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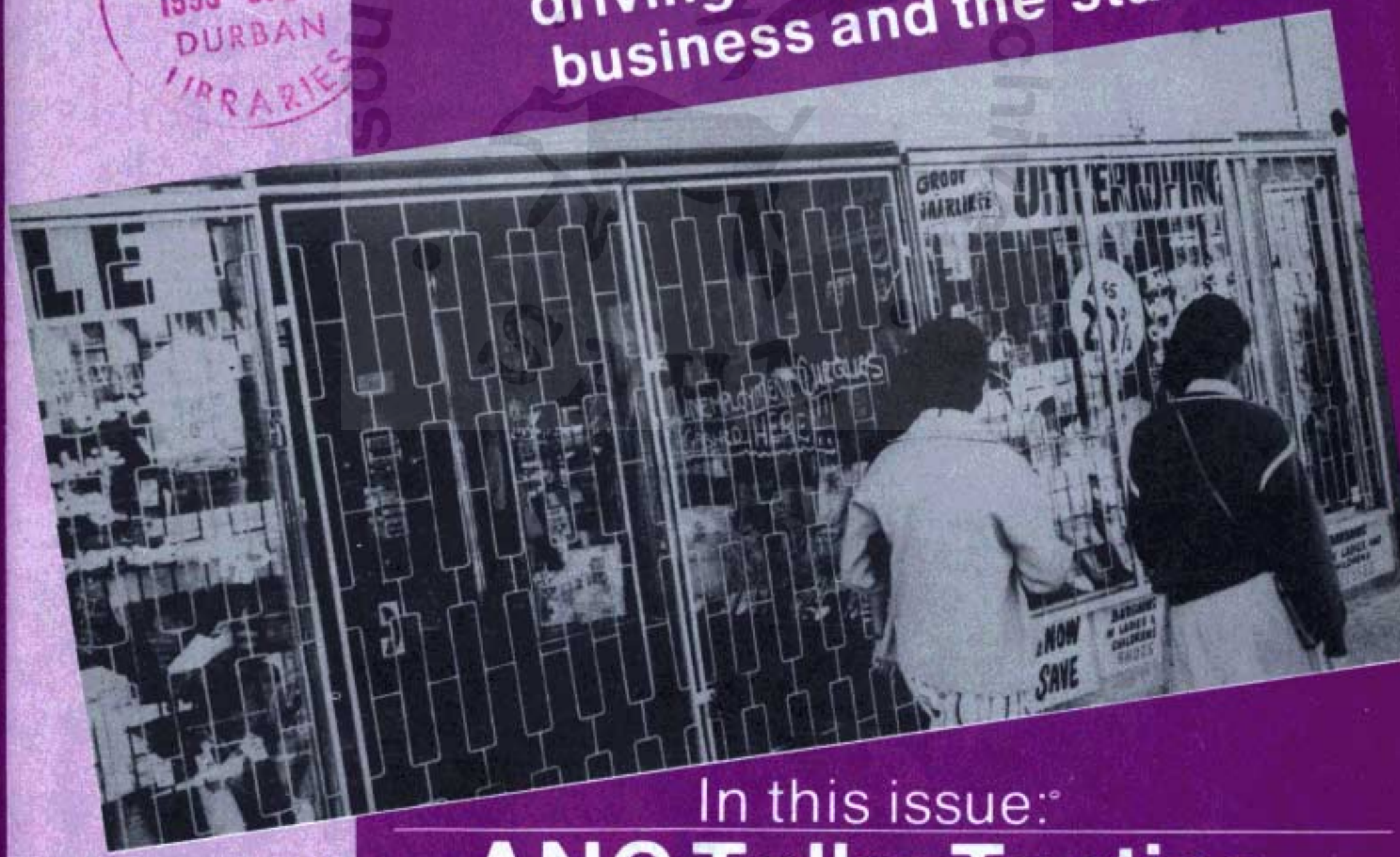
IN

PROGRESS



CONSUMER BOYCOTT

driving a wedge between
business and the state



In this issue:

ANC Talks Tactics

UDF under attack in Natal; Looking at the Urban Foundation; Police violence in Colesberg; NUM Strike; Alfa Leaves SA.

Editorial

The political patterns likely to dominate South Africa's short-term future are emerging.

One involves extensive and growing local-level co-operation between trade union and community organisations in the nationwide consumer boycotts. Only a year ago, the November stayaway saw the first major union-community alliance over national political issues. In the present wave of consumer boycotts, unions not affiliated to the UDF were almost invariably consulted about boycott organisation and implementation only after the event - except in the case of Pietermaritzburg, where the initiative was a union one.

But despite the tensions generated by this lack of consultation, unionists overwhelmingly consented to join in. This would have been unthinkable five years ago, and unlikely at the beginning of last year. However fraught with mutual recrimination these alliances are, they may ultimately provide grassroots experience essential to the emergence of a new form of South African political democracy.

Again and again, though, organised workers and the youth emerge as two poles of interest in the township politics of boycott and stayaway. No organisations seem able to control the youth. Until this is achieved, slogans about mobilisation under working class leadership will remain rhetorical.

Boycott pressure seems to be succeeding in motivating business interests at local and national levels into pressuring the state. But capitalist reformists have excellent reasons outside of township pressure to be impatient with the government.

Perhaps shaken by foreign political and economic pressure, the South African state's policymakers have recoiled into defensive indecision. At present, any flexibility and responsiveness is confined to economic policy - the technocrats' sphere. This is accompanied by domestic political intransigence and foreign aggression. Perhaps this reflects gains in political influence by the repressive apparatuses of police and defence force.

Under the circumstances, centrist business and political interests will continue to beat a path to Lusaka, as they focus efforts on developing a workable relationship with the ANC. Business's tacit intention is to set in motion moves towards Lancaster House-type talks.

But ironically, the ANC has now explicitly rejected the national convention road - at least until apartheid has been dismantled. Still, the ANC's increasing legal accessibility to local groupings is unlikely to stop there. What business and the PFP get away with, others may well try to imitate - though routine and open communication between the ANC and extra-parliamentary groups does not yet seem likely.

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The Tactics of Talks

The ANC is developing a set of tactics to cover talks and negotiations with capital and the government. But while talks take place, it's 'business as usual' as far as the ANC's political and armed struggle is concerned. HOWARD BARRKLL reports.

What can be termed 'the tactics of talks' has taken on new importance, as widely divergent groups respond to the escalating political and economic crisis in South Africa by trying to open up channels of communication.

The mass upheaval of the past 15 months has caused some social strata in South Africa to begin questioning past assumptions as to what political conditions or temporary alliances best serve their interests. This state of political flux is most publicly evident within the ranks of a relatively enlightened section of capital and the white bloc.

The most dramatic sign of an important (though as yet inconclusive) political rethink was the exchange of views on 13 September between leading South African businessmen and African National Congress leadership. And the current situation promises more talks between sections of the white bloc and the ANC.

THE 'TACTICS OF TALKS'

At present the ANC is engaged in considerable analysis as to the exact nature of the crisis confronting the ruling white bloc as a whole, and big capital in particular. The latter element, the ANC has determined, is also part of the 'enemy forces'.

To exploit these new conditions, the ANC has been evolving a series of tactics for these talks - tactics it considers consistent with its primary strategic objective. This is national liberation, the main content of which is African liberation, via the seizure of state power or its transfer to the

people, and the construction of what the ANC terms a 'united, democratic and non-racial country' along the lines of the Freedom Charter.

From discussions with ranking ANC sources, it appears the movement distinguishes in the first instance between 'talks' and 'negotiations'. Talks may be exploratory exchanges of views, designed to feel out what the ANC regards as its enemy or, alternatively, to cement understandings with real or temporary allies. Negotiations, on the other hand, have a limited and clearly defined framework within which attempts are made to reach a settlement.

In the current, rapidly evolving situation, it seems the ANC goes further to isolate four particular categories:

- * talks with organisations working inside the country which the ANC regards as either basic or explicit allies, for example the progressive and democratic trade unions, political, student, community, women's and religious organisations;
- * talks with representatives of non-government elements of the white bloc, for example big business, the Progressive Federal Party, etc;
- * negotiations with the government or ruling party; and
- * negotiations of the kind implied by the national convention concept.

In each case, the ANC appears to have a different view of its immediate objectives. But as its thinking evolves on how best to take the new situation forward, it seems there are several relatively constant overriding principles guiding the movement's tactics on the question of talks.

One is the need to build maximum unity between all sections and formations of the oppressed, other democrats and

progressives and, quite literally, to bring these forces, equipped and prepared as well as possible, 'to the battlefield'.

A second is to win over to its basic outlook as many potentially amenable whites as possible: at least to attempt to neutralise some hitherto actively reactionary elements, and thereby as much as possible to isolate politically the diehard defenders of what it sees as a racist and exploitative state power. In the ANC's view, it is imperative for any serious revolutionary movement to weaken the ranks of 'the generalised enemy'.

A third principle is that a liberation or revolutionary movement goes to war for the seizure of state power by the people. It does not, in the first instance, go to war in order to hold talks or negotiate a settlement.

But that said, a further principle applies: namely that the liberation movement, which comes under political rather than militarist leadership, must be willing always, even as the battle rages, to engage in talks which may offer a reasonable prospect of reducing the extent of people's suffering in achieving state power.

In this instance, the ANC appears to draw deeply on the experience of Vietnamese revolutionaries who, despite believing that they had been double-crossed repeatedly first by the French colonial power and then by the United States, were nonetheless always willing in the midst of battle to try to make peace talks work (in Paris and elsewhere).

In the ANC's view, the revolutionary movement must always protect its moral-political superiority and its ultimate commitment to peace. The revolutionary movement goes to war only in order to create the material conditions for credible peace.

The alternative - completely ruling out the tactics of talks - in the ANC's view slips into the immaturity of a rhetorical or terrorist fraction. It regards such a fraction as a baseless perversion of the national liberation movement concept which luxuriates in radical postures that are unresponsive to the people.

But underlying this fourth principle is the insistence that talks of any kind should never be allowed to demobilise the liberation movement's forces - unless or until an explicit ceasefire is

decided upon. Unless or until that happens, talks are one tactic alongside the gathering of forces involved in mass political mobilisation and armed struggle.

A fifth principle is that the ANC will not allow the fact of negotiations with the government to remain a secret from its base.

ANC TALKS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS

From the ANC's perspective, another struggle is closely intertwined with the physical battle now raging: one at the level of ideological and organisational loyalties.

'There is a struggle going on for the allegiance of people at various levels and strata of our society. Basically, the struggle is between Botha and the ANC. Therefore, it is necessary for the ANC to speak to people', a senior ANC source remarked recently.

In this respect, it cannot have escaped anyone's attention - least of all that of the ANC - that its recent talks with business leaders have created a new legal climate.

This may enable a number of progressive and democratic formations, working legally inside the country, to hold similar open talks with the ANC leadership in the near future.

Here, the intention is to build maximum unity between the oppressed, and other democrats and progressives.

The ANC regards talks in the second category - with big business leaders and other non-governmental elements from the white bloc - as part of its thrust to isolate politically the Botha government as thoroughly as possible. Conditions for this are ripening, in the ANC's view.

There are indications that the ANC may still be willing to expand this second category to include a few elements from within the ruling National Party (such as MP Wynand Malan). But the movement has made it clear that it would be prepared to speak to him or other ruling party MPs only as individuals, not as representatives of the National Party or government.

'Any meeting with non-ANC people is aimed at convincing them that the time is past for just fiddling around - changing this, reforming that. The

reason people are dying is that they are saying: "We want a united, democratic and non-racial country. We want people's power". We made that clear in our talks with the businessmen', said a ranking ANC source.

It is understood that the businessmen who attended the 13 September meeting protested that they were convinced Botha and his group in the National Party were sincere reformists committed to fundamental changes. Yet, at the same time, the nature of the talks indicated their deep concern that Botha is incapable of delivering timeous political options that can safeguard capital. These relatively enlightened sections of business appear to recognise that South Africa is moving towards a scale and kind of struggle which could result in a successful quasi-Bolshevik insurrection, rather than a traditional black nationalist takeover.

It is sensible to conclude that one of capital's intentions at the meeting was to establish the potential for, in one or other sense, 'buying out' some portion of ANC leadership or exercising the 'Lourho option'. The latter is a political insurance policy, paid for by favours to the liberation movement or selected members of its leadership during the period of struggle; and the first claims for business priveleges are made after liberation. It was tried in the Zimbabwean struggle, but the mistake was in getting Joshua Nkomo to underwrite the policy. In the event, the mistake did not matter much.

Capital's prospects of succeeding with this tactic in the case of the ANC look very dim indeed. The movement arguably has a harder, more highly developed and better placed left wing than any other African liberation movement has had. The form of struggle it has adopted has promoted active mass involvement in struggle across a broad spectrum of organisational forms and arenas. The presence of well-developed trade unions and political and other organisations means the South African people cannot be 'disarmed' merely by an absence of guns after liberation: they have the means to exercise vigilance. And the ANC's programme states a clear linkage between the political and economic components of national liberation.

The ANC leadership's statement to the businessmen that its minimum planned objective involves nationalising major mining and banking monopolies on coming

to power has recieved wide publicity. Given the extent of monopolisation in South Africa, one may reasonably estimate that complete nationalisation of the Anglo American Corporation, Barlow Rand and Sanlam alone could give an ANC government control over as much as 75% of the economy. Below these commanding heights, an ANC government would allow small businessmen and traders to flourish in a mixed economy, the ANC delegation told AAC chairman Gavin Relly and his five colleagues.

Whether or not an ANC government would go further is likely to depend on conditions at the time of taking power. And nationalisation, of course, can take a number of different forms - involving various percentages of ownership, sometimes with elements from among the former owners retaining important management functions. Here again, the balance of forces at the time of a political takeover would be more likely to determine the form and extent of nationalisation than any rhetorical promises made during the period of struggle.

The South African Communist Party (SACP), which has a formal alliance with the ANC, has a more far-reaching programme for economic change, of course, and the business delegation was keen to know more about the party, its role in the ANC, and its outlook.

Front- and back-door ANC sources confide that the only agreement reached between the ANC delegation and the Relly group was that in principle they should probably talk again.

PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS

The ANC's view on negotiations with the government, the ruling National Party, or the government's 'employees' is that in these cases the agenda is not an open one. Here, a whole range of preconditions apply.

The central precondition is that such talks must be premised on an agreement among participants that the objective of the talks is to totally dismantle apartheid and to arrive at a modality for a united, democratic and non-racial country. This, say authorised ANC spokesmen, is 'not negotiable'.

'There can be no question of mere amendments or reforms to the present

order. All we would be discussing in such talks is the modality for the transfer of power', a competent ANC source said recently.

The ANC has not yet spelt out exactly what it means by the total dismantling of apartheid and the handing over of power to the people. But indications are that it would regard either process as incomplete if the present character of what it calls the 'repressive state apparatus' (the defence force and police) remains intact.

Other preconditions include the release of all political prisoners, the unconditional return of exiles, an atmosphere of political freedom inside the country conducive to talks, and the agreement of the 'entire democratic leadership of South Africa' to such talks.

But the ANC has ruled out talks or discussions with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the Kwazulu bantustan. Ever since their talks in 1979, relations between the ANC and Buthelezi have progressively worsened. Buthelezi accuses the ANC of planning to kill him, to which the ANC responds he is being 'paranoid and silly'.

In September this year, a top-ranking ANC source explained the movement's refusal to talk with Buthelezi, saying that the movement's view was that he was a 'hireling' of the government who 'has adopted a posture which is directed at the physical destruction of all forces that oppose apartheid'. To the collective ANC mind, this amounts to a posture and practice no different from the worst elements in the government. It is probable that the Sebes, Matanzimas, Hendrickses and Rajbansis are similarly dismissed.

'We are not prepared to speak to Buthelezi's paymaster at the moment, so there's no reason to talk to the hireling', the same ANC source said.

FROM NATIONAL CONVENTION TO PEOPLE'S POWER

The issue of a national convention has been far from the minds of ANC members for many years. And Nelson Mandela reportedly went some way recently to debunk the concept, saying the issue was not holding a convention but, instead, how power was to be transferred to the

people.

The ANC leadership out of jail is evolving the same view in more amplified form.

Competent ANC sources say the situation in 1985 is vastly different from that during the 1950s, when the ANC called for a convention.

At that time, say these sources, there was sufficient legality still to hold out the perspective of a national convention at which the country's disparate groups and interests could hope to map out a model for a democratic future.

Now, however, following decades of political repression, the consolidation of apartheid, the government's refusal to entertain the possibility of one-person-one-vote, the development of revolutionary forces and, latterly, the state of emergency and state attempts to smash the United Democratic Front despite its programmatic commitment to peaceful change - it is 'idle' to hold out the perspective of a national convention as the means to dismantle apartheid.

'You cannot have a national convention between oppressed and oppressor', said a senior ANC source.

Instead, in the ANC's view, apartheid has to have been either totally dismantled or destroyed before any national convention can be held - if the South African people find at that point they still want such a convention.

Again, indications are that the ANC believes that this necessitates the prior dismantling of the 'repressive state apparatus'. 'A national convention can be held only when we have a situation of democracy, free political activity and equality', according to one senior ANC source.

In other words, in line with Mandela's reported views, the issue is the transfer of power to the people, the struggle to smash or dismantle apartheid totally. The issue is not a national convention.

'There is no middle road', an official ANC statement on the national convention issue stated recently.

To put it another way: as far as the ANC is concerned, its external and internal arms continue their joint efforts to strengthen the underground, continue with mass political mobilisation, and continue attempts to escalate the armed struggle. It is business as usual for the ANC.

Senior ANC sources further comment on the issue of a national convention that they are not interested in sitting down 'with every political exponent of this or that position designed to cheat the people of their right to full democracy'. Instead, a national convention, if held after the total destruction or dismantling of apartheid, would probably be 'a representative meeting of the delegates of the people of South Africa to constitutionalise people's power'.

To the ANC, the current PFP-Inkatha-business campaign for a national

convention looks like 'an attempt to cobble out a settlement of the fate of the country over the heads of the people'. The presence of Inkatha will be one factor, it maintains, that will 'discredit' the national convention campaign in the eyes of the people. PFP leader Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert should know better than to team up with Inkatha, in the ANC's view, and the movement has told him so. The ANC adds that it detects the hands of the Reagan administration and Thatcher government in these manoeuvres.



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Industry and Government

'Two Sides of the Same Bloody Coin'

An early consumer boycott pamphlet was headlined 'Industry and Government: Two Sides of the Same Bloody Coin'. It set out the central aim of the boycott: forcing business into persuading government to meet the boycotters' demands. **INGRID OBERY** looks at the boycott in the Eastern and Western Cape, and **KAREN JOCHELSON** reports on its course in Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The consumer boycott tactic has a long tradition in South African protest politics. But all organisers involved in the current boycott, underway since mid-July in areas which first undertook it, assert that it goes beyond previous campaigns.

Most consumer boycotts in recent years were union-initiated responses to industrial disputes, and focused on one product or manufacturer. The current boycott call originated with community organisations, and put forward explicitly political national demands: lifting the state of emergency, removing police and army from townships and the release of all political prisoners and detainees.

In some cases, these were supplemented by specific local demands. Common additions concerned democratic Student Representative Councils and demands aimed at local government. FOSATU added a national demand for political rights for all.

In most regions, the boycott was initially called by the UDF or affiliated organisations. It began piecemeal in a number of small Cape towns, but broader political demands were made for the first time when it took off in Port Elizabeth in mid-July. During the next month, it spread to the rest of the Eastern Cape - where it is still most successful - to the Western Cape, the Transvaal and Natal.

In all major centres, unions unaffiliated to the UDF were drawn into boycott organisation. While most objected to the way this was done, all unions gave their support to the campaign. A FOSATU Branch Executive Committee in the Transvaal recommended on 28 July that FOSATU initiate a consumer boycott of all white shops that

would end with a national stayaway. The recommendations were discussed by FOSATU's Joint Central Committee in Durban on 3 August, and all regions agreed to canvass them in their factories.

A FOSATU report-back on 17 August was attended by representatives from the General Workers Union, Food and Canning Workers Union, National Union of Mineworkers, Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of SA, and the Cape Town Municipal Workers Association. It was agreed that the duration of the boycott would be subject to monthly review, and a national co-ordinating committee was appointed to organise and monitor it regionally. In most areas unions were then drawn into local consumer boycott committees, together with community organisations and youth groups.

CHALLENGES, TACTICS AND STRATEGY

The boycott poses challenges not only to the state and big business, but also to the boycotters themselves.

Organisations involved have different views about the boycott's role and potential. Some see it as merely a more developed form of protest action designed to make big business aware of its political responsibilities, while others see it as a direct challenge to the country's economy.

The boycott aims to 'pressurise business to pressurise the government' into faster change. Business is expressly not seen as a mediator. Rather it is a constituency with political influence on the government.

As the boycott has progressed, targets broadened from white business to include 'sell-outs' - those African, coloured and Indian businessmen who participate in government through black local authorities, management committees or one of the houses of parliament.

In effect, the call to boycott white business, while directing people to buy in 'their own areas', does define the campaign racially. As a Pretoria FOSATU organiser said: 'The boycott does feed on an anti-white sentiment in the townships. People see whites as the problem'. A Johannesburg UDF spokesperson added: 'Whites always complain that they don't know what is going on in the townships. The boycott aims to make them aware of what is going on so that they can begin to demand change too.'

But a boycott of white and collaborator shops has often left people with little or no choice of where to buy, particularly in areas where many outlets have been burnt, or where there are no alternate shops. Such circumstances led some Western Cape unions to criticise the tactic of a general boycott: they felt targets should be specific and easily identifiable.

Non-collaborator Indian and coloured shops were generally exempt from the boycott. But Indian businesses in Grahamstown and Johannesburg central business areas are in effect subject to boycott, since consumers travelling into the townships cannot prove they have bought from acceptable outlets. Boycott organisers felt that businessmen who supported the struggle would be willing to make sacrifices, and said of those who expressed dissatisfaction that 'it was time they realised they were also black'.

CLASS ALLIANCES

Class alliances are a crucial and ambiguous issue in the boycott.

A current problem, posed by both UDF Port Elizabeth general secretary Derrick Swartz as well as a number of unionists, is the class basis and content of some progressive organisations. Swartz pointed out that 'there have been criticisms of the "popular" nature of our strategies and campaigns which did

not emphasise the class nature of our struggle.' He added that currently students and youth tended to dominate organisations. 'Although many of them do come from the working class, they have a natural populist tendency. Workers have the experience which youth do not have.'

While the boycott certainly has the potential to politicise communities, Swartz was practical in his assessment: 'This is definitely not a revolutionary moment. The central problem at the moment is the lack of structured working class leadership and organisations to determine the pace and nature of our struggle. Political and community organisations dictate the struggle at the moment. The question is not merely that of achieving governmental political power, but the basis of the structure of our new society.'

This does not reflect the attitude of most UDF organisers. An East London consumer boycott committee member said: 'The boycott brings together workers, students, church people, businessmen and the rural communities into practical action against government and its policies. For purposes of immediate mobilisation this form of unity is crucial and we are committed to maintain it. This class alliance, together with other forms of democratic struggle, must inevitably shake the government.'

This implies a fairly good relationship with, for example, township shopkeepers. Similarly in the Western Cape, the Western Cape Traders Association is a UDF affiliate and appears to be actively supporting the campaign with financial contributions and lower prices on basic foodstuffs.

Transvaal UDF representatives say that one of the aims of the boycott is to form an alliance with the black middle class, though it should be subject to popular discipline.

Most unions expressed reservations about this alliance, particularly where township traders' prices have remained high or have increased. A union spokesperson in Cape Town said, 'In these cases workers become cynical and ask why they should fill the pockets of township traders who do not support their demands or campaigns.' And according to another unionist, 'The union's credibility with workers is at stake if township prices stay high. They will question the motives of the people calling for the boycott'.

Apart from trade unionists, Swartz was

the most critical of such an alliance. While he believes that 'it is a necessary strategy', he points out that the traders' support is premised on personal profit: 'They knew they would make a lot of money. We should never misunderstand their motives for supporting the boycott. Their role remains determined by their class position'.

The different interests at play are made clear by the National African Federated Chambers of Commerce. As Gabriel Mokgoko, NAFCOC national organiser and public relations co-ordinator, put it: 'We support the lifting of the state of emergency because we are conscious of what it does to us as businessmen and to our community. We can't stay aloof from calls against the state of emergency otherwise we are seen as part of the system'. For Richard Nkosi, assistant editor of African Business, the official NAFCOC journal, black business is 'the vanguard for change'.

DIFFERENT REGIONAL EFFECTS

Clearly the boycott has been far more successful in some areas than in others. A snap survey of supermarket, furniture, clothing and liquor chains showed that most had been hit hardest in the Eastern Cape, particularly in Port Elizabeth, East London, Queenstown and King Williamstown, and to a lesser extent in the Western Cape. The Transvaal as yet seems almost unaffected.

In the Eastern Cape the boycott has reduced turnovers to below 50% of normal, and in some cases to less than 25%. The local chambers of commerce admit to up to 100% support for the boycott. Many small businesses have closed as a result of the boycott's effects on top of the recession.

Large chains are also affected, though many will not admit to it. One which did, Hepworths, a clothing store group with a dozen outlets in the Eastern Cape and several in Pretoria, went into provisional liquidation in the first week of October.

Eastern Cape activists and trade unionists attribute the success of the boycott to the history of resistance and organisation in the area, and to the fact that Port Elizabeth and East London

are relatively compact towns with easily identifiable shopping areas. In contrast, the reef and the Western Cape sprawl over vast areas, with large populations, looser social cohesion and many more retail outlets.

Some but not all groups involved in boycott organisation recognise the boycott's regional specificity. Unions involved in the new union federation directed their regional branches to support the boycott in a way appropriate to the specific conditions in their areas.

So in the Western Cape, while the UDF hoped to replicate Eastern Cape successes with a broad boycott, it was outvoted by the unions and other community groups in favour of a selective boycott which they considered more appropriate for the area.

VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION

The consumer boycott takes place in the context of heightened politicisation and militancy, escalation of police and army violence and responsive violence within the communities. State media has stressed black-on-black violence and argued that a select few terrorise normally peace-loving black communities.

There have been incidents of intimidation and violence around the boycott, but it appears that in areas where it is 100% successful, such incidents are few and support for the boycott is largely voluntary. Recently there have been reports of increased intimidation in Soweto and Port Elizabeth.

UDF leadership admits that people have been forced to eat detergent, raw chicken and rice, or to drink cooking oil. But it maintains that most of these incidents are perpetrated by unaligned youth. A few community and labour leaders felt the youth was often uncontrollable, but others felt that 'people will have to learn the hard way'.

Even within the Eastern Cape communities, there are unpoliticised people who keep the boycott out of fear, or who do not know about it and attempt to shop in town. There are certainly many more such people in the Transvaal, Western Cape and Durban, where political organisation is more diffuse.

BUSINESS RESPONSE



On 20 August, 80 representatives of commerce and the retail sector met in Johannesburg to discuss the implications for business of the emergency, stayaways and the consumer boycott. They stated their willingness to talk to black leaders about grievances, but stressed that they would take action to neutralise the effects of the boycott.

While many organisers continue to see the consumer boycott as a foolproof tactic, it is proving to have drawbacks. An immediate problem is that workers face retrenchment and short time, particularly in the Eastern Cape. The Queenstown and East London Chambers of Commerce have threatened to cut employees' wages by 80% in a bid to end the boycott. The Chambers were granted exemption from wage determinations (which rule that employers may not pay workers on short-time less than two-thirds of their full wage), to enable members to cut wages and hours to 20%. Other Chambers indicated that they may also apply for exemption.

Unions are unlikely to ignore this, and strike action is likely. The Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union of SA (CCAWUSA), for instance, supported the boycott on the understanding that other federation unions would take solidarity action if its workers were retrenched as a result of the boycott.

Consumer boycott organisers believe business has a political role. They feel that if apartheid structures and practices no longer serve capital's needs and interests, it will demand change. Organisers said business was aware that even if the boycott did not succeed, other tactics could be used. A national stayaway, for example, is easier to organise and would hit capital far harder.

Business leaders, however, see their new political role as dictators of the pace and practice of change. For them, the survival of the free enterprise system is at stake. In a statement to the United Nations hearings on transnational corporations in South Africa in mid-September, South African big business defined its role as 'active agents for positive change'. Signatories to the statement were the Afrikaanse

Handelsinstituut, the Association of Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCOM), NAFCOC, the Federated Chamber of Industries and the Urban Foundation.

Business strategy to accelerate the reform process included the creation of a 'business charter' to outline its objectives for power sharing and black advancement. A step in this direction was the publication of a full-page advertisement, entitled 'There Is A Better Way', in leading national newspapers.

Signed by heads of companies such as Pick 'n Pay, the Nedbank Group, the Premier Group, JCI, Argus and Anglo American Properties, it declared that the reform process should be accelerated by the abolition of statutory race discrimination, negotiation on power sharing with acknowledged black leaders, granting of full citizenship to all, and restoration and entrenchment of the rule of law. Necessary moves to strengthen free enterprise included economic privatisation, the removal of influx control and pass laws, a 'more cost-effective' decentralisation policy and improved education and living conditions for blacks.

Similarly, the hard-pressed Cradock Employers Federation initiated a meeting of Eastern Cape businessmen in early September. It set out seven demands to be presented to President PW Botha and Minister of Constitutional Affairs Chris Heunis: negotiation with recognised black leaders, concern about SADF action in townships, that the state of emergency be lifted soon, free trading rights instituted, and a single, equal education system established. Local businessmen support the demand that detainees be released, but have not come out publicly on this.

Another strategy to foster the politics of negotiation, rather than violent change, is business's participation in 'behind the scenes mediation' during what is seen as a 'pre-negotiation stage'. The meeting between leading businessmen and the ANC in Zambia was perhaps an overture. But the bomb blasts on 27 September in three Durban supermarkets, also boycott targets, for which the ANC claimed responsibility, indicate that the ANC is still committed to its policy of supporting political mass action with armed struggle.



Consumer boycott casualty: A burnt out delivery truck in Soweto.

PORT ELIZABETH

Spontaneous Community Action

The first major urban focus of consumer boycott action, Port Elizabeth, has seen almost total community support for the campaign since it began on 15 July. Within two weeks of its beginning, a Progressive Federal Party (PFP) survey of small retailers revealed that two had already closed; and 32 of the 43 interviewed gave figures indicating turnover drop of 80-100%.

Initiative for the boycott came in early July from a group of township women, which grew from an initial 150 to 700. A number were members of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (PEBCO) and the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress (PEYCO), but many were unaligned. They were angry about police brutality, the state of emergency, township conditions and the infighting between the UDF and AZAPO. The community's energy should be directed at the oppressors, they said.

Local community activists and leaders were hesitant about taking boycott

action, and this was debated thoroughly. Would such action advance the struggle, and could enough support be mobilised?

Community organisers felt they could not ignore spontaneous action from their constituents. But they had to ensure it took a constructive political direction, and that organisational strength and depth were improved in the process. They argued that the boycott should be organised under the banner of recognised organisations.

The UDF and its affiliates took the lead in discussing tactics and calling the boycott. Once the Consumer Boycott Committee was set up, non-UDF unions were invited to participate.

The 'conglomeration of township organisations' which initially made up the Consumer Boycott Committee were the UDF, PEBCO, PEYCO, COSAS (until it was banned), the Eastern Province Dance Association, various organisations from Port Elizabeth's northern areas, and the UDF-affiliated Motor Assemblers and

Components Workers Union of SA (MACWUSA) and General Workers Union of SA (GWUSA). Unions not affiliated to the UDF sent representatives to the committee, once asked.

The group of women were eager to begin the boycott immediately, and there appeared to be fairly widespread support for it. UDF leaders argued that the boycott had to be well publicised, the community mobilised around the call, and clear demands and strategies set out.

Derrick Swartz, local UDF general secretary, explained that the climate of heightened militancy and anger resulted in immediate support for the idea.

'Because we had won the support of the community in the past, many sport bodies, church organisations and community bodies joined the committee. Rank-and-file workers also appeared to give full support.' But, he added, the disappearance of PEBCO leadership, detentions, and the organisational demands of the Goniwe funeral meant that remaining leadership was stretched very thin.

As a result, Swartz admitted, there was a time lapse before unions were drawn into the committee. Unions' aloofness from political activity was exacerbated by the split over the March stayaway (see WIP 37). This 'is a stumbling block to welding alliances with the most important working class organisations', said Swartz.

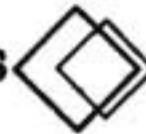
In the event, unions were presented with an already established situation, which they could choose to support or reject.

Following the national decision by non-UDF unions to participate in the consumer boycott, local branches gave their support, albeit with reservations. A General Workers Union (GWU) spokesperson said, 'Workers know that unions do not just follow community organisations' decisions. But we have told our members that if community organisations do call meetings, they should go and participate fully. Some shop stewards were also elected to go to PEBCO and other local community organisations to discuss union proposals.'

Spreading the word about the boycott was fairly easy, according to Swartz. It was discussed and publicised mainly at funerals, which were often attended by up to 60 000 people, and at mass meetings.

According to Swartz, 'We did tell people that town centres would be monitored and those who broke the boycott would be spoken to. But there is such a level of militancy that we cannot control everyone. We have spoken to activists and explained that the state would be keen to publicise incidents of intimidation and we should not open ourselves to discredit. Participation should be based on commitment and understanding.'

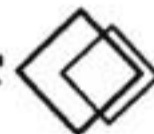
LOCAL DEMANDS



Aside from the three major political demands - police and army out of townships, an end to the state of emergency, and release of detainees - the most important local demand is for boycott leaders to be released from jail or given immunity from arrest or harassment if they come out of hiding. Against the background of mysterious deaths and disappearances of local community leaders, many community activists live in fear of their lives.

Other local demands concern the removal of a racist superintendent at the hospital in Doringenza, proper medical treatment for township residents and non-interference in hospitals by police.

SUCCESS DESPITE HARASSMENT



On 2 August, boycott committee spokesperson Mkhuseleli Jack was arrested under emergency regulations. This was the first instance of action directed specifically against the committee. It has generally had to operate underground, as members are harassed and arrested as soon as they become known to police. By 15 August the committee was effectively immobilised, and member organisations decided to elect a new one which could work more openly. At the same meeting the committee decided to extend the boycott for a further two months because no demands had been met. The campaign lagged slightly in late August but in early September was again extended - now until after Christmas.

Some newspapers reported that white

employers were shopping for their domestic servants. Other reports stated that 600 000 people in East London, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage alone were boycotting shops, some of which in desperation were offering 50% discounts on clothes and furniture.

The boycott has had close to 100% success. This claim by boycott organisers is supported by statements from local business and the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce. The extent to which Port Elizabeth streets remain bare of black shoppers cannot solely be explained, as police and SADF claim, by intimidation.

As in most other centres, there are incidents of intimidation to enforce the boycott, but these are not sufficiently widespread to account for the scale of support. Conversely, union sources allege that police and SADF members have forced boycotters to buy from white shops.

Tony Gilson, director of the Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, explains popular support for the boycott as a result of wider problems in the townships. Boycott and general unrest are 'all part of the question of black aspirations and frustrations,' he said.

He believes the boycott may continue for some time, and that many of the boycott demands are perfectly reasonable.

'People are asking for a fair stake in South Africa, and the underlying causes of the disturbances will not be solved by security action alone.'

POLITICAL GAINS



While some local demands may yet be met, as in East London, this is by no means certain in Port Elizabeth. Prospects are still dimmer for the realisation of broader political demands. 'It all depends on people's strength to hold out,' said Swartz. 'But the state is arrogant, and feels that giving in to demands would be a sign of weakness, though the boycott is hurting their pet project - the small businessman.'

Swartz explained that one of the most important effects of the boycott was that it could 'pose real challenges to big capital and exploit further the existing contradictions between big capital and the state.'

EAST LONDON

No Gap for the Enemy

A Border Consumer Boycott Committee pamphlet headed 'Industry and Government - two sides of the same bloody coin', called for the boycott to begin on 29 July.

The regional general council of the UDF decided to call the boycott, in solidarity with Port Elizabeth and in response to local conditions. Together with a number of local affiliates, it formed the Border Consumer Boycott Committee on 22 July.

Local demands were that hawkers be allowed to trade in town, that halls in the white areas be made available for meetings, that democratic student representative councils be permitted, that forced removals be ended and that Duncan Village, a township on the edge of East London, be reprieved from proposed incorporation into the Ciskei.

From early August, local businessmen were willing to negotiate through the Chamber of Commerce. 'The business

community has seen the power of the consumer boycott', said Harold Winearls, chairman of the Retailers Committee of the East London Chamber of Commerce.

In mid-August the Chamber air-dropped a pamphlet over Duncan Village. It appealed to the 'proud Xhosa nation' to stand together and not be intimidated by a radical minority. This statement, representing the more conservative wing of the Chamber, also stated its willingness to negotiate and urged the government to end forced removals, to reprieve and upgrade Duncan Village and to license hawkers.

By the end of the month, the city council had reversed the ban on fruit and vegetable hawkers, promising that stalls would be erected for them. Winearls, representing a more liberal view, argued for opening halls to all races, and condemned detention and harassment of black leaders. 'The township people must be part of any

planning for the future. I think the boycott committee is ready to talk but they are all forced into hiding', he said.

By late September, the all-white North End Traders Association was urging that black traders be allowed to trade freely in the area. Sixteen shops in the area were forced to close as a result of the boycott.

PROBLEMS OF VIOLENCE

According to the boycott committee, monitoring the boycott is a community responsibility and everyone is committed to the action. They 'see it as their own, and those who somehow missed the call are being gently persuaded to fall in line', a committee statement said.

An activist added that rank and file often took it upon themselves to discipline people. But, he said, the extensive support for the call 'caught activists with their pants down, as we did not know if people were ready for such a tactic. There has also been unexpected support from the coloured areas'.

However a South African Council for Higher Education (SACHED) worker said the 'criminal element' was a problem. It stopped delivery vehicles coming into the township, a cooldrink truck was attacked in Mdantsane and there was looting in Duncan Village. 'The UDF has issued a pamphlet telling people to stop this kind of thing, saying that we should not burn our schools and houses - that we must keep a good image for the consumer boycott, giving no gap to the enemy', he said.

UNION SUPPORT

East London's trade unions have suffered years of state harassment. It is the hometown of the South African Allied Workers Union (SAAWU), and other unions are as yet small. As a UDF affiliate, SAAWU was party to boycott discussions from the start.

'In this boycott workers cannot be seen apart from the rest of the community. They are in fact the

spearhead of any move by the people to drive sense into the heads of the clique in Pretoria', said a boycott committee spokesperson.

As in Port Elizabeth however, unions outside of the UDF felt the process of taking the decision to boycott had been less than democratic. David Tandani of the General Workers Union explained that 'Non-(UDF) affiliated organisations appreciated the invitation to the meeting on 22 July. But we queried the stage at which we had been invited, since for such a campaign to succeed all organisations should be there from scratch'. He said that a problem was that UDF often took decisions which affected workers.

A committee spokesperson said the boycott was canvassed for some time in trains, buses and churches 'and in all instances the people felt that the action was long overdue'. But unions felt that there was too little time to spread the word to members, though the word did spread fast: 'In fact it has strengthened organisation and some factory canteens are being boycotted. As a result more workers became interested in trade unions', said Tandani.

A community activist admitted that there were problems with 'the way we mobilised. The unions were more systematic.' But this was overcome through the traditional information networks in East London. 'The trains are most important since the bus boycott in 1983.'

OBJECTIVES

People were called upon to boycott the shops in the Central Business District. The aim, as a boycott committee member said, was not to pressure 'business to negotiate for us. They must take sides in the struggle between us and the racist minority they voted into power'.

In the long term, 'the retailer's demise will in turn affect the manufacturer, and in the long business chain the big men will be affected,' said a committee spokesperson.

Those coloured, Indian and African businessmen who supported the tricameral system were also boycotted. 'They are part and parcel of the policing and murdering of our people'.

consumer boycotts consumer boycotts consumer boycotts consumer
Tandani pointed out that councillors' shops tended to be burned down before they could be boycotted. An activist said the boycott of 'sell-out' shops was largely informal. 'We have to deal with different enemies at different levels. It is difficult because often these are the shops which give credit.'

The Checkers branch in Mdantsane is not a boycott target, for largely tactical reasons - it provides people with a source of basic commodities, and means that township residents will be willing and able to continue the boycott for a long period. As it is, people have difficulty getting appliances repaired and there are outlets from which to buy clothes and furniture.

Ironically, Ciskei President Lennox Sebe came out in support of the boycott and urged township traders to keep prices down. Tandani commented: 'Sebe can never change his colours. He never supports workers' campaigns. He was trying to help Mdantsane's black businessmen by telling them to be good to the people so that they were not forgotten after the boycott'.

TRADERS CO-OPERATE

The committee claims to have a working relationship with township traders on issues such as prices. If wholesalers refuse to supply township outlets, the committee will not negotiate: 'We shall devise an even harder blow against business but we will not disclose the nature of this weapon'.

Duncan Village shopkeepers have allegedly been severely harassed and threatened by police. Shebeens, previously ignored, are now often

raided.

A few Indian traders are apparently considering resignation from the Indian management committee, and have enquired about becoming involved in the UDF. 'We know this is motivated by profits, but the UDF will discuss it', said an activist, but added that ongoing negotiations were difficult because leaders were afraid of exposing themselves and did not fully trust the traders.

POLITICAL GAINS

'The consumer boycott has helped people transcend petty differences', said a local SACHED advice office worker. 'We now have to consolidate these gains. And with leaders underground this is difficult. Organisations cannot be controlled. I hope that students, for example, are learning the lessons about organisation - they have often made themselves easy targets in the past.'

'This boycott is an action that all people can participate in as individuals - they can make their own decisions', said an activist. Most of the demands may not be met, he said, but if people realise what the state is like they will be willing to struggle further.

One immediate gain, he said, was that people were demanding to be included in organisations. 'The Duncan Village Residents Association is going to be re-launched with a concrete programme of action, coloured areas are discussing the idea of civics, and youth organisations have many new members. The problem is how long these structures can survive without experienced leadership.'

WESTERN CAPE

Alliance with Traders

The success of the Western Cape consumer boycott is far more ambiguous than that in the Eastern Cape.

The boycott call originated in July, when an anonymous pamphlet appeared in black townships calling on people not to buy outside the townships. UDF township affiliates then called on other affiliated organisations to extend the

boycott to their own areas.

The Western Cape Consumer Action Committee was formed at a UDF co-ordinated meeting at the beginning of August. Participant organisations included the unions not affiliated to the UDF, the Cape Action League (CAL), Western Province Council of Sport (WPCOS), Thornhill Residents' and Youth

Associations, the Western Cape Youth League (WCYL), the Retail and Allied Workers Union (RAWU), the Clothing Workers Union (CLOWU), The Call of Islam, the Western Province Council of Churches, New Unity Movement (NUM), Al Jihad, the Plastic and Allied Workers Union, Sarepta Youth and Workers Organisation, District Six Interim Youth Movement, the AME Ministers Alliance, the Federation of Cape Civics and the Western Cape Students Action Committee.

Following the meeting, these organisations canvassed the boycott with their constituents, and a boycott of white retailers was officially launched on 14 August.

The Consumer Action Committee urged participant organisations to co-operate and form local committees overseeing day-to-day running of the boycott. Seventeen areas were named as targets, and by 7 September eight local committees had been set up in Bellville, Athlone, Woodstock, Bokaap, Elsies River, Ravensmead, Wynberg and Mitchells Plain.

UNION SUPPORT — ● —

As in the Eastern Cape, non-UDF unions were informed after the initial decision to launch the consumer boycott had been taken. A leading Cape Town unionist said that the unions had met to discuss problems, which included the racist nature of the call, and the fact that it excluded shops, particularly in coloured and Indian areas, where most traders were participants in government structures.

'A fair number of workers said they did not want to be told where they could buy, and that there was a danger of workers losing their jobs. Some believed a boycott should be a last resort after worker action, but we said a better solution was to redirect the existing boycott in a better direction,' a union organiser said.

BOYCOTT TARGETS — ● —

The initial call was for a boycott of all white and 'sell-out' shops: 'White

voters put this government into power and now they must pressurise them to meet our demands,' a community activist said.

Objections to this blanket call emerged, however, with some organisations on the Consumer Action Committee arguing that it had racist overtones and was impractical, in that many workers did not have access to black shops during shopping hours. Widespread inability to support the boycott would generate disunity, they felt.

On 25 August this grouping, which included the non-UDF unions and organisations connected to the New Unity Movement, proposed a selective boycott of national chain stores. They argued that big business has most influence with government, and belongs to bodies such as the Association of Chambers of Commerce, which supported the declaration of the state of emergency.

UDF-linked organisations argued in favour of a general boycott, along the lines of boycotts in other centres. They felt that people would be confused if the call was changed, and claimed that small businessmen also have political clout.

On 8 September, a vote in the Consumer Action Committee resulted in adoption of a selective boycott. A total of 19 shops, including major chainstores and some large local shops, were targeted for boycott.

A drawback was that some area committees confused the new list of shops to be boycotted, and provided no explanation as to why the boycott had been redirected.

The UDF remains unhappy about the change. According to UDF interim executive member Naseeg Jaffer, 'We will motivate for the decision to be reviewed on the basis that public meetings supported a broad boycott'. The UDF favours a 'targeted' boycott - in effect a general boycott with specific shops named as targets.

Jaffer maintains that this strategy accommodates union arguments, since 'if area conditions are such that people have to buy from white shops, then they should do so.'

But unionists argue that workers would be subject to intimidation in terms of such a strategy. 'There is a fair amount of fear and there are definitely some arbitrary groups who try to enforce the

boycott', said a union organiser.

As one unionist noted, there is now considerable confusion about reasons for the boycott. 'If the situation is not improved, people will turn against it. People wanting to shop will work out their own protection from those who want to stop them. And there is vandalism when searching people in the name of the boycott.'

At a boycott committee meeting on 6 October the UDF intended to propose a broad boycott of white shops where each region would decide if any shops were to be exempted. However, most union representatives did not attend the meeting. The New Unity Movement remained firm in insisting that a selective boycott be continued. A meeting between UDF and unions is planned but it seems unlikely that the union position has changed.

DEMANDS — ● —

Demands concern lifting the state of emergency, withdrawing the SADF and police from the townships, releasing political prisoners and detainees, lowering prices on basic foodstuffs, paying a living wage to every worker, and instituting a single parliament in a unitary and democratic South Africa.

'We are likely to call off the boycott if short-term demands - like lifting the state of emergency, that big business keeps prices of basic foods down, troops out of the townships and the release of detainees - are met', said Jaffer. He added that the boycott's duration also depended on people's ability to sustain it.

There is hope that some demands may be realised: 'The emergency has backfired on the state, and it is possible that big business could call for it to be lifted. Also getting the SADF out of the townships and freeing some detainees are not unrealisable in the present context of generalised political crisis', one unionist said.

TRADERS' CO-OPERATION — ● —

The Western Cape Traders Association, a

UDF affiliate, was called on to support the boycott. It was told members would be boycotted if they raised prices. The Association was co-operative: 'They have produced a poster listing static prices on basic goods,' said Jaffer.

The Western Cape Traders Association has advertised its support for the boycott in local newspapers, and produces a newsletter carrying statements from the UDF and the New Unity Movement. It has promised to supply carry-bags printed with boycott demands.

To minimise state harassment of delivery vehicles, traders propose co-operative bulk buying and delivery to ensure they all get supplies.

POLITICAL GAINS — ● —

The consumer boycott has had sporadic success in the Western Cape. The UDF claims success, particularly in working-class areas like Mitchells Plain, Mannenberg, Bonteheuwel, Bellville and the African townships. Lack of success in other areas is due to 'low levels of organisation so that people do not get the feeling they are participating in a mass action', Jaffer said. He admitted though that many activists had been drawn into the UDF and local organisations had suffered. The UDF consequently saw the need to decentralise and concentrate on local organisation.

Most unions are more cautious in claiming major successes. According to an organiser, 'There is no systematic monitoring of the situation so we have no clear idea of the degree of support. Monitoring is sporadic and impressionistic, and people's own desires probably affect their claims.'

Some impact is indicated by certain large chain stores' use of unmarked bags rather than those which advertise the shop, in an attempt to counteract the boycott. But Alan Lighton, director of the Cape Town Chamber of Commerce, denies any substantial effect in the Western Cape.

A unionist felt that there must be a drop in sales particularly in the furniture business: 'Now is the time of year people put down lay-bys in anticipation of Christmas bonuses. They

can't do this now. And furniture shops cannot send trucks into the townships because they would be burned, and people are afraid to buy because they do not want to see their new furniture burned.'

Another union organiser said that in many areas such as Bellville, boycott support work had been deflected by other activities. 'People had to resist the police presence, and a lot of time was taken up taking statements and dealing with the wounded.'

But this, together with the boycott, massively politicised the community in Bellville, the organiser said, and meetings are well attended by both youth and older people. 'Students are aware of the need to stand together with parents.'

A union leader raised problems about the Consumer Action Committee, saying that 'A large number of small activist organisations are able to overrule much

larger representative groupings. Most activists are very young and think differently from older people. The committee is not based on working-class leadership. The most worrying thing is the potential clash between youth and workers if no time limit is set to the boycott.'

Both non-UDF unions and UDF affiliates in the Western Cape view the Consumer Action Committee as a vehicle for potential political unity. The last occasion when opposing groups were brought together in a formal structure was on the Disorderly Bills Action Committee in 1982. 'For the first time people are debating politics, lines and matters of policy and coming to compromise positions', according to Jaffer. But some unionists believe the spirit of co-operation may soon wear thin.

PRETORIA

Creating a Public Conscience

The Pretoria boycott was launched on 9 August by the Pretoria UDF Area Committee. The Consumer Boycott Committee (CBC) was supported by the Soshanguve Youth Organisation, Ga-Rankuwa Youth Organisation, COSAS, the Azanian Students Organisation, the Atteridgeville/Saulsville Residents Association, the Soshanguve Residents Association, the Mamelodi Action Committee, the Zaheni Womens Club and by UDF-affiliated unions in the area including SAAWU, GWUSA, the Retail and Allied Workers Union and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA).

The boycott began on 10 August with a well-supported work stayaway. It was suspended on 26 August. Only then was the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) approached to join the committee, and is now involved in plans to rejuvenate the boycott.

To organise the boycott the CBC issued pamphlets and press statements. It contacted the Taxi Association, which helped distribute pamphlets and refused to transport anyone with parcels from white shops to the township. In the townships, youths monitored the buses and removed and destroyed groceries bought in town.

The UDF maintains that the stayaway

and consumer boycott were particularly successful in Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, and to a lesser extent in Soshanguve. Success was very limited in Ga-Rankuwa and Mabopane 'where there are fewer activists and people were not informed in time'.

The catalyst for the boycott, explains a UDF spokesperson for the CBC who does not wish to be named, was the death of Matthew Goniwe and three other UDF Eastern Cape leaders. This was aggravated by the detention and harassment of progressive activists, the declaration of the state of emergency and the continued refusal to meet the demands of protesting students: 'It was necessary to show the whites of Pretoria that we were dissatisfied with the government and its "reform" package and its refusal to examine our demands'.

BOYCOTT DEMANDS

CBC demands were both national and local. The former included an end to harassment, detention and unexplained deaths and disappearance of activists; the unconditional release of political

prisoners; the removal of police and SADF from the townships and the lifting of the state of emergency.

Also important was the demand that community councillors resign. Three councillors, including the mayor, resigned in Mamelodi, and the community hall was opened for meetings.

Other local demands concerned transport. In Soshanguve and Mabopane PUTCO's bus service was withdrawn, leaving the train as the only alternative. Residents felt that PUTCO provided a better service and demanded its reinstatement.

Another demand concerned the Pretoria City Council's proposed removal of the taxi rank from the city centre to the outskirts of the city. With the support of the community the Taxi Association went to court where judgement went against the city council.

There is some confusion as to the boycott targets. The UDF is adamant that the boycott was aimed at big business rather than white business in general. But Martin Ndaba, area organiser for the FOSATU-affiliated National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU), maintains the boycott feeds off an anti-white sentiment in the townships. It is thus perceived as being against white business and 'white fronts' (black businesses with substantial white interests).

The UDF organisers are clear that the political stance of business has changed and that the consumer boycott is an attempt to capitalise on this. 'Business is beginning to push the government for change. It is realising it has a role to play in getting rid of racial discrimination, like influx control and gutter education, that has for so long served its interests. The boycott will also make white business realise that it can participate in the liberation struggle. Workers and bosses cannot do without each other and one always has to control the other. Ultimately it must be the workers.'

COMMUNITY UNION RELATIONS

The organisation of the consumer boycott has brought old tensions into the open. The UDF organising committee argues that conflict over the May Day celebrations

lay behind the fact that FOSATU was not initially approached to join the boycott committee: 'FOSATU only looked at workers' problems in a workers' environment and that is why we could not work together'.

Ndaba is aware that the UDF sees non-affiliated unions as conservative: 'The UDF views us as a moderate grouping which does not want to get involved in community struggles - as so-called workerists. So we are not invited to participate in projects they initiate.' But, he points out, the two groupings are currently attempting to bridge differences by once again trying to work together.

And FOSATU itself is changing: 'Our demand for political rights for all South Africans shows a fundamental change in the FOSATU stance. Previously we always said we would use our power at the point of production to bring about changes and reforms. Now we are using another kind of economic weapon to pressure the state and making openly political demands', explains Ndaba.

The UDF believes this shift in direction is due to the imminent formation of the new trade union federation.

There are additional tensions in the area between NAAWU and the United African Motor and Allied Workers Union of South Africa, a CUSA affiliate. This involves friction generated by the union unity talks and also by what NAAWU sees as poaching by the CUSA-affiliated union.

BOYCOTT EVALUATIONS

FOSATU and the UDF differ in their reactions to the stayaway and the effect of the boycott on the middle classes. The UDF cites the stayaway as successful. But Ndaba objects that NAAWU was not consulted and though the union decided to support it, it also negotiated with management to accept the stayaway days as layoff days to 'ensure the stayaway was supported collectively'. Such agreements were made at Sigma and Silverton Engineering. The effects of the boycott on the community are also perceived differently. The UDF spokesperson explained that 'people are more

conscientised than before, and realise that apartheid and capitalism must be replaced with other ideologies and practices.'

Charles Nthite, acting regional secretary for NAAWU, is more cautious. 'The long-term goals of the consumer boycott are educative and conscientising. The aim is to mobilise the community against the terrible actions of the government and to create a public conscience.'

Ndaba agrees: 'The boycott will change people's conceptions of the system, causing them, for example, to realise that the police and army are not peacekeepers or protectors and serve the state'.

The UDF spokesperson also argues that the boycott was important in showing the black middle class where their interests lie. 'The government created a black middle class which forgets the problems of its brothers and sisters. We need a strategy to counter this. The consumer boycott can create this unity.'

Ndaba is more dubious about the unifying potential of the boycott. 'Whether the middle class sees its interests allied with the working class depends on the individual. Many businessmen will support the boycott to

make money and protect their business and property, not because they necessarily support the demands of the boycott.'

RELATIONS WITH TRADERS

Boycott committee overtures to businessmen were rendered difficult as traders face pressure from the police. In Brits, a meeting was called by the CBC with local Indian businessmen to 'see who was against the system' in order not to boycott them. But police warned traders not to attend and the meeting was called off.

When the boycott was suspended on 26 August, organisers decided to draw up a price list to prevent traders 'ripping off customers'. A series of meetings was held with businessmen on 31 August, 5 September and 15 September, where traders agreed to try to compete with the wholesale prices.

The boycott committee has now regrouped but there is still confusion in the Pretoria townships as to whether the boycott is presently being observed or not.

JOHANNESBURG

Tactical Differences

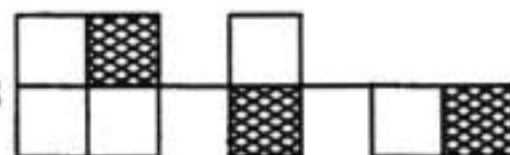
The boycott in the Johannesburg area has thusfar met with little success. But a UDF spokesperson on the boycott committee maintains that 'businesses will not admit to being hit, as they do not want to be alarmist. The media also plays it down or ignores it. But if you go into supermarkets you will see a decline in trade'.

National Forum (NF) secretary general Lusiba Ntloko is one of those who argues that until recently, 'the boycott committee was uncontrolled and unorganised. The UDF committee launched the consumer boycott without consulting other organisations'.

A grouping of 16 UDF affiliates, including Young Christian Students, COSAS, the Azanian Students Organisation, the Release Mandela Committee, the Federation of Transvaal Women, the Anti-Presidents Council, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the End

Conscription Campaign and the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee began to discuss a consumer boycott early in July. They agreed to canvass support among other organisations, including the Council of Churches and the Domestic Workers and Employers Project.

UNION INITIATIVES



Following the declaration of the state of emergency on 20 July, open organisation became more difficult, and resulted in oversights like the exclusion of the independent unions and other unaffiliated organisations. However, the UDF committee decided to call for a consumer boycott to start on 12 August.

Jethro Dlalisa of FOSATU's Transport and General Workers Union and secretary of the Johannesburg local shop stewards council, outlined events: 'Our Johannesburg local was not happy with the UDF boycott call because other organisations of the oppressed people and worker organisations were not consulted for co-operation. Nonetheless, we decided to support the call for the consumer boycott. But we felt the organisational base of the boycott needed to be broadened. On 7 September we held a meeting of representatives from the UDF, FOSATU, the NF, the Azanian Peoples Organisation, Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions, the Azanian National Youth Unity, the Council of Unions of South Africa, the Food and Canning Workers Union and the National Union of Mineworkers to discuss intensifying the boycott through the joint efforts of all political, trade union and civic organisations.'

The UDF boycott committee spokesperson, however, maintains that the UDF 'called on them when they were about to call on us. It is not important who called the campaign. If it is progressive then we will support it.'

Such a broad range of organisations made 'tactical differences' inevitable. Problems were aired at the first joint meeting on 7 September. They were resolved at a meeting a week later, when the Consumer Boycott Co-ordinating Committee was formed.

First came a disagreement over the structure of the committee. The UDF felt that in view of the security situation, no more than ten people should sit on the committee. The existing UDF committee consisted of seven people and FOSATU felt that an additional three representatives would not make it fully representative.

The solution was to create a sub-committee representing all organisations, responsible to the ten-person co-ordinating committee.

Another debate concerned allowing delivery trucks into the townships. Dlalisa explained: 'We wanted the usual retailers to continue to deliver goods - if there is no supply of food to the townships then people will break the boycott. And once it is decided that trucks should not be hit, then there must be discipline'.

The UDF argued that trucks are immediate targets as they are white-

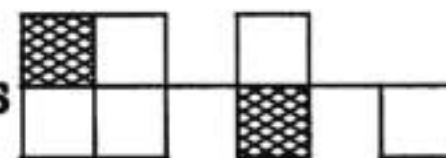
owned and provoke frustration and anger 'from people who are not highly politicised but are concerned. It is not our duty to tell them not to stone or burn delivery trucks. We can only explain to them why. Businesses should get their own trucks and buy in bulk collectively. It would be an education for them too.'

At the heart of these disputes, it appears, lie different conceptions of struggle, one based on spontaneous mass action, the other on tight grassroots organisation. On monitoring and co-ordinating the boycott, Dlalisa commented: 'Workers should be in control, because they are more disciplined and have structures to work through. They would not cause friction among the oppressed people.'

The NF agrees: 'Monitoring the boycott should not be left in the hands of the youth. Workers should assume a greater role - a new local structure should be established,' said Ntloko.

Though it participates in the committee, the NF is critical of the consumer boycott's potential as a tactic. Ntloko argues that it is reformist: 'A union fights for better conditions for workers within the confines of capitalism; it is not a revolutionary organisation. But a political organisation must fight for the overhaul of the status quo. The consumer boycott does not make any effective gains in terms of liberation.'

DEMANDS AND OBJECTIVES



During the first joint meeting the demands of the boycott were discussed. In addition to the three national demands, FOSATU argued for inclusion of the demand, adopted by all 'federation' unions, for political rights for all South Africans. It was finally agreed to leave it out as it was not immediately realisable.

The committee's UDF spokesperson explained that 'in earlier boycotts, demands were often too ambitious, such as the one calling for the dismantling of apartheid. Our demands are now short-term demands that can be met, and will give people a sense of achievement. This boycott is better organised and our goals are clearer'.

Another weakness the NF perceives is that the boycott of white business cannot be total: 'Black traders still have to buy from white stockists and manufacturers. White business can hit back, for example by withholding supplies. If there is no food in the townships, people will quickly break the boycott.'

Consequently, the NF favours the stayaway as opposed to the consumer boycott tactic, arguing that the former 'can contribute to long-term change and employers cannot hit back. It shows that the country is dependent on the black working class and without it the country will crumble.'

The UDF spokesperson maintains that this argument is based on a misunderstanding of the aims of the consumer boycott - which are to conscientise the white community and establish an alliance with black businessmen.

'The boycott is a way of making the white community aware and concerned about what is happening in the townships. It may look racist, but this is because of the nature of apartheid. Whites must be conscientised about what is happening in their country so they can demand change too'.

He adds that the boycott ties into the End Conscription Campaign as 'we are calling for the army to get out of the townships, and it is the whites whose children are in the townships.'

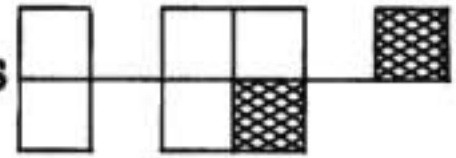
He argues that as the boycott is aimed at whites, it does not matter that black businessmen still buy from white retailers. Nor does it matter if the boycott hits the small white shopkeeper, rather than big business, hardest: 'They too vote for the government and have children in the army.' Dlalisa adds: 'If they lose a bit of income through the boycott it will force them to think about what is happening. We want them to feel the pain and do something.'

UDF and unions agree that pressure on white business is central. The UDF spokesperson explained: 'Apartheid is made for white business. So if they feel it is no longer productive, they will change it.'

Dlalisa adds that white business knows that without black support it cannot survive. 'Revolution is coming and they need to secure their position'. But should white business refuse to negotiate with the government then 'we

will go for a national stayaway which will hurt harder than the boycott.'

RELATIONS WITH TRADERS



Township shops are notorious for overcharging. The boycott committee maintains that traders mark up their goods by 40%. Dlalisa agrees that the traders do profit from the boycott. 'Customers do suffer but they buy less and then only necessities. In any war situation there must be victims. We can make sacrifices for a better life.'

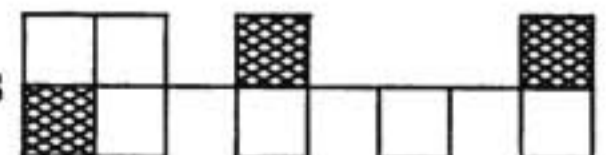
For the UDF spokesperson the role of black businessman in the boycott is far more significant. As a group they are isolated by apartheid, he argues, and their grievances make it possible for them to 'co-operate with us for now. The boycott is drawing them into the national democratic struggle. They do not have a good image, but we are trying to bring them under our discipline and sow division in the apartheid state.'

But alliance with the democratic movement must be on its own terms: 'They must lower their prices, accept that the status quo must change and play a constructive role by joining our existing organisations like civics.'

The boycott committee's first step in promoting this alliance was to meet black businessmen to ask them to reduce their prices and conform with a price list drawn up by the committee.

But after pledges of support were given in Tembisa, several businessmen were detained and seven shops closed down on 30 August in terms of emergency regulations. The traders were eventually released after the intervention of NAFCOC. To prevent further intimidation, meetings are now conducted with more caution.

POLITICAL GAINS



The UDF spokesperson maintains that UDF is spearheading the movement from 'organisation to mobilisation', taking people beyond protest politics, achieving a mass politicisation and clarification of popular goals which did not occur in 1976 or in the early 1980s.

'Among short-term gains, we can already see a change of mind amongst whites and the business sector. Even the government's increasingly frantic reform rhetoric shows the effect unrest is having. And their white constituency

accepts the rhetoric at least.'

Dlalisa concludes that the boycott will build organisational strength and co-operation, enabling campaigns for long-term demands to be systematically undertaken.

PIETERMARITZBURG

Unions take the Lead

YUNUS CARRIM gives an early impression of boycott events in Howick and Pietermaritzburg.

Possibly the most effective consumer boycott outside the Eastern Cape was in Pietermaritzburg. It was organised specifically around local demands: for the reinstatement of 950 BTR Sarmcol workers in Howick and the signing of a recognition agreement with their union, the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). Launched on 15 August and ended on 26 September, the boycott did not achieve these ends. But it demonstrated to a wide cross-section of white Pietermaritzburg the power of black consumers.

A survey by the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce revealed that in the first two weeks of the boycott, white businesses experienced a 60-70% drop in turnover. This varied with the type and locality of business. Even John Orr's and The Hub, not highly reliant on black custom, admitted to a 15% drop. Most large supermarket chains refused to comment and referred all queries to their head offices, which also gave no definite answers.

A MAWU spokesperson said a monitoring committee believed that the boycott of white businesses varied between 30% and 90%. Large supermarkets in the Indian area reported an average of 25% turnover increase. Indian businesses in the mainly white Central Business District and others in the Indian area of the city complained of lost turnover as the boycott kept consumers out of the city.

Despite few precise details, the boycott was clearly effective for at least three weeks. It then tapered off and was officially called off at the end of the sixth week. Organisations supporting it began discussions to end it in the fourth week.

Support for the boycott arose in the course of the sustained campaign over

the preceding three and a half months by unions and community organisations to win the Sarmcol workers' struggle.

SARMCOL DISPUTE

On 30 April, 950 MAWU members went on strike at BTR Sarmcol in Howick (20 km from Pietermaritzburg). The dispute was over terms of a recognition agreement. On 3 May all 950 were fired, and at a mass meeting they launched a consumer boycott of all white businesses in Howick from 6 May. The objective was to cause business to pressurise Sarmcol to reinstate workers and recognise MAWU.

In Howick, a supermarket owner reported a 50% drop in takings in the first two days. One business closed and several others feared possible closure. A local businessman pleaded with strikers at a mass meeting not to treat him as white and donated R200 to their cause. Businessmen complained whites from outlying areas feared to come into town.

The boycott was successful because Howick is a small town with a cohesive, united black community and a strong MAWU presence. Sarmcol workers are a significant proportion of the township workforce and white business relies strongly on township custom.

But Sarmcol management refused to budge, and employed scab labour from Pietermaritzburg and surrounding areas.

Taking their struggle to Pietermaritzburg, workers met community organisations and church groups to raise material and political support. Black, and particularly Indian, businessmen were approached for donations in cash or kind, and asked to provide basic groceries to the support fund at reasonable prices. Response was good.

The Pietermaritzburg public was forced

to notice the Sarmcol struggle, when during peak shopping hours on Saturday 29 June a convoy of ten buses of striking workers jammed main street traffic. Posters, leaflets and stickers were distributed to explain the struggle and appeal against scab labour.

On 6 July, at a 2 000-strong mass meeting, union and community organisation representatives endorsed a FOSATU proposal for a one-day stayaway if the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce did not get Sarmcol to negotiate with MAWU. It did not, and the stayaway took place on 18 July. Some 92% of African workers and 70% of all workers, including whites, stayed away. Township schools were boycotted and 80% of all black businesses were shut.

Still Sarmcol management would not budge. Unions and community organisations then discussed FOSATU's proposal for a consumer boycott. Because of this threat and the success of the stayaway, the town mayor and the Chamber of Commerce invited MAWU and community organisations to a meeting. MAWU was criticised for organising the stayaway and urged not to extend the struggle to Pietermaritzburg. Chamber representatives said they could not influence Sarmcol to meet the union, but agreed to try to set up a meeting between MAWU and the company. There was a meeting but Sarmcol rejected all MAWU's proposals. The consumer boycott went ahead.

DEBATING LOCAL TACTICS

Momentum for the boycott came out of the preceding months of struggle and was propelled by violent confrontations between people and police, and between strikers and scabs. Three were killed and scores arrested. Five strikers have been jailed for up to a year for 'violent intimidation'. Other cases are pending.

Added to the momentum was the declaration of the state of emergency, the UDF-proposed national consumer boycott, Victoria Mxenge's death, a schools' boycott and a defiant, militant youth.

The goal of the boycott was debated. The unions and the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa

(APDUSA) supported a boycott based on the Sarmcol issue. The UDF and its affiliates felt that lifting of the state of emergency should be included as a demand immediately, to reflect the militant township mood. It argued for inclusion of a demand for the release of all detainees including those detained during the stayaway. The issues could not be separated, the UDF believed, and inclusion of such demands linked the union and political struggles. The UDF said that to mobilise maximum support, demands appealing to the widest number of people should be included.

The unions responded that if the Sarmcol and emergency demands were linked, Sarmcol management could respond that even if workers were reinstated, the boycott would continue until the emergency was lifted. Management would say pressure should be brought to bear on the government, rather than Sarmcol. MAWU also felt the Sarmcol struggle was at a crucial stage and needed intensified effort as management showed signs of giving in. MAWU stressed that it recognised that the state of emergency was a major issue, but a co-ordinated national strategy was necessary to combat it. Unions were discussing national action, and local unions had no mandate unilaterally to support a boycott over national issues.

MAWU argued that local dynamics should dictate the terms of the boycott. 'The specific way we combat the state of emergency is through the Sarmcol issue', said a union organiser.

COMPROMISE

Unions and the UDF compromised, deciding to launch a consumer boycott based on Sarmcol demands for the first ten days. It would then be reviewed to see if lifting the emergency and related issues should be added as demands. The boycott would begin on 15 August, and they set no date for its conclusion.

Organisations committed to the boycott were: FOSATU; CCAWUSA; GWU; the UDF and affiliates, especially COSAS, the Natal Indian Congress and various youth and civic organisations; National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA); Detainees Support Committee (DESCOM); APDUSA; the Azanian Students Movement (AZASM);

Lawyers for Democracy; Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA); and the Pietermaritzburg Youth Cultural Society.

About 70 000 leaflets and 30 000 stickers in English and Zulu advertised the boycott of white business. Black businessmen were approached, informed of the boycott and asked not to use it as an opportunity to profiteer. They responded positively.

A monitoring committee representing unions and community organisations was set up. It administered the boycott in terms of mandates from weekly joint union and community meetings. Decisions at FOSATU shop steward council meetings provided direction for the joint meetings.

Several community organisations complained they had not been properly consulted during planning of the stayaway, but concerted consultation over the boycott between unions and community organisations helped alleviate these tensions.

THE BOYCOTT SPREADS

Pietermaritzburg is a relatively small town and most white business is situated in a central business district. There are a fair number of alternative black businesses even though they do not match white business in variety or prices.

On 24 August a 2 500-strong mass meeting endorsed continuation of the boycott based on the Sarmcol issue. On 2 September, largely on FOSATU and other unions' initiative, consumer boycotts were launched in Durban, Pinetown and Hammarsdale to oppose the state of emergency and related issues. These boycotts did not take up the demands of the Sarmcol workers. In the event, the Pietermaritzburg boycott never formally included demands relating to the state of emergency. But as other Natal union branches did, popular perception probably linked the Pietermaritzburg boycott with the state of emergency.

The Durban boycott appears to have been least effective, but it was evidently successful in Hammarsdale and particularly in Pinetown. The crisis in Inanda, the confrontations between Inkatha and progressive township organisations and the spate of arrests of activists contributed to limiting the

boycott's success in Durban. It was called off on 6 October.

By the time the Durban boycott was called, the Pietermaritzburg boycott was flagging. After the mass meeting on 24 August, there were no further attempts to consolidate it. Money had run out, and township community organisations were in disarray. Confrontations with police and the need to escape detention hampered activists. And confrontations with Inkatha took a severe toll. Many activists fled their homes and open campaigning around the boycott was impossible.

Inkatha was not prepared to support the boycott because it had not been consulted, but did say that it sympathised with the plight of the Sarmcol workers. It believed consumer boycotts were a legitimate and powerful non-violent strategy but said the time was not right. Inkatha said a boycott had to be nationally co-ordinated and planned and must have majority support.

The Inyanda Chamber of Commerce, an organisation of businessmen affiliated to Inkatha, was stridently against the boycott. Its president, PG Gumede, 'declared war' on FOSATU and called on Inkatha in Pietermaritzburg to 'crush' the boycott. He urged consumers to 'flock' to the city centre on Saturday 28 September, assuring them that Inkatha would protect them against 'intimidation'. Gumede said KwaZulu's Chief Buthelezi made it plain that FOSATU's persistence with the boycott was a challenge to Inkatha and to his own leadership.

The Pietermaritzburg chairman of Inkatha and secretary of Inyanda disassociated themselves from Gumede's statements. But the Inyanda Chamber of Commerce local secretary had said earlier that Inyanda did not support the boycott. African traders did not benefit but Indian traders did, he said.

A pamphlet jointly produced by the the Pietermaritzburg City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Afrikaanse Sakekamer was air-dropped over African townships. Entitled 'Boycotts Harm You', it stressed that boycotts 'hurt you and your family first', drive business away and lead to price increases and unemployment. Four editorials over seven weeks in the Natal Witness echoed the same sentiment and repeatedly suggested that intimidation was endemic to consumer boycotts.

ENDING THE BOYCOTT

The boycott was called off on 26 September, after two weeks of discussions. Organisations involved in it stressed that they had not succumbed to Gumede's threats. In the discussions CCAWUSA workers said management had threatened them with retrenchments if the boycott persisted. They suggested calling off the boycott and organising another stayaway in which CCAWUSA members would not be singled out for victimisation. But already the boycott was beginning to peter out, and there was no sign that the Sarmcol management was prepared to give in.

At a meeting on 19 September, the majority of union members suggested that the boycott be called off. The UDF felt that this would discourage those boycotting in other areas, and suggested that it be revitalised. The unions argued that local dynamics should dictate whether the boycott continued or not, but the UDF was asked to investigate the possibility of financing the necessary leaflets and investing more energy into the campaign. But at the next meeting on 24 September, the UDF agreed with other organisations that the boycott be called off.

Some 30 000 leaflets were distributed informing people of the end of the boycott. The leaflet was reproduced as an advertisement in the Natal Witness. It said that 'the boycott has achieved one of its main objectives - namely to focus attention on the struggle of the Sarmcol workers, and no useful purpose is to be served by prolonging it. At the appropriate time we will decide to resume the boycott should we consider it to be in the interests of the Sarmcol workers'.

White businesses were clearly jolted by the boycott and did put pressure on Sarmcol to negotiate with MAWU - but Sarmcol was intransigent. The Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce said that the boycott made it realise

'the need for increased dialogue and negotiation on the socio-economic situation' with organisations supported by the black community.

The boycott also had lessons for those organising it. Clearly it was important to consult properly with black traders around practical issues like sufficient and appropriate stock. Also, black traders did not match white businesses in prices and goods range, leading to considerable sacrifice by consumers.

To succeed, a consumer boycott must maintain broad support, which calls for more delicate balancing of competing interests than in other popular campaigns. Prospects for inculcating working class content into a consumer boycott campaign are limited, because workers, particularly those in the commercial sector, are most vulnerable in such a class alliance: their jobs are at risk and they are less able to support a long-term boycott. Also, women in the community bear the brunt of immediate material consequences of a consumer boycott.

But the fact that in Pietermaritzburg, the unions and the Congress, Unity Movement and Black Consciousness traditions held together for the first time ever, is a positive precedent.

The Pietermaritzburg boycott provided opportunity for democratic exchange among a wide variety of organisations. There were tensions. Unions suggested that community organisations offered more rhetorical than practical support. Community organisations felt the unions exerted too-rigid control, not allowing the former space to operate more effectively. But both now understand better the dynamics, structures, strengths and weaknesses of the other. This will allow more realistic expectations of each other in struggles waged together in future.

The central political and organisational question which emerges is surely that of the relationship between trade unions and community organisations.

SMALL TOWNS

Local Demands Dominate

ADELAIDE

The boycott started on 6 May. Organisations involved were the Adelaide

Youth Congress, the Womens Association, the Residents Association, and COSAS. Youth Congress meetings were banned in

the town.

The first meeting between town and township (those invited included individual community councillors as well as UDF-affiliated groups) was held on 25 June. However, the Adelaide mayor refused to discuss the consumer boycott at the meeting. UDF affiliates refused to attend a follow-up meeting on 9 July because of police raids in which 100 people were arrested, and because they had not yet reported back to their community. In July the Youth Congress said it would continue the boycott until next year. By mid-August, according to the Adelaide mayor, the boycott had 'petered out'.

FORT BEAUFORT

A call to boycott all white shops was made on 14 July. Demands included withdrawal of troops from local townships, provision of a community hall, a sports stadium, tarred roads, adequate water supplies and improved schooling facilities. Township residents claimed police were closing local shops to force them to buy in town. As a result, illegal 'backyard shops' provide people with basic goods. Some people formed societies to buy food in nearby Ciskeian villages.

GRAAF-REINET

By 4 September the boycott had ended. The local Chamber of Commerce placed a newspaper advertisement inviting black people to meet with them to discuss grievances.

GRAHAMSTOWN

On Monday, 2 September, Grahamstown's African townships began the third consumer boycott of all white businesses this year. All three boycotts were called by the Grahamstown Burial Action Committee (GBAC). The first boycott lasted one week in May. The second, a selective boycott of six or eight shops, was called in June and lasted some weeks.

The third boycott was called for four months. Most demands focused on local township conditions like housing, sewerage and electricity. Some of the 34

demands posed by the GBAC in the June boycott included: new school buildings; tarred roads; houses for the aged; community halls; creches; parks and playgrounds; public telephones; a public library; an end to bucket toilet system; an end to petty apartheid; a night school; trading sites for hawkers; living wages; an end to evictions; an end to victimisation and harassment.

Some demands added during the present boycott are: teacher training facilities for black matriculants; an end to discrimination at the local hospital; equalisation of black pensions with white; township sport facilities; an end to victimisation of employees who belong to political organisations.

The boycott was almost immediately successful and the local newspaper reported that at least two businesses had been forced to close down, and other businesses had experienced substantial losses. A clothing store feared that it would lose R36 000 per month, and some smaller shops were taking in less than R50 per day. Indian businessmen, because of their involvement in the tricameral system, are also being boycotted.

The boycott is being actively supported by a group of 150 Grahamstown whites, who are organising co-operative buying schemes with shops exempt from the boycott.

There have been negotiations between the Grahamstown Chamber of Commerce and the GBAC. The Chamber also consulted with security forces but reported that only when violence, boycotts and stone throwing in the townships had subsided would the state of emergency be lifted.

No township shops have been closed, but trading hours have been reorganised. Shops are closed on Wednesday afternoons and must close early on Saturday and are shut on Sundays. They open later and close earlier on other days. This, together with the curfew - officially from 10 pm - means that people have great difficulty getting to shops before or after work.

KING WILLIAMSTOWN

The boycott began about the beginning of August. President of the local Chamber of Commerce, Isaac de Meyer, said the boycott had been 60% successful. He said a few shops were having a 'very bad time' but that he was unaware of any

closures. The Chamber attempted to set up negotiations with boycott organisers but 'no one knows who they are'.

PARYS

Residents of Tumahole township began a boycott of white business on 12 August. Organisers appealed to businessmen to secure the reinstatement of workers sacked from two Parys firms after a funeral stayaway.

PORT ALFRED

A consumer boycott began in the first week of June. The black community made 20 demands, one of which was the release of community leader Gugile Nkwinti. White civic leaders formed an employers federation to negotiate with local black leaders. Nkwinti was released on 14 June, and on 20 June he presented community demands at a public meeting.

The employers federation agreed to act on local issues and would support the other demand in liaison with government authorities. The community accepted this and agreed not to penalise white business for conditions 'beyond their control'. Further meetings were arranged with the local Chamber of Commerce and the Eastern Cape Development Board.

An important demand posed to the development board was that the township be placed under local municipality management. This proposal has been taken to the Department of Constitutional Development. The boycott was then called off.

On 15 September township students called for new boycott. Community leader Gugile Nkwinti's position is unclear, as he was reported both as overruling the student's call and also as supporting it. Shortly after this call was made he was re-detained. The boycott is reportedly not highly successful.

POTCHEFSTROOM

Ikageng township has observed a boycott since early August. The primary demand was for reinstatement of 436 workers fired from the Triomf Fertilizer plant, and of municipal workers who lost their jobs during a union recognition dispute. The boycott ended when workers were

reinstated.

QUEENSTOWN

The boycott began on 12 August. Business attempts at negotiation with black leaders broke down. R15-m for upliftment of local black townships has been approved by Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Affairs but 'for many local businessmen it is already too late'.

Almost all demands were local:

- * people evicted for not paying rent should get their houses back;
- * no further rent increases without consultation;
- * toilets and taps be provided in back yards;
- * improved school conditions; and
- * scrapping of lodgers' fees.

A demand to renovate Umlungise sports stadium cannot be met at present because construction firms are unable to enter the township.

In the week of 23 September a 100% successful work stayaway was held. Afterwards at least 100 workers were fired. The Queenstown Chamber of Commerce has asked ASSOCOM to approach the government for financial aid for businesses facing liquidation.

WITBANK

Local shops were reportedly 'severely affected' by the consumer boycott. COSAS called a successful work stayaway in support of detained students.

WORCESTER

Mass meetings to launch and publicise the boycott were held in Zwelenthemba township in August. Support in the coloured area is limited, as measured in monitoring chain stores. OK Bazaars and Checkers reported a substantial drop in turnover since mid-August because of the boycott.

Boycotts have also been reported in Krugersdorp, Cathcart, Kirkwood, Cradock, Stutterheim, Alexandria, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Springs and Uitenhage.

Little to be Thankful for

Just outside the small Karoo town of Colesberg lies the township of Bongweni. Loosely translated, it means 'the thanking place'. Part of the north-eastern Cape, the area falls outside the formally proclaimed state of emergency. But the residents of Bongweni tell a story very similar to numerous other descriptions of township life under siege, of police shootings and beatings, of violence and counter violence, of medical collusion with police, of teargas and death.

While the residents of Bongweni indicate support and enthusiasm for the UDF, their concerns and campaigns have - like many small townships - involved local rather than national issues.

Unemployment in the area is high. Bongweni residents estimate it at 75%. Those who are employed are poorly paid. Workers in the local Colesberg hotels earn R87 per month. They used to get a monthly bonus of R25 as well - but since a consumer boycott started in the area, management has cut this. Domestic wages range between R40 and R50 a month. The highest paid workers in the area, employed by ESCOM, earn wages of between R300 and R400 a month. But ESCOM employs very few.

Bearing in mind the level of wages and unemployment, rents are high. Old houses, some of them little more than shacks, are rented at R17,40 per month; new houses cost R31,10 per month. Rental includes an electricity charge, but the township has none. And it was around rents and township facilities that the people of Bongweni began mobilising earlier this year.

On 16 June, following a community meeting, the Colesberg Action Committee put forward ten demands to the Bantu Affairs Administration Board. These concerned high rents, bad roads, clinic facilities, electricity, lack of sports fields, water provision, and the bucket system of sanitation used.

The Bantu Affairs Board was given two weeks to respond to the demands. By 2 July, no reply had been received. But

on that day, soldiers tried to set up camp outside the township. Youths prevented this by stoning the camp.

On 3 July, police entered the township, firing tear gas. Residents allege that four infants were killed by the effects of the gas.

Township anger grew, and later the same day, youths marched on the township house of a black policeman, pushed his car into the street, and set fire to it. That night, groups of youths moved around the streets, singing and chanting. At about 8-00 pm, police in Casspirs and vans entered the township. When youths approached the house of another black policeman, SAP colleagues inside the house opened fire on the group, killing four. A thirty year old woman received a head wound, leaving her mentally confused. She is currently in jail awaiting trial, having contravened her bail conditions by forgetting to report to the local police station.

Early next morning, 4 July, a crowd returned to the policeman's house, removed possessions from it, and burnt them in the street. That night police again swept through the township firing tear gas, and arrested 79 residents. This raid lasted through the night, police only leaving Bongweni at 5-00 the next morning. Residents allege that, throughout the raid a 15-year old township youth was with police, pointing out people who were then beaten.

Those arrested were taken to the police station: about sixty children and youths were placed in one cell, 11 male adults in another, and all women into a third. According to township residents, police assaulted those in custody. The policeman whose car had been burnt allegedly participated in the assaults. Some of those arrested were taken individually from the cells to be questioned and beaten, while others were assaulted in the cells. Periodically, police threw tear gas into the cells. More than ten people had to be taken to hospital suffering from the effects of the gas.

On 5 July, all township residents stayed away from work. At a meeting, they resolved to begin a consumer boycott of white businesses the next day, to be continued until the Bantu Affairs Board met their demands. The boycott, however, was selective. Owners of four businesses who had previously been sympathetic to township residents, were not boycotted.

Saturday, 20 July was a tense day in the area. Matthew Goniwe, UDF rural organiser for the area, and three other murdered UDF activists were being buried in Cradock. Two days later, on 22 July, township residents allege that police attacked a group of school children singing freedom songs while returning to classes after a lunch break. As they walked from the new to the old location a white policeman saw them, and telephoned for police reinforcements.

After lunch, the children were returning to school. As they passed Rev Mcoyana's house, he warned them that police were waiting close by, and urged them to go no further. While the minister was talking to the children, the police contingent arrived. As the station commander began addressing the crowd, two police opened fire with birdshot. The station commander ordered them to stop firing at once - but 14 people, including Rev Mcoyana, were injured.

The wounded were taken to hospital, and subsequently to police cells where they were charged with attending an illegal gathering. The wounded priest was hospitalised for over a week, and also charged. Minors were released into the custody of their parents, but bail of between R300 and R1 000 was set for four accused.

On Friday, 23 August, the Tandabantu general dealer - a store exempt from the boycott - was burgled in suspicious circumstances. Shortly afterwards, police ordered its closure. Another general dealer exempt from the boycott was closed by police. Both were reopened on 27 August.

Residents claim that, as part of a campaign of harassment, authorities shut off the township water system for a few hours at the end of August.

At the start of the consumer boycott, barricades were erected at the township entrances. On 26 August, police entered the township, ordering those at home to take down the barricades, and children to go to school. Residents allege that, during this raid, a number of people were assaulted by quirt-wielding police.

After a period of relative quiet, two community leaders were arrested and charged with intimidation relating to the consumer boycott. On the same day - 23 September - the house of a suspected informer was stoned while plainclothes police were present in the house.

Two days later, the suspected informer was seen in a car with police, and youths attempted to stop the car. The next day, Thursday 26 September, a group of youths again tried to confront the alleged informer at her house. Two days later, the alleged informer's husband approached the Action Committee, insisting that his wife had not passed on any information to the police, and that he personally supported the consumer boycott. The Action Committee, in return, tried to persuade the youth to cease attacks on the woman. But early in October, she was caught by a group of youths, stabbed and set on fire. As police arrived on the scene, she managed to escape before a burning tyre could be placed over her. But a few days later she died in hospital.

Bongweni residents are not the only consumers in the area on boycott. A Colesberg hotel exempt from the township boycott has been black-listed by white Colesberg residents. But the owners are happy with the situation, saying their black trade is more profitable than previous white patronage. All hotel facilities are now open to blacks.

But not all businesses exempt from the boycott are as fortunate. Community leaders allege that police sent an inspector to the Kayaletu general dealer, and as a result his cafe licence was withdrawn.

Township leaders say the boycott will continue until demands submitted to the Bantu Affairs Board are met. And in a sign of the times, a new demand has been added: satisfactory inquests into the deaths of all those shot by the police.

UDF Under Attack

Inkatha attacks on UDF supporters are not new. But the recent clashes, involving an increased level of Inkatha violence, raise important organisational questions in Natal. RICHARD DE VILLIERS discusses some implications of the continuing conflict.

United Democratic Front treasurer and political lawyer Victoria Mxenge was assassinated on 1 August 1985 outside her house in Umlazi, Durban. By 13 August violence throughout the Durban area had left 63 dead and about 1 000 injured. Over 42 shops and shopping complexes were looted and burned, and many dozens of homes destroyed.

Youth 'rampaged' through the Umlazi and Kwa Mashu townships, setting up roadblocks, stoning police and burning down administration board offices. Indians and Africans clashed in a series of riots in the Inanda/Phoenix area. The Gandhi settlement on the outskirts of Phoenix was destroyed. Many companies closed early on 8 and 9 August. And several schools had total boycotts. Leaders and representatives of all political persuasions publicly expressed fears of another Zulu/Indian race riot like that of 1949.

On the face of it, it is difficult to link these events with Mxenge's assassination. Initial explanations ranged from assertions about 'agitators' whipping up feelings among an essentially passive populace, to declarations that 'the people have had enough'. But these explanations are too superficial.

There is proof that a mob of Inkatha supporters surrounded Mxenge's home, and threatened to burn it down the day before her funeral. Winnington Sabelo, KwaZulu Legislative Assembly member for Umlazi, also led an impi against a group of mourners at a funeral of unrest victims on 17 August.

The exact significance of these incidents in the overall picture is not clear. One factor, however, which underlines the bloody fortnight is the relationship between Inkatha and the UDF.

Since the formation of the UDF in Natal, both organisations have seen each other as rivals. More than that, they have attacked and condemned each other persistently in the media and on public platforms.

One of the first issues Natal UDF contested was the murder of UDF-supporting students on the Zululand University campus towards the end of 1984. This set the tone for an extremely antagonistic relationship between the organisations.

The UDF and Inkatha had already rejected the new constitutional deal and the Koornhof Bills. Both were committed in principle to a national convention - as expressed by the UDF at its Rocklands launch and Chief Buthelezi in a recent statement. They also protested against the increase in the bread price. In spite of these similarities, the organisations never attempted to work together on these issues. In fact spokespersons for both organisations were at pains to deny any possible common ground. Each continually insisted that their anti-Koornhof Bills campaign and anti-bread price campaign were different. The relationship remained antagonistic.

Despite these campaigns, and the heightened level of political awareness throughout the country, neither organisation was able to tackle its own serious grassroots organisational problems.

The UDF lacked organisational structures but had tremendous potential support. Inkatha, though it had strong organisational structures, drew on, at best, ambivalent support.

Apologists for both organisations would deny these charges, and no doubt there are variations and subtleties according to class, age and area. But

the general trend seems that Inkatha was weakly supported in the greater Durban area and the UDF was poorly organised in the African townships.

Inkatha's mode of organisation shows many of the characteristics of the fascist political movements which emerged in Europe after the depression in 1929. Ideologically, appeals to symbols of Zulu nationalism and anti-Indian rhetoric are obvious examples. However, more significant is its mode of organisation. Patronage based on the provision of jobs to civil servants and trading licences to small businesses, the 'gauleiter' system of neighbourhood cells, and a private army (the amabutho) not averse to using force against recalcitrant 'supporters', are very similar to the mode of organisation of Hitler's Nazi party. Street violence of the 1930s has its echo in Durban of the 1980s.

The UDF in Natal is difficult to categorise. Unlike many mass-based left-inclined organisations around the world, it has no relationship with powerful worker organisations and trade unions. At the outset, SAAWU affiliated to the Front, but had its own problems of leadership. The Natal UDF made little effort to forge links with the more powerful FOSATU affiliates. So it was left to develop a mass base entirely on its own - something it was not designed or able to do.

The UDF, relying on community based affiliates, had a weak presence in Umlazi, Kwa Mashu, and the informal squatter camps in Inanda. Its affiliates were powerful in the small townships of Lamontville, Chesterville and Hambanathi. However, the leadership that emerged there became cut-off from day-to-day community concerns and was swallowed up in broader national UDF activities. Generally, the largely Indian intellectual middle class leadership of the UDF made little progress trying to organise from the top down.

Youth organisations were the conspicuous exception, and it was largely from these groups that the UDF filled its many mass rallies. Unfortunately, well-attended public meetings, spiced with anti-Inkatha speeches and slogans, do not protect

supporters when they go home to the townships.

Against this background, it was almost inevitable that the two organisations headed for a series of confrontations.

Whether there was a state 'dirty tricks department' involved in the clashes, or whether Inkatha leadership simply decided to eliminate the UDF in the urban areas in August is not entirely clear. There are indications of a conspiracy: the fact that police casspirs escorted bus loads of amabutho to break up funerals. But further information is needed before categorical statements can be made.

A conspiracy is not really at issue here. The state can be expected to play whatever cards it has ruthlessly. What is clear is the outcome of the clash. With the police turning a blind eye, Inkatha has burnt out and harassed UDF supporters in all major townships in and around Durban. In one instance, known UDF supporters were hounded out of Hambanathi and sought refuge at a priory in Verulam.

Inkatha has secured Umlazi and Kwa Mashu by appealing to the older members of the community, promising to discipline the youth and restore law and order. No doubt this is convenient for the state as it contemplates the 'Natal Option'.

UDF affiliates like the Joint Rent Action Committee and the Detainees Support Committee have been unable to operate successfully since that August fortnight. Township people, aware of the dangers of being associated with the UDF, are concerned to distance themselves from the organisation. The UDF has little attraction for them: it appears to be Indian-led, with a predominately radical, and by implication, violent, young membership which displays anti-worker tendencies in its calls for stayaways. As they see it, to belong to the UDF now almost certainly means having your home burnt down, and possibly death.

With the UDF leadership in detention, and a weak organisational infrastructure, the UDF is unable to defend itself and its supporters against the combined onslaught of Inkatha and the state.

A Black Future for Free Enterprise

The Urban Foundation is an important weapon in capital's attempt to transform South Africa. But in spite of renewed efforts by the Foundation to fight for policy changes, a significant improvement in the 'quality of life' for urban African workers seems unlikely. PAUL HENDLER looks at the Foundation's successes and failures.

The Urban Foundation has, in the nine years of its existence, vociferously argued for a structural reform of South African society. Its main aims have been to mobilise private sector resources to help the urban black communities achieve a 'better quality of life', and to achieve widespread acceptance of the 'free enterprise' ethic among blacks. The 1976 Soweto uprising, and recent endemic rebellion in African townships, has shown capital that social stability is crucial for a successful free enterprise system.

STATED GOALS

The Foundation has targeted housing, local government and influx control as priority areas for change. The process of attaining these set goals is fraught with contradictions, and achievements in some fields have been offset by deeper problems emerging in others.

Recognising that the acute housing shortage is a potential source of resentment, the Foundation believes private enterprise should provide new houses, although the state would have to provide rented accommodation for poorer township residents.

The private housing market expanded rapidly with the introduction of 99-year leasehold rights in 1978, and an amendment to the Financial Institutions Act. The Foundation's executive director believed these changes furthered 'the concept of individual ownership and entrenched free enterprise values among urban black communities'.

The Foundation believes that in addition to housing through private contractors and building societies, people should be allowed to build their own houses to unconventional, cheaper

building specifications. To this end it has initiated several pilot 'self help' low-cost housing projects for Africans at Khutsong (near Carletonville) and Inanda (near Durban).

In 1983, the Foundation said local authority structures offered real opportunities for 'authentic black community leadership' to assume office and enter into negotiations with the central government on many critical issues'. Devolution of local authority power would defuse the volatile political situation in many townships, according to the Foundation.

Perhaps the most far-reaching goal the Foundation set itself is the abolition of one of South Africa's oldest institutions of political domination - influx control. This is perceived as being a major stumbling block to peaceful evolution towards a society based on 'free enterprise'. Its 1983 annual review warned that coercive controls over urbanisation were obsolete and created 'a climate conducive to agitation and insurrection'.

The Foundation envisages urbanisation policy based on 'incentives' rather than 'coercion'. This would involve decentralising economic growth to smaller metropolitan areas, and some form of rural agricultural development. The increase in job opportunities would keep many African workseekers from coming to the few major growth points.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

To achieve its goals, Foundation politics is focused mainly on effecting changes in state policy and eroding the political bureaucratic impediments which prevent the implementation of 'structural reform'.

The Foundation's first strategic advance - the introduction of 99-year leasehold which gave Africans permanent urban rights and long term land tenure - involved 15 months of negotiations with government officials and the Association of Building Societies. During 1979 the Foundation helped frame regulations to speed up the implementation of leasehold rights and lower costs of surveying.

Partly as a result of Urban Foundation lobbying, in December 1984, 99-year leasehold provisions were extended to Khayelitsha and other selected areas in the Western Cape. As it is a coloured labour preference area, Africans were previously excluded from any form of permanent land tenure.

The Foundation's substantial political influence is shown in that prior to this extension it administered a home-ownership scheme in the Cape Town area, under 60-year leasehold title. This 'under the table deal' was organised by upper echelon government to escape the notice of ultra-conservative state employees. The Foundation still works behind the scenes to extend leasehold provisions to all Western Cape townships.

During the past year the Foundation successfully lobbied to re-introduce freehold rights in urban African townships. PW Botha has announced intentions to do this.

The Foundation also helped draft the Black Local Authorities Act, which conferred local authority status on certain African townships. But Foundation executive director Jan Steyn said the legislation was too limited a framework for local government. Working with a team of top lawyers he completely reformulated the Bill.

Nevertheless, the final product still bore the indelible stamp of apartheid. Only 'legal' residents - those with section 10 rights - could vote. This excluded hundreds of thousands of 'illegals' living permanently in the cities.

Attempting to create a favourable atmosphere for the implementation of the Act, the Foundation released the results of a rather dubious poll, hinting that at least 40% of township residents would participate in the scheduled November/December 1983 elections. In the event, the eventual election poll was 21%. In Soweto it was only 10,7%. Foundation in-house research revealed that between 40-60% of the potential

electorate were 'illegal' and so excluded from voting. This meant that little more than 10% of adults living in main urban townships cast their votes.

Despite the election fiasco, Foundation support for Black Local Authorities continued. Since 1983, the Foundation and private business have lobbied central government to recognise the Urban Councils Association of South Africa (UCASA) - the umbrella body of many local councils. This bore fruit towards the end of 1984 when Gerrit Viljoen issued a statement recognising UCASA in a semi-official capacity.

The Foundation lobbied extensively to end influx control and vociferously opposed the Orderly Movement Bill. The dropping of this Bill indicates that their efforts were not in vain.

Foundation research into influx control has formed part of a broader project of research into 'urbanisation', which is identified as 'the key social, economic, political and demographic phenomenon in South Africa'.

Much of the research data has found its way to the desks of government bureaucrats and state appointed commissions of enquiry - such as the recently completed President's Council investigation into the pass system. The Council recommended abolition of the system. Similarly, PW Botha's announcement that SA citizenship would be returned to citizens of the 'independent' Transkei, Venda, Ciskei and Bophuthatswana, also appears to reflect the influence of Urban Foundation lobbying. But until recommendations are translated into legislation, it is difficult to assess the extent and power of this lobby. Also, Council support for an 'orderly urbanisation' policy has led to speculation that one form of coercion might be replaced with another. This directly contradicts Urban Foundation opposition to all forms of coercion.

Since the introduction of 99-year leasehold more houses were built in townships than during the early 1970s. In 1970 3 703, in 1971 1 089 and in 1972 only 954 houses were built. In contrast, in 1981, 2 649 houses were built on the Witwatersrand (the major area of urban African settlement), 2 102 in 1982,

2 881 in 1983 and 5 919 in 1984. By the end of 1985 a further 6 129 are expected to be completed.

These new housing estates are different from standard 'matchbox' houses. They represent a new kind of township person for whom financial commitment and fixed employment become necessary parts of life. Such people will perhaps think twice before taking part in a general strike or consumer boycott. But to regard Africans who do enter the ranks of homeowners as 'co-opted', ignores the effects of other political and ideological practices.

Certain government elements have supported Foundation efforts to alter the urban geography of Soweto and other townships. In 1980, Louis Rive, chairperson of the Greater Soweto Planning Council, said the state planned to improve street conditions, sewerage, storm water drainage, electrical and water supply systems in Soweto. Since then upgrading has also taken place in other African townships.

Whatever its ideological effects, home-ownership remains limited to a small minority of township residents and the desperate housing shortage remains. In 1983 one source estimated a backlog of 160 000 units, while another claimed that on the Witwatersrand alone the backlog was 220 000 units. During the last five years an average of only 5 476 houses have been built annually. At this rate it will take 30 years to wipe out the existing backlog - longer if population increases are considered.

Upgraded townships do not necessarily mean a satisfied, quiescent population. Rent increases necessary to repay the massive loans which financed upgrading are as likely to cause resentment amongst people who also face a rapidly increasing cost of living.

Foundation efforts to end the pass laws have also had an uneven success. The government has made a complete about face on the citizenship issue. But the 'dompas' is not yet 'dead'. For most Africans influx control practices have not changed.

The Foundation admits no success in the arena of local government. Cut off from popular support, local councils are particularly vulnerable to the violent events in the townships and in recent months many councils collapsed. Many Eastern Cape councillors, fearing for their lives, have disappeared into hiding, and on the Witwatersrand there

is intense popular resistance to them. As a result some long term capital development projects have been shelved and essential services like township refuse and night soil removal disrupted.

The Foundation faces the problem of powerful, ultra-conservative government forces which strongly resist political changes in the townships. The sizeable proportion of the white electorate which opposed the constitutional changes proposed by Botha and his lieutenants during the 1984 referendum, is one indication of this. And recent disclosures about the breaching of the Nkomati Accord, as well as pro-UNITA activity in Angola, can leave little doubt as to the strength of ultra-conservative forces within the military apparatus.

The failing economy is an equally serious problem for the Foundation, together with low wages paid in most industries, and the relatively high cost of building housing. Cost problems are not limited to conventionally built houses. A recent report on housing, using certain affordability criteria, observes that costs for cheap self-help schemes exclude an average of 96% of people living in the prescribed areas.

A major impediment to the abolition of a coercive form of influx control is the absence of jobs. The flood of unemployed workers settling near the major industrial growth points would probably pose new threats to continued accumulation of capital in the South African economy and incidents of crime and violence would increase. The events in the Vaal Triangle last year, and the ongoing rebellions in the Eastern Cape and other parts of the country indicate that this is already happening.

But reform initiatives are far from dead. One of these, the regional services councils system, accepted in principle by the state, is designed to ensure economically viable services and upgrading to African townships. The Foundation is reportedly undertaking a major investigation of the entire local authority system. Presumably this is a prelude to 'further concessions' in the new year.

Psychic Survival in Troubled Times

Where atrocity becomes normal, human feeling dies. This is as true of South Africa under a state of emergency as of late capitalist societies. JACKLYN COCK looks at a new book on the effects of psychological survival in troubled times.

A widespread sense of crisis pervades everyday life in contemporary South Africa. Differentially experienced among both blacks and whites, individuals commonly feel helplessness and incomprehension in the face of rising and unpredictable turbulence now routine in our society. This crisis triggers responses associated with the Nazi concentration camps - in fact, when in August 1985 parents flocked to Moroka police station in a bid to have their 300 children released from detention, one of them said 'Soweto resembles a concentration camp'.

In this and other contexts there is a very real danger that South Africans will feel overwhelmed by the violence and chaos in our society and withdraw into a survival mentality. This involves an emotional anaesthesia, a disengagement from others, a concern only with daily survival.

Those active and committed on either side of the conflict contrast with those susceptible to the syndrome of withdrawal. They are sustained by the conviction that their actions further the creation of a future in which they have a place, and experience their activism as a potent intervention in shaping that future. But whether in the townships or the suburbs, such activists are not necessarily in the majority.

A recent book suggests that this psychological process is widespread under late capitalism. In *The Minimal Self. Psychic Survival in Troubled Times* (Pan Books 1985), Christopher Lasch argues that in advanced capitalist societies people live with a sense of crisis. This is generated by the threat of nuclear war, ecological damage, memory of the Nazis' genocidal war, rising inflation and unemployment.

The outcome of this sense of crisis, and of helplessness in the face of it, Lasch suggests, is a survival mentality. Living in a state of psychic siege, each person retreats to a defensive core.

Lasch sees this siege mentality infiltrating all aspects of cultural, social and political life in advanced capitalist societies. He attempts to define it in his concept of 'the minimal self'. In his previous book, *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch argues that the concern with self is characteristic of our times. In *The Minimal Self*, he refines this thesis to argue that this preoccupation with self takes the form of a concern with psychic survival. 'People have lost confidence in the future... (T)hey have begun to prepare for the worst... by executing a kind of emotional retreat from the long-term commitments that presuppose a stable, secure and orderly world' (p 16).

In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Lasch describes the trajectory of the retreat inwards into purely psychic preoccupations. To many people what matters is psychic and physical self-improvement: getting in touch with their feelings and their bodies, eating health foods, jogging, developing their potential - taking control in those areas where they may do so. Lasch argues that these pursuits, wrapped in the rhetoric of authenticity and awareness, signify a retreat from political struggle. He decries this preoccupation with self-discovery and personal growth as representing unseemly self-absorption. This insulates people from the social problems around them, diverting their energies from collective struggle. The culture which reflects this is described by Lasch as 'a culture of narcissism'.

Lasch is discussing phenomena which fall into that difficult interface between psychology and ideology: between the individual's lived relation to his or her world, and a group's self-constitution of its identity and norms and assumptions of reality. By implication, when the latter is fragmented, the individual's sense of participation in reality is dislocated - hence, perhaps, the fact of people being thrown back into individualism. It is an important area for analysis, especially here and now.

In *The Minimal Self*, Lasch stresses that narcissism should not be confused with egotism and selfishness. Rather he argues that prevailing social conditions 'not only encourage a defensive contraction of the self but blur the boundaries between the self and its surroundings' (p 19).

Some have argued that the apparent increase in self-absorption is the product of a movement towards a post-industrial society where competitive consumerism is replaced by self-exploration and non-materialistic forms of self-fulfilment. Lasch, however, views mass consumption as part of a larger pattern of dependence, disorientation and loss of control. A culture organised around mass consumption encourages narcissism 'not because it makes people grasping and self-assertive, but because it makes them weak and dependent. It undermines their confidence in their capacity to understand and shape the world and to provide for their own needs. The consumer feels that he lives in a world that defies practical understanding and control' (p 33).

Many writers since Illich have lamented the dependence of citizen-consumers, a dependence on experts which involves erosion of practical skills and competencies. Lasch argues that the consumer's dependence creates infantile feelings of helplessness. 'If nineteenth century bourgeois culture reinforced anal patterns of behaviour - hoarding of money and supplies, control of bodily functions...- the twentieth century culture of mass consumption recreates oral patterns rooted in an even earlier stage of emotional development when the infant was completely dependent on the breast' (p 34).

Technology deepens such dependence, rather than liberates. Writing of domestic labour, for example, Lasch

points out that 'if this technology reduces some of the drudgery of housekeeping, it also renders the housekeeper dependent on machinery' (p 43). Modern technology undermines the self-reliance and autonomy of consumers.

The general effect of modern mass culture in 'breaking down the distinctions between illusions and reality' encourages a narcissistic orientation to experience. We 'live surrounded by man-made objects...but they no longer serve very effectively to mediate between the inner world and the outer world...The world of commodities takes the form of a dream world, a prefabricated environment that appeals directly to our inner fantasies but seldom reassures us that we ourselves have had a hand in its creation. Commodities cannot take the place of hand-made objects any more than science can take the place of practical worldly experience. Neither contributes to a sense of exploration and mastery. We may take some vicarious, collective pride in scientific achievements, but we cannot recognise those achievements as our own' (p 195). 'The commodity world stands as something completely separate from the self; yet it simultaneously takes on the appearance of a mirror of the self, a dazzling array of images in which we see anything we wish to see. Instead of bridging the gap between the self and its surroundings, it obliterates the difference between them' (p 196).

Here Lasch is speaking of 'commodity fetishism', which Lukacs understood as the essential feature of capitalism. Lukacs built on Marx's understanding that the social world of capitalism is a perverted world of 'the fetishism of commodities' in which the products of our labour generate an apparent independence; objects begin to rule the producers instead of being ruled by them. Man becomes dominated by the world of things, by processes which his own activity has created but which turn against him as objective, independent processes. The outcome is a social consciousness which understands the social world as something fixed in nature and thus immutable and unchangeable.

The psychology generated by commodity fetishism which assumes the immutability of the social world and its relations, is clearly liable to lead to the survival mentality. An anomie and helplessness results, precisely because

the world and one's place in it was rigidly conceived, then upset. So when people, faced by rampant change and social dislocation, are forced to break painfully from set assumptions, the trauma of helpless individualism and the minimal self follows - a development commonly to be seen among white South Africans in recent years.

Drawing on this tradition of marxist writing would have strengthened Lasch's argument considerably. As long as he relates narcissism to industrialisation through a vague concept of mass consumerism, rather than to capitalism, he cannot point any path out of the quagmire in which his notion of the minimal self occupies the centre stage.

The minimal self remains a narcissistic self. Many life situations in advanced capitalist societies 'contain stresses found in the concentration camp' - malnutrition, physical abuse, dehumanisation' (p 127). The outcome is that everyday life has begun to pattern itself on the survival strategies forced on those exposed to extreme adversity, as in the Nazi concentration camps. It is because they are overwhelmed by this chaotic and violent environment that people withdraw into a survival mentality. 'Selective apathy, emotional disengagement from others, renunciation of the past and the future, a determination to live one day at a time - these techniques of emotional self-management...have come to shape the lives of ordinary people' (p 58).

The survival mentality is intensely privatist. It is a mentality which 'turns away from public questions and concerns itself with the predictable crises of everyday life, where individual actions still seem to have some minimal impact on the course of events' (p 640). Attention is still concentrated on narrow, clearly defined objectives, on the small immediate obstacles that confront people every day. There is a retreat from engagement, involvement and commitment, into the stance of detached, bemused ironic observers. Above all, it is the refusal of moral and emotional commitment that links the survival mentality to the culture of narcissism.

For Lasch this refusal is exemplified in Doris Lessing's later work such as *The Four Gated City* and *Memoirs of a Survivor*. Lasch understands her work to

'speak to the prevailing sense of living in a world in which the demands of daily survival absorb energies that might once have gone into a collaborative assault on the common dangers confronting humanity' (p 82). In Lessing's vision, survival demands intense spiritual discipline, a simplification of needs, an emotional pruning. This involves repudiation of ordinary human emotions and the ties of love and friendship that distract from 'higher' purposes. The demands of survival leave no room for a personal or emotional life. Survivors have to learn to travel light; they cannot afford to weigh themselves down with family, friends or intimate relationships. 'Emotional baggage has to be thrown overboard if the ship is to stay afloat' (p 85). 'Long-term commitments and emotional attachments carry certain risks under the best of circumstances; in an unstable, unpredictable world they carry risks that people find increasingly difficult to accept' (p 94). The outcome is 'an emotional anaesthesia'.

For Lasch there is no necessary link between this psychic damage and late capitalism. He is blind to the explanatory force of historical materialism. For him, the problem of explaining the destructiveness of the twentieth century 'goes deeper than capitalism or economic inequality' (p 241). This blindness also closes him off to the revolutionary possibilities of the new social movements. It is significant that most of these - the peace movement, environmentalism and feminism - were started outside organised class interests and institutions. But it is arguable that they are among our richest resources, that they contain the capacity to bring about structural as well as personal change; that they could revitalise and restore the damaged psyche Lasch describes. The dominant issues in all these movements lead us into the central institutions of capitalism and the class relations it generates.

Lasch is writing in a radical humanist tradition. As with the rest of this tradition, his analysis is seriously weakened by the absence of a marxist understanding. Nevertheless, his argument speaks to those of us living in a terrorised society where the normalisation of atrocity threatens to blunt our human sensibilities.

Patrick Mabuya Baleka (25)
Oupa Hlomoka (32)
Tebogo Geoffrey Moselane (39)
Mohapi Lazarus More (25)
Gcinumuzi Petrus Malindi (25)
Morake Petrus Mokoena (47)
Tsietsi David Mphuti (48)
Naphtali Mbuti Nkopane (40)
Tebello Ephraim Ramakgula (35)
Bavumile Herbert Vilikazi (30)
Sekwati John Mokoena (33)
Mkhanbi Amos Malindi (20)
Simon Tseko Nkodi (25)
Pelamotse Jerry Tlhopane (27)
Serame Jacob Hlanyane (37)
Thomas Medikwe Manthata (45)
Hlabeng Sam Matlole (61)
Maxala Simon Vilakase (24)
Popo Simon Molefe (33)
Mosiua Gerard Patrick Lekota (37)
Moses Mabokela Chikane (37)
Thabiso Andrew Ratsomo (27)

Twenty-two trialists appeared in the Pretoria Magistrates' Court on 11 June 1985.

A four-volume indictment was served on the accused. The main charge faced is high treason, with three alternative charges of terrorism, two of subversion and five of murder. The accused were not asked to plead.

The indictment concerns a range of allegations covering UDF activities since its formation. The state alleges that the UDF and affiliated activists (mostly involved in Vaal civic associations) participated in, and furthered the aims of the banned ANC and SACP, and attempted to overthrow the status quo by violence.

Events and activities in the indictment include:

* UDF national executive council meetings where front politics, mobilisation and campaigns were discussed;

* several public meetings where it is alleged the ANC was glorified as a 'friendly army', its members portrayed as heroes and martyrs, and the government discredited. Calls were made for the release of political prisoners,

and the Freedom Charter was hailed as an alternative to the present system of government. ANC slogans, signs, flags and freedom songs were prominent at UDF meetings;

* campaigns launched to oppose government policies including forced removals, black local authorities, the homeland system and compulsory military service were part of the ANC-UDF conspiracy.

In the Vaal Triangle the state alleges the UDF was actively involved in the murder of five township residents, including community councillors; the destruction of homes and shops; a worker stayaway in November 1984; school boycotts and unrest; the FOSATU Black Christmas campaign; protests against rent increases in the Vaal townships; intimidating black councillors to resign and threatening to murder township residents who supported them; and promoting the idea that America's constructive engagement policy is anti-black.

The defence challenged the Transvaal attorney general's decision to issue certificates prohibiting the court from hearing a bail application. Counsel for the defence made representations to the attorney general to persuade him to set aside the certificates so that the accused could apply for bail.

On 25 June the case was again postponed to allow the attorney general to study defence submissions requesting the withdrawal of the certificates.

The accused appeared next on 3 July. The attorney general refused to withdraw the certificates on grounds that the accused's release would constitute a threat to the maintenance of law and order and to the security of the state.

Counsel for the defence then contested the validity of the certificates. The defence argued that under Section 30 of the Internal Security Act a certificate refusing bail was only valid if issued after an accused was arrested on a specific charge. While the accused were formally arrested on 11 July, the

certificates were dated 10 June.

The deputy attorney general, who appeared for the state, said a magistrate's court had no jurisdiction to rule on the certificates as this was a review procedure, a prerogative of the supreme court.

Presiding magistrate Koekemoer found that while he did not have the power to rule whether the attorney general had exercised his discretion properly, he could decide whether the attorney general had complied with the legal requirements laid down in the Internal Security Act for the issuing of 'no-bail' certificates.

The state then argued that the certificates were not legally issued until the magistrate became aware of them on 11 June, by which time the accused had been arrested on a charge. Hence the certificates were issued after the arrest of the accused and were valid.

The defence insisted that the certificates were issued when they were signed.

Judgement was postponed until 1 August, when the magistrate ruled that the certificates were valid as they only took effect when handed to court. The defence appealed against this ruling in the Pretoria Supreme Court on 29 August and again applied for bail. The application was postponed at the request of the judge president until 2 September so it could be heard by a full bench of three judges.

In a split decision handed down on 9 October, the supreme court ruled that the 'no-bail' certificates issued by the attorney general were invalid and that the accused, some of whom have now been in custody for nearly a year, could apply to the court for bail. This application is expected to be heard during October, when the trial is also due to begin.

Mathews Dime Kekane (27)

Albanos Mathlare Lesotho (26)

Kingale Stephen Sithole (28)

Three alleged ANC members have pleaded not guilty to charges of high treason, contraventions of the Internal Security Act, and Participation in Terroristic Activities.

The state alleges that Kekane left South Africa in 1976 and underwent ANC military training in Angola and Russia. He recruited Lesotho as an ANC member in South Africa, and trained him militarily

and politically. According to the state, Kekane and Lesotho jointly possessed explosives, and sabotaged a railway line in Soweto during June 1982. They allegedly attempted to blow up an ESCOM installation at the same time.

Sithole, claims the state, was an ANC member or supporter between 1978 and 1984. He underwent ANC military training outside South Africa, and undertook a number of illegal missions inside once he had returned.

When the trial opened in the Johannesburg Supreme Court on 13 August, the state indicated that it intended handing in statements made by all accused while in custody. The defence objected, claiming that the statements had been made to magistrates under duress, and should not be admissible as evidence. Presiding judge Kirk-Cohen ruled that the state had to prove that Sithole's statement had been made freely and voluntarily, while the onus fell on the defence to establish that Kekane and Lesotho's statements were made under duress.

In a lengthy trial-within-a-trial to establish the admissibility of the statements, Kekane described how police arrested him in the early hours of 25 July 1984. 'I was woken by knocking and torchlight...I opened the door and was pulled out. They didn't ask questions and I wasn't told why I was dragged outside'. Kekane was then taken to an interrogation room at Protea police station, handcuffed and placed in leg irons. 'Lieutenant Kobus Reyneke grabbed me by the collar with both hands and demanded that I tell him about the gun. When I denied all knowledge of a gun, he bashed me against the wall...A Captain Grobbelaar grabbed my clothes and shook me. He also blocked my mouth and nose with his hand for what felt like ages. When he let go, I gasped for breath, screamed and felt dizzy'.

Lesotho claimed that, on his arrest, he was handcuffed, a hood placed over his head, and elbowed in the ribs by police while being transported to a police station. While interrogated, he was hit, tripped, kicked, tied up in material, and hit in the chest with a rubber object.

Police denied these allegations. In a judgement on the trial-within-a-trial, Justice Kirk-Cohen ruled that the statements made by Lesotho and Sithole were not admissible as evidence, but that Kekane's statement was acceptable as evidence.

Alfa Leaves SA

Alfa Romeo opened its Brits plant during 1971. After a bitter struggle, including a trip by union officials to Alfa's parent company in Italy, and a threat of solidarity action by Italian workers, Alfa agreed to negotiate with the FOSATU-affiliated National Automobile and Allied Workers Union (NAAWU).

Early in 1985, rumours of an imminent Alfa pull-out from South Africa circulated. These were repeatedly denied by Alfa management. In an April interview, Managing Director Gianni Marinelli pointed to Alfa's huge capital investment as a reason for staying, and indicated that the company intended challenging BMW for a larger share of the market.

In lengthy mid-year negotiations involving two work stoppages, NAAWU and Alfa reached agreement on new wage scales. Workers received across-the-board increases of 30c an hour, effective from 1 July.

On 11 September, Alfa's Marinelli announced the company's withdrawal from South Africa, which led to the immediate loss of 500 jobs. As reasons for the closure, he cited financial pressure and the falling rand, as well as sustained losses of tens of millions of rand over the past three years.

Shortly after his announcement, workers at Alfa staged a three-day strike to protest the company's refusal to negotiate a plant closure programme. The company was prepared to negotiate retrenchment pay only. Pressure, including an approach to Alfa in Italy by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, forced concessions from the company, and workers were paid off on 27 September. They had secured one month's salary, plus a continuation of benefits to the end of the year.

The retrenchment of the workers, mostly commuters from Bophuthatswana, is the latest blow to the Brits region, already desperately depressed by recession, drought and general

underdevelopment. The 500 retrenched Alfa workers are unlikely to find jobs in the near future, if at all: there is a 41% unemployment level in some of the areas neighbouring the Brits industrial complex. Jeremy Keenan, of the University of Witwatersrand's Development Studies programme, estimates that many of those people laid off in the area spend up to five years searching for new employment.

The closure will affect other businesses in Brits, especially the auto components firms which formerly supplied Alfa. Plants such as Auto Cable, Bosch, Cosa and Polyrin all had substantial contracts with Alfa.

Most industry in Brits is acutely dependent on state subsidies in the form of decentralisation incentives, which have not increased over the years. In fact, there is evidence that they have been cut back. Alfa management cited such subsidies in the early 1970s, along with the availability of low cost labour in Bophuthatswana, as crucial factors in their decision to set up the Brits plant. Initial incentives to move to Brits included both wage and fixed capital subsidies from the state.

Alfa's financial problems stem in large part from a wider motor industry crisis, involving a limited consumer market. It was a small firm with a market share of less than 4% of passenger car sales, and a workforce well below average size for the industry. Production of engines and car body pressing was undertaken by other companies on a contract basis. This made Alfa typical of the type of firm earmarked for 'rationalisation'. From management's point of view, it was unable to compete with larger monopolies. But for workers, the Alfa closure involves increasing impoverishment in an area with no efficient unemployment benefits or other social security.

The decision to pull out of South

Africa was probably made at Alfa's Italian headquarters. Certainly the union had no advance warning of it. There are indications that, in South Africa, only top-level management were aware of the impending closure. Alfa misled its workers through frequent denials of its intentions. According to the chairman of the NAAWU shop stewards'

council at Alfa, workers incurred debts in the belief that they had job security.

The company's deceit, and its subsequent intransigence in negotiating a fair plant closure programme, has left union leadership and rank-and-file members outraged.

Strike at Bosch

On 8 September, the German multinational, Robert Bosch, agreed to grant its workforce a minimum pay rate of R3,00 per hour. This followed a three-day strike, a sit-in, and lengthy negotiations with the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). The union, which has about 375 paid-up members at Bosch's Brits plant, sees the agreement as a breakthrough. It has challenged the belief that border areas are concentrations of cheap non-unionised labour.

The determination to increase wages is part of MAWU's national demand for a living wage. The R3,00 an hour minimum gained at Bosch is the first success of this campaign.

The union has been organising in the plant since 1983 and is still in the process of negotiating a recognition agreement.

In July of this year management granted a 12c an hour increase across-the-board. The majority of the workforce indicated dissatisfaction with this increase, but Bosch was reluctant to re-open negotiations. On 2 September, workers went on strike. Two days later, management offered a further 11c an hour. Workers were still determined to win another 27 cents. On 5 September,

workers went to the factory, but joined arms and sat at their machines.

Management ordered them to the canteen and locked the factory gates.

Maintaining telephonic contact with the union, workers decided to spend the night in the factory.

Management informed the 300 workers in the canteen that they were dismissed and expected to leave the premises by 5-00 pm. Workers refused to budge from the canteen, and sang freedom songs and held discussions. Management then agreed to begin negotiations that night with shop stewards and officials from the union. A German trade union telegraphed the company, asking for assurances that Bosch would not use police against the workers and that they would begin negotiations. The discussions lasted until after midnight.

All 300 workers remained in the canteen during negotiations, and some had food and blankets delivered by friends and family. The canteen sit-in is the first time that such action has been taken by workers in the Brits area.

In a final agreement between Bosch and MAWU, management agreed to reinstate dismissed workers, and implement a minimum wage of R3,00 an hour.

NUM Strike Ends

On Sunday 1 September, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) began its strike at Gencor's Marievale and Beatrix gold mines, its Matla, Blinkpan and Transvaal Navigation Collieries, and Gold Fields' Deelkraal mine.

Gencor estimates that about 11 300 of its workers - the majority of its total black workforce - went on strike. At Deelkraal 5 000 of 6 650 workers went on strike.

Strikes were crushed by mine security and the police at a number of other mines: Gencor's Stilfontein, Unisel and St Helena, and Gold Fields' East Driefontein. Workers were allegedly

forced to work at gunpoint at Gold Fields' Kloof and West Driefontein mines.

On 3 September, the NUM executive suspended the strike, pending judgement in an urgent application to the Industrial Court to declare the mass dismissals at Gencor and Gold Fields unfair labour practices.

NUM initially won an urgent Supreme Court interdict against Marievale, preventing the company evicting 62 miners from their hostels. The company later won an appeal against this decision. NUM is seeking reinstatement of these workers and those at

Anglovaal's Hartebeesfontein mine, where workers were marched from their hostels at gunpoint and dismissed.

The dispute between NUM and the Chamber of Mines began on 19 April, when NUM demanded a 40% pay rise, recognition of May Day as a paid public holiday, better service benefits and danger pay.

In the first round of talks, beginning on 13 June, NUM dropped its wage demand to a 27% across-the-board increase. The Chamber offered only 14%, and rejected NUM's proposal that it be directly involved in talks with white unions on the removal of job reservation. It also rejected the demand for 1 May as a public holiday.

On 14 June NUM declared a dispute on the grounds that the Chamber's offer were unrealistic.

The Chamber's final offer was for a wage increase ranging between 19,6% for lowest-grade workers, and 14,1% for higher-grade workers. This was rejected by NUM, which was not prepared to accept anything lower than a 22% across-the-board increase. The Chamber's offers on leave, leave allowance and reduction of working hours fell short of NUM's demands.

The Chamber implemented its offer on 1 July even though no agreement had been reached.

NUM held a strike ballot in the second week of July at one Anglovaal mine, three Gencor mines and 15 Anglo American mines. No ballot was held at any of the mines belonging to Gold Fields and Rand Mines, as no agreement was reached on ballot procedure. The mining houses alleged irregularities during the ballot which NUM denied.

The union's decision to strike was taken at a special conference in Welkom on the first weekend of August. NUM decided to take action at the 29 Chamber mines where it was recognised. The strike was delayed until 25 August to

give employers time to make realistic offers.

An eleventh-hour resolution of the conflict seemed likely when NUM met with the Chamber on 19 August and agreed to drop demands for improved working conditions, shift allowances, and overtime pay. Its demand for a 22% across-the-board increase still stood, although it proposed that workers be given two hours off on 1 May rather, than a public holiday as originally demanded.

The union accepted separate discussions with the Chamber on scrapping job reservation, but wanted to be party to a joint meeting before the Chamber concluded an agreement with representatives of white unions.

The dispute brought to the fore tensions between the mining houses. On 21 August, after lengthy negotiations, new offers were made. Anglo American (where NUM had the greatest presence) offered an additional 2,9%, thus increasing wages by 22%. Rand Mines offered an additional R4 a month on coal mines. Gold Fields, Anglovaal, Rand Mines and Anglo American offered a 10% holiday leave allowance increase. Gencor refused to make any offer, arguing that the July increases were 'more than appropriate'. Eventually Rand Mines and JCI brought their offers into line with Anglo American's.

NUM decided to accept the revised offers, but went ahead with strike action at the seven mines owned by Anglovaal, Gencor and Gold Fields.

Gencor's hardline attitude was spelt out by Johan Fritz, executive director of mining for Gencor, who said he did 'not dispute that workers have a right to withdraw their labour. But they do not have a right to disrupt production.'

He added that the mining company had 'a shield against irresponsible action - a large reserve of unemployed.'

Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Advance Laundries Johannesburg	SA Laundry, Dry Cleaning and Allied	11		<p>Eleven workers, dismissed after last year's November stayaway, were reinstated by the Industrial Court after the union claimed the company was guilty of an unfair labour practice. The workers, all women with children, ignored the stayaway call, but asked to go home at 2 pm, as they feared they would be harassed if they were seen returning from work. When management said they could leave for Soweto at 3-30, they left earlier, and were fired.</p> <p>The Court ruled that management's failure to hold a proper inquiry prior to firing the workers, and the fact that seven workers who did not report to work at all were not dismissed, constituted an unfair labour practice.</p>
Asea Electric Pretoria	MAWU	700	21-26.09.85	<p>When a white foreman hit a black worker 'for no apparent reason', 200 workers downed tools, demanding disciplinary action. But Asea suspended the foreman on full pay. Five hundred workers at two other Asea plants went on strike in support of the first group. MAWU argued that 'the company must not discriminate when disciplining workers', adding that 'multinational companies must stop treating black workers as third class workers - supporting apartheid structures'. When, on 26 September, the foreman involved resigned, all strikers returned to work.</p>
CIM Deltak		2		<p>After the company suffered substantial losses in stolen goods, management used lie detector tests in an attempt to find those responsible. Although the tests were not conclusive, two workers were dismissed. They have appealed to the Industrial Court, claiming their dismissals are unfair.</p>
Colgate Palmolive Boksburg	CWIU			<p>Workers at Colgate refused to work overtime in support of a demand for a shorter working day. After two meetings of a conciliation board, management agreed to reduce the working day from 46 to 43 hours, and will grant 1 May as a paid holiday. Workers will also receive a 42c an hour increase, which will bring the minimum wage to R3,74 an hour. This will compensate for wages lost through shorter working hours. The union aims to achieve a 40 hour week in due course.</p>
Dairy Belle Pretoria and East Rand	FCWU	450	19.09.85	<p>After a black security guard alleged that a white manager was stealing, police arrested the guard from his home in the middle of the night. The guard was then fired the company. Some 450 workers at the Clayville factory went on strike in protest, and were joined by workers at other Dairy Belle plants. Strikers at Clayville - the entire workforce - were then dismissed. The issue threatens to spread, as the SA Co-ordinating Committee of the International Union of Foodworkers has warned Dairy Belle's holding company, Imperial Cold Storage, that there will be a national strike unless the issue is resolved.</p>

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Dorbyl	MAWU			<p>Strike ballots at four Dorbyl plants have been shelved in favour of wider ballots over plant-level bargaining. The plants involved are Dorbyl Railway Products, Dorbyl Railway Products Forging Division; Dorbyl Structural Products Engineering; and Dorbyl Structures Erection.</p> <p>After worker meetings to discuss a possible strike, four MAWU shop stewards were fired. An arbitration is currently in progress.</p> <p>Dorbyl has recently closed its Rosslyn division of Dorbyl Forging and Machinery, and MAWU has declared a dispute over severance pay. Since 1982, Dorbyl has closed at least four plants where MAWU was well organised - Dorbyl Auto Products, Roodepoort; Busaf Works at Elandsfontein, which subsequently reopened without any MAWU members being employed; Busaf in Durban; and now the Rosslyn plant.</p>
Edgars, Jet Stores, Sales House Johannesburg	FEDCRAW	350	13-30.09.85	<p>Over 20 workers went on strike at Edgars' Cresta branch after their demand that a white supervisor be dismissed for racist comments was turned down. The strikers were fired.</p> <p>About 400 workers from Edgars, Sales House and Jet Stores then went out on strike, demanding the reinstatement of those dismissed - but were themselves fired. Strikers picketed various stores in Johannesburg, and were arrested and charged by police. A consumer boycott of retail outlets involved was threatened, and workers received pledges of solidarity from trade union and community organisations.</p> <p>Negotiations between the union and management initially deadlocked when management offered to reinstate strikers with a final warning. Management then revised its offer, reinstating all workers without loss of benefits, or issuing of final warning. The union accepted this, and agreed that workers would not be paid for time on strike. The union will also follow agreed procedure in future, before taking industrial action.</p>
Facts Investors Guide Johannesburg	MMASA	8		<p>After a brief work stoppage in December 1984 over a demand for a Christmas bonus, eight workers were dismissed. The workers, members of MMASA, took their case to the Industrial Court, which recently ruled that they should be reinstated on terms and conditions not less favourable than those governing their employment before dismissal.</p>
Foschini	CCAWUSA	230		<p>After management decided to place 230 workers from Pages Stores on part-time, CCAWUSA declared a dispute, arguing for short-time rather than part-time work. The dispute seemed to be nearing an end when management agreed to submit new proposals to the union during October.</p>
Fry's Metals Wadeville	MAWU	150	August 1985	<p>About 150 workers at Fry's Wadeville plant downed tools following deadlocked talks over wages and working conditions. The union was demanding across-the-board increases of 50c an hour, with a minimum wage of R3,50. Ignoring a call by SEIFSA not to negotiate at plant level, the British-owned company offered to raise the minimum wage from R1,90 to R2,10 an hour. Workers returned on 26 August, threatening to continue the strike unless demands were met within a short period. A final agreement involved a 47c minimum increase, backdated to 15 July. This is in addition to the increases granted earlier this year at the industrial council.</p>

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Germiston City Council	SABAMAU			The Industrial Court has ordered the reinstatement of a nurse dismissed from the Katlehong Health Clinic. The Court found that the City Council had not held a proper inquiry into the conduct of Petronella Poho before dismissing her. The city council did not contest the action.
Gronner Passi Pietersburg	BGWU	150		After strike action, 150 women workers were dismissed. The BGWU negotiated their reinstatement shortly afterwards.
Harrop Alling Pretoria	RAWU			Union general secretary Donsie Khumalo was arrested and charged with intimidation after a foiled strike at Harrop Alling in Pretoria.
Irvin and Johnson Springs	SFAWU	600	14-20.08.85	Talks between the union and management began in June, when worker representatives demanded that the minimum weekly wage be raised from R70 to R115. Subsequently, the union revised its demand to R95, while the company offered R85. Mediation failed to break the deadlock. A strike ballot reflected majority support for industrial action, and on 14 August, over 600 workers downed tools. Six days later management revised its offer, and strikers returned to work.
Matthey Rustenburg Wadeville	MMU			A white MMU member was fired after allegedly assaulting a black worker at a multi-racial braai. MMU members threatened strike action unless the worker was reinstated. The Industrial Court was unable to find whether the fired worker was responsible for the assault, and issued a temporary order reinstating the white. When the order expired, the MMU again threatened strike action, but finally settled with management. Neither party will give details of the settlement.
Metal industry	MAWU			<p>MAWU's struggle for company-level bargaining is intensifying, and the union has declared disputes with 70 companies which refuse to negotiate the issue. Dispute meetings are to be held soon, and strike ballots will follow these. MAWU has called a meeting of unions destined for the new federation, and other progressive organisations, and will solicit their active support for actions taken around the demand.</p> <p>The union sees the campaign for company-level bargaining as most important, and wants to build substantial support for it before deciding on a suitable time for industry-wide action. SEIFSA, the massive employer federation in the industry, continues to advise its members not to negotiate wages at company level, but through the industrial council.</p> <p>The council has recently withdrawn inspectors from the field to deal with the 70 disputes it currently faces.</p>
Metalware Manufacturing		135		The Industrial Court has ordered Metalware to pay R40 000 in wages to employees whose jobs had been wrongly classified, and who had been underpaid. The company currently operates from Bophuthatswana.
Mondi Sabie		600	26-28.08.85	Following a dispute over conditions of service and a production bonus, 600 workers went on strike on 26 August. Police were called in when a crowd at the mill set fire to vehicles, and two workers were arrested. Strikers returned to work on 28 August.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Nampak Eastleigh	PWAWU	58	Late August	After management rejected a demand that a branch driver trainer be dismissed or transferred, 58 workers downed tools. Following negotiations between PWAWU and Nampak, management agreed to reinstate all strikers, and convene an inquiry into grievances.
Nieman Oyers and Finishers Pretoria	NUCW	8		After a wage dispute, eight workers were dismissed. The union took the matter to the Industrial Court, which recently ordered the reinstatement of the dismissed workers.
Pharma Natura	SACWU	42		After a strike at Pharma Natura earlier this year, 42 workers were dismissed. The Industrial Court recently turned down their application for reinstatement, finding that the workers had acted defiantly in an attempt to force the company to adhere to 'autocratic' shop steward elections. The court also rejected a worker claim that strikers had misunderstood an ultimatum to return to work or face dismissal.
Samcor Eastern Transvaal	BAMCWU UMMAWSA			The unions have demanded wage increases of 30%, while management at this chrome mine has offered 17% for higher grade workers, and 25% for lower grade workers. BAMCWU has declared a dispute with the company, and applied for a conciliation board. Strike action has been threatened.
Siemens	MAWU			During July, over 2 000 workers went on strike at five Siemens plants over wage demands. Talks between management and the union deadlocked, and all strikers were fired. By the end of July, management had agreed to hire all but 40 workers, whose cases were referred for mediation. After mediation, Siemens agreed to take back 26, but insisted that the remaining 14 were involved in violence and intimidation during the strike. MAWU has declared a dispute over Siemens' refusal to rehire the 14 workers.
Structural Hollow Flooring Company Robertsham	BAMCWU	135	24-25.09.85	Workers went on strike on 24 September over wages. After successful wage negotiations the following day, workers returned to work.
Transpoly Johannesburg	PWAWU	80		When the company cancelled recognition of the union, workers decided to impose a ban on overtime to pressurise Transpoly to restore the agreement, and negotiate over wages. Eighty workers were then dismissed early in August. FOSATU, of which PWAWU is an affiliate, threatened action against the company. FOSATU's Transvaal shop stewards council warned that unless workers were reinstated, workers at plants linked to Transpoly would be called out. After the company agreed to reinstate fired workers and the union agreement, workers returned on 19 August.
Western Greyhound Bus Potchefstroom	TAMU	195		Charged with holding an illegal strike on 30 May, 195 employees of Western Greyhound were found guilty and fined. The company will pay the fines of 40 workers.
Woolworths Johannesburg	CCAWUSA		12.08.85	When a union member collapsed and died while working in a 'freezing room' on the factory floor, workers at several branches of Woolworths stopped work in protest against working conditions. CCAWUSA shop stewards claimed that the deceased worker had complained of not feeling well, but was forced to continue working.

Strikes and Disputes: OFS/Cape

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Abattoir Corporation Port Elizabeth		300	24-26.07.85	After a two-day wage strike, nearly 300 workers were fired, and Port Elizabeth faced a meat crisis. At one supermarket, meat prices rose by R1/kg, and a local butcher said many faced ruin because the strike came at the same time as the consumer boycott. The abattoir employed 120 white apprentices to replace black workers fired.
Automobile industry Eastern Cape	NAAWU SA Iron, Steel and Allied Industries			An interim wage agreement seems imminent in the industrial council. But full agreement remains remote, this being the second interim increase since negotiations began in 1984. Unions involved in the council have largely accepted an employer offer of between 14c and 24c an hour, and new minimum wage levels of between R2,70 and R5,70 an hour.
Bosal Witenhage	NAAWU		20.09.85	Workers downed tools, demanding that their pension contributions be refunded. Management agreed to make short-term loans available to workers, based on pension contributions.
Cape of Good Hope Port Elizabeth	NUTW			A foreman who came to work in an SADF uniform was dismissed after workers had complained that his behaviour was provocative given the role of the SADF in the townships.
CDA East London	NAAWU	3 500		Workers downed tools on 6 August, following demands that their pension contributions be refunded. They returned to work the following day as shop stewards and union officials began talks with management. A second stoppage occurred on 28 August, when workers in vital sections of the plant went on strike after disciplinary action had been taken against a co-worker by management. CDA closed the plant for three days, but on 10 September, after intermittent throughout the day, fired 200 workers. This followed the previous week's firing of 100 workers. When the remainder of the plant (3 500) downed tools in sympathy with those dismissed, CDA closed again. After ten days, management and NAAWU reached a settlement whereby those dismissed would be rehired, and the plant would resume full production. Seventeen workers face disciplinary proceedings.
Dairybelle Epping and Phillipi Cape Town	RAWU	400	15.08.85	Workers struck at two Dairy Belle operations, demanding recognition of RAWU, and a minimum wage of R400 per month. Four hundred were fired, but reinstated the next day. After negotiations, management agreed to a secret ballot to test RAWU support, and wage negotiations once a recognition agreement was signed.
De Beers Consolidated Namaqualand	NUM			A wage dispute between the two parties has been resolved. Basic wages have been raised by 11%, and NUM members will receive a 12% increase. This raises minimum pay from R306 to R340 a month, backdated to 1 May.
Henderson Agencies East London	CCAWUSA	41	Late August	When 41 workers left work to attend a memorial service for those who died in unrest in Duncan Village, they were fired. SAAWU, FCWU, TAWU, GWU and NAAWU have pledged support for the dismissed workers, and demanded their reinstatement.
Panmore Chicken Factory East London		1 000	Late August	Towards the end of August, two work stoppages occurred after worker attempts to negotiate wages and working conditions with management failed.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Murray and Roberts Western Cape	SAAMU	1 500	12-15.08.85	Workers at a number of Murray and Roberts' construction sites downed tools in support of a demand to recognise SAAMU. Workers also demanded the dismantling of a liaison committee and its replacement with an elected workers committee, and a worker voice in the running of company hostels. The strike was called off when the company agreed to test the representivity of SAAMU. At the end of August, management fired 1 500 strikers, claiming that a check of union nomination forms showed that SAAMU represented a minority, and could not be recognised.
Table Bay docks Cape Town			02.09.85	Casual workers at Table Bay docks went on strike on 2 September, protesting pay rates and facilities, which are worse than those of permanently-employed stevedores. Some strikers claim they have been employed for ten years as casual workers, and want to be taken onto permanent staff. They are paid R2,00 a shift less than permanent workers.
Volkswagen Uitenhage	NAAMU	130	13-22.09.85	When seven workers refused to work an eight-hour shift, rather than the usual five hours, they were fired. A further 120 workers on the Golf production line then downed tools, and were also dismissed. VW shut down the plant. On 22 September, management said it was prepared to rehire dismissed workers, but accumulated service benefits would only be reinstated if workers did not contravene company rules for the rest of the year.
Wanda Furnishers Cape Town		70	30.07.85	All 70 Wanda sales representatives went on strike in protest against a new commission structure which will limit earnings.

Strikes and Disputes: Natal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Atlas Brick and Block Illovo			07.08.85	Brick workers at Atlas went on strike for a day, demanding more work. The recession in the building industry has resulted in a stockpiling of bricks, and striking workers had been put on a short working week of three days.
BTR Sarmcol Howick	MAWU	970		The dispute between MAWU and Sarmcol continues. The consumer boycott aimed at pressuring Sarmcol to negotiate has been called off, and the issue will now be aired in the European Parliament. MAWU claims that the British-owned company has contravened the EEC Code of Conduct. MAWU recently indicated a willingness to take the dispute to the Industrial Court. But management rejected this, after initially indicating that the idea was acceptable.
Die Castings Pinetown	MAWU	125		Workers have been out on a legal strike for over three months. According to MAWU, the company resisted serious wage negotiations for over two years. In the latest round of talks, workers downed tools - and were fired. MAWU has declared a dispute with the company and intends taking it to court.

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Fisher Flying Products Empangeni	PWAMU	46		The union claims workers were dismissed on 6 September for union membership. PWAMU also alleges that workers earn only R150 per month, and are forced by management to pray every morning. The company responds that workers were not fired, but retrenched.
Frame Group	NUTW			The union has been struggling for recognition at Frame since 1973. After an audited ballot to measure support for the FOSATU-affiliated NUTW and TUUSA's TWIU, both unions now have recognition in the Group. At Frametex, the largest Frame plant, NUTW obtained majority membership. At Pinetex, the second largest plant, neither union obtained a majority. TWIU has been recognised as the majority union at Seltex, Nortex and Natal Knitting Mills.
Hart	MAMU			MAMU claimed that Hart's refusal to negotiate at company level if the issues involved had already been determined in the industrial council, was an unfair labour practice. While the industrial court encouraged negotiation at both industrial council and company level, it ruled that Hart's refusal was not an unfair labour practice. MAMU has vowed to fight the issue of company-level bargaining 'tooth and nail'.
Nlobane Colliery Vryheid	NUM	4 300	27-29.08.85	The entire black workforce at this ISCOR colliery downed tools over dissatisfaction at management's response to expected wage increases. Three days later workers returned to work, having dropped demands for increases over and above those approved in July.
Illovo Sugar Mills South Coast	SFAWU	180	04.09.85-	The entire transport staff at this mill went on strike over a demand for a 100% pay increase. Management said it had received an unsigned note demanding double wages.
Natalia Development Board	BCAMU	500	03-05.08.85	More than 500 workers downed tools over a wage dispute. The strikers, employed at construction sites at KwaDabeka and Sundumbili, returned to work after two days, when management agreed to recognise CUSA's BCAMU, and increase wages in September.
Rosedale Textile Mills Willowton	TWU	115	01-06.08.85	Workers went on strike, demanding that management indicate when a recognition agreement with CUSA's TWU would be signed. On the first night of the strike workers were locked in the mill, and refused food. The next day, management closed the mill. After negotiations, management agreed to recognise shop stewards, hold monthly meetings with them, and institute proper grievance procedures. Workers returned on 6 August.
Sizani MaZulu (KwaZulu Transport) Pietermaritzburg		400	26.07.85	Bus drivers refused to work, protesting the loss of a day's wages over the previous week's stayaway. Later in the day they returned as negotiations over docked wages began.
Tidwell Housing Ludysmith	MAMU			Tidwell Housing, an American multinational, has agreed to pay R6 000 to five MAMU shop stewards dismissed in August 1984. The company, which has taken advantage of not falling under either South African or KwaZulu labour legislation, refused to deal with MAMU although the union had organised a majority of workers employed there. When five MAMU shop stewards approached management about wages, they were fired. MAMU was due to take the company to court when its new owners, CI Industries, agreed to a settlement and recognition.

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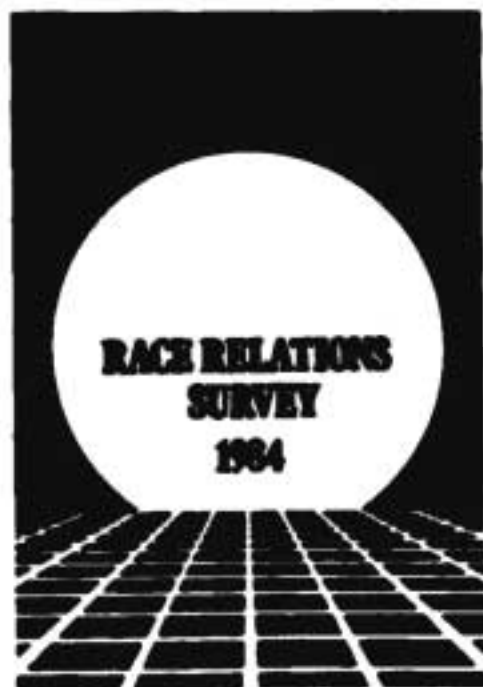
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