

# Labor Against Apartheid

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49 W. 37th Street,  
New York, N.Y. 10018

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## Conference to Host Three Leaders From South African Labor Movement

The first United States appearance of three leaders of the emerging black labor movement in South Africa will highlight a conference on "Labor and South Africa," to be held March 1 and 2 in New York. The conference will take place at the headquarters of District Council 37, 125 Barclay Street in lower Manhattan.

The South African speakers are Pirishaw Camay, general secretary of the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA); Emma Mashinini, general secretary of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (CCAWU) and an as yet unnamed representative from the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).

FOSATU and CUSA are the two major black union federations in South Africa. FOSATU, the largest, has over 100,000 members and is made up of unions in the auto, textile, iron and steel, paper, food, transportation, sugar, and jewelry industries. CUSA represents between 90,000 and 100,000 workers in construction, food and beverage, chemicals, steel and mining.

CCAWU is a leading unaffiliated black union, representing workers mainly in the retail trades. General Secretary Mashinini was arrested and detained without charge or trial by the South African security police for her trade union activities.

The three South Africans were invited to the conference by a group of United States labor leaders including National Hospital

Employees' Union President Henry Nicholas, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists President William Lucy, ACTWU Secretary-Treasurer Jack Sheinkman, UAW Vice President Marc Stepp, AFSCME D.C. 37 Executive Director Victor Gotbaum and District 65/UAW Secretary-Treasurer Cleveland Robinson.

The conference will begin with a Friday evening rally, featuring addresses by one of the South African speakers and by veteran union and civil rights leader Cleveland Robinson, plus entertainment. On Saturday, each of the other South Africans will speak, and there will be a variety of workshops on such topics as international solidarity, U.S. corporate investment in South Africa, and apartheid and the family. There will also be a showing of the ABC television documentary "Adapt or Die" on the South African unions.

Following the conference, the South African visitors will tour the United States, with speaking engagements arranged by unions in a number of cities.

The conference is being coordinated by the New York Area Labor Committee Against Apartheid. Those wishing further information or volunteering assistance may contact the committee, c/o Headwear Joint Board ACTWU, 49 West 37th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018 or telephone 212-840-0550 on Mondays.



A meeting of strikers from the National Union of Textile Workers.  
NUTW is an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions.

## New York City Pension Fund Votes to Divest

The New York City Employees' Retirement System trustees voted in August to withdraw gradually all investments in companies doing business in South Africa. It is the largest of the city's five pension funds and the largest fund in the nation to take such a stand against apartheid.

At the time of the decision, it was estimated that \$665 million of the fund's \$8.3 billion in assets were invested in companies doing business in or with South Africa.

The divestiture will follow several steps. After fifteen months, the fund will sell off all holdings in businesses which deal with

the South African military or police; which provide financial services to that government; or which refuse to abide by the Sullivan Principles, a code which calls for integration of the workplace, equal pay and employment opportunity for "blacks, coloreds and Asians."

After two years, the fund will have no holdings in companies which have signed these principles but which do not allow monitoring or compliance. After three years, a company must have achieved the highest rating in complying with the Sullivan principles. And, finally, after five years, the fund will cease to hold in-

vestments in any companies except those whose activities are deemed "to be of substantial assistance to efforts to eliminate apartheid."

The trustees of the fund, who adopted the divestiture procedure, include the Mayor, Comptroller, President of the City Council, the five borough presidents, and leaders of District Council 37, the Teamsters and the Transit Workers unions.

The gradual divestment plan was the result of almost a full year of bargaining among the principal parties. As many as ten revisions were made in an initial proposal drawn up by the fund's social investment subcommittee. In July, these efforts were supported by a report of a Mayor's Panel on Apartheid which recommended divestment of holdings in American firms that support "this abhorrent system of government."

Carol O'Cleireacain of D.C. 37, who sat on the committee for union trustee Victor Gotbaum, described the trustees' deliberations.

"If the union had not pushed for divestment, the decision would never have been made," she said. "But what we have is a stronger resolution than the union could have come up with on its own. The more we banged heads, the more we improved the plan. As a result of this reasoned discussion and a lot of hard work, we have an approach which is defensible, manageable and prudent.

"Now," she continued, "we have reached the most interesting phase: how to make it work."

O'Cleireacain said that the fund would likely turn to an outside investment manager to deal with the technical problems of selling off unwanted investments while minimizing transaction costs. The trustees hope that their pioneering efforts can serve as an example to other city and state pension funds.

Funds from numerous cities have now voted to sell off South Africa related holdings. In 1982, Philadelphia voted to do so, followed by Washington, Boston and now New York. Five states—Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan and Nebraska—have also passed laws on divestment of South Africa holdings. Support for federal legislation that would curtail all new corporate investment in South Africa is building.



South African gold mine workers.

# The Enforced Relocation of Blacks

Forced removal and relocation of blacks (meaning Africans, Coloureds and Indians) are fundamental to the system of apartheid in South Africa. They are necessary to insure control by the white minority over the land and other resources in both urban and rural areas.

Removals arise out of two basic policies of apartheid: the separation of people along racial and ethnic lines, and control over the allocation and location of labor. Enforcing these policies has led to a staggering level of population displacement.

It is estimated that between 1960 and 1982, the South African regime has forcibly uprooted and relocated over 3.5 million people—nearly ten per cent of the present population. More than two million more are under threat of imminent removal. This means that in twenty years the apartheid regime has, within South Africa, forceably moved half of the number of people that it took the slave trade three centuries to move from Africa to the Americas.

Between three quarters and four fifths of those relocated have been Africans. Most of them have been moved out of the towns, cities and farming areas which constitute the 87 per cent of the country designated for white ownership and occupation. They have been forced into the bantustans, or the barren 13 per cent of the land allocated for Africans.

All relocation of Africans is ultimately linked to the bantustan policy, which is aimed at depriving Africans of their South African citizenship and the possibility of exercising social and political rights in a unitary South Africa. The policy is rooted in the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970, which decrees that all Africans are "citizens" of one or other of the bantustans, and the Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1970, which paves the way for granting "independence to these territories."

The bantustans are not the only locus for relocation. Between one fifth to one quarter of population removals have been carried out under the Group Areas Act of 1950. The Act enforces a system of rigid segregation in residential and trading areas between Indians, Coloureds and Whites. Indian and Coloured communities have been forced to the periphery of the towns and cities.

There are four major types of removal: removals under the pass system; removals of "black spots"; Group Areas Act removals; and the removal of squatters.

The pass system ensures a supply of cheap labour in all sectors of the South African economy. People who do not have "legal" rights to remain in towns, and town dwellers who lose their jobs or their houses

are arrested, summarily tried, fined or imprisoned and then removed to the bantustans. As a result of the pass laws, the majority of South African workers are migrant workers, living apart from their families for much of their lives. Even when families live together in towns a pass raid might force them apart. In 1982, there was a 30 per cent increase in trials for pass offences. Over one million people have been arrested under the pass laws in the past six years.

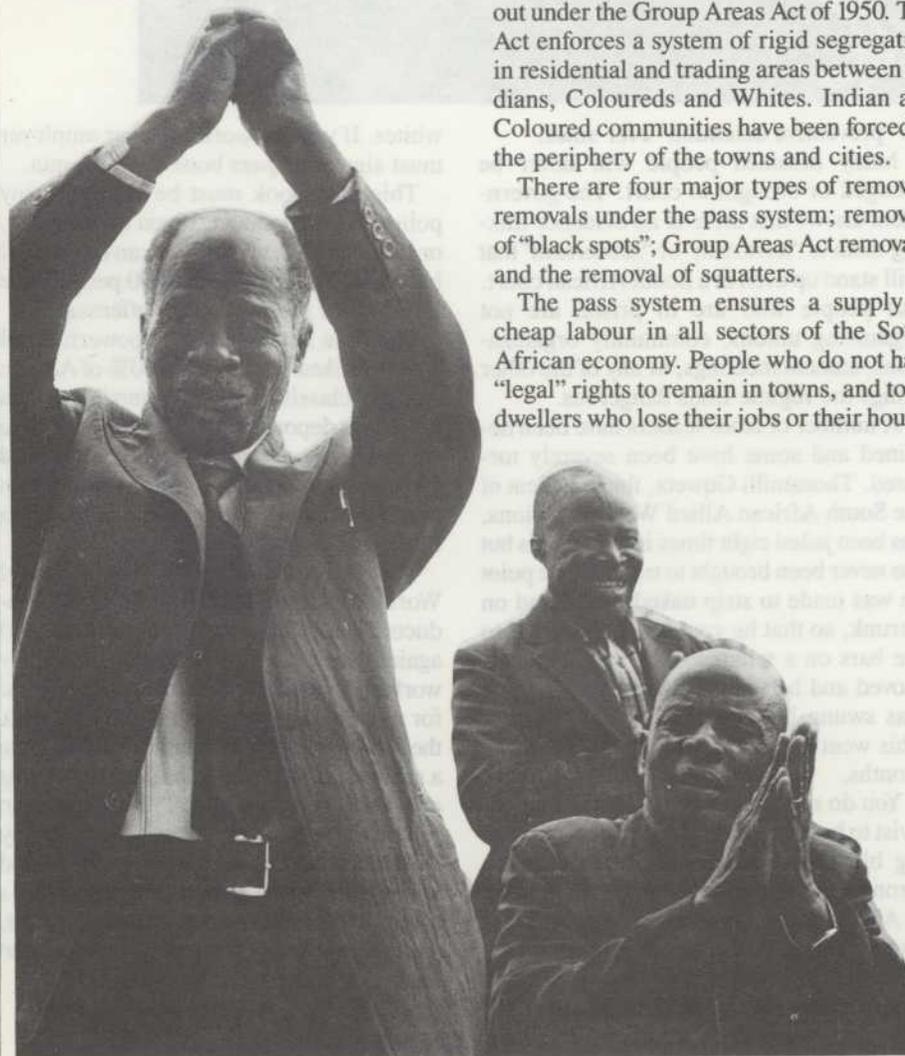
In the countryside forced removals are carried out to meet the labour requirements of white farmers. Increased mechanization on farms has led to eviction of thousands of tenants. Without a tenancy the ex-farm labourers are termed "illegal" occupants of white-owned land. They are forced to move by the regime into the bantustans. An estimated 1,120,000 people have been evicted from farms since 1960.

A "black spot" is land occupied by Africans and situated within a "white" area, generally a farm. It is either African freehold land, purchased before 1913, or land owned by the Church but used by Africans. The majority of "black spots" were and are in rural areas.

This type of removal forces people into the bantustans. Freehold land owned by Africans is taken from them. Landowners are compensated with inferior land in the bantustans. Tenants are forced into closer settlements, where they may keep no stock.

The Group Areas Act enforces residential segregation among people of different races. Indians and Coloureds are forced to move from the inner city areas, in which they have lived for centuries, into townships divided strictly along racial lines. Up to the end of 1979 about 1,100,229 Coloured and Indian families had been moved under the Group Areas Act.

Finally, there is the destruction of squatter communities. To reduce the numbers of people living in towns in 'white' South Africa, the regime has provided minimal housing for nearly eight years. People without accommodation have set up squatter communities which are on the periphery of the major cities. They live in make-shift houses of cardboard and plastic. With great ferocity these shacks are destroyed and the people forced into bantustans. Entire communities like Unibel and Nyanga have been bulldozed to the ground. People are baton charged, teargassed, arrested and removed. Most recently the people of Crossroads in Cape Town, who had secured permission to stay in their community, have received notice that they are to be removed, if they are "legal" urban residents, to a new township, Khayelitsha. The township is being built on a site surrounded on three sides by military installations.



# Labor *Against* Apartheid

## Repression In Apartheid South Africa



No doubt many Americans were shocked this summer when they turned on the TV news and saw South African police using whips and tear gas to disperse peaceful demonstrators. It is even more shocking to realize that what we saw on television was only a more visible version of the repression black South Africans live with every day.

Anyone who in any way threatens the apartheid system of white supremacy—whether by organizing a union, speaking out publicly, forming a student or community organization, or even attending a funeral for someone killed by the police—knows they are likely to be arrested. In the first eight months of this year, 572 people were known to be detained without charge or trial. Many more were arrested in September in the protests and rioting that followed the enactment of the new South African constitution which continues the disenfranchisement of the 71% African majority. In one raid alone 500 students were picked up and detained.

Under the Internal Security act a police colonel who "has reason to believe" that a person has committed "terrorism" or "subversion" (or is withholding information) may order indefinite detention. One man, Abel Dude of Soweto, has been held without trial for two and a half years. He was arrested in April of 1982, and has been held

in "preventive detention" ever since.

Many detained people will never be charged or brought to court. The government knows that there is no evidence linking them to "terrorism" or "subversion" that will stand up even in a South African court. But people who are in prison are not organizing unions, community organizations, student meetings, or any of the other things the regime finds dangerous.

A number of labor leaders have been detained and some have been severely tortured. Thozamilli Gqweta, the president of the South African Allied Workers Unions, has been jailed eight times in three years but has never been brought to trial. At one point he was made to strip naked, and stand on a trunk, so that he could be handcuffed to the bars on a window. The trunk was removed and he was left dangling. Then he was swung like a pendulum and beaten. This went on virtually every day for three months.

You do not have to be a leader or an activist to be picked up by the police. Just being black and in the wrong place at the wrong time is enough.

All Africans must carry a pass book stating where they live, where they work, who they are married to, and especially whether they have permission to stay in the 87% of South Africa legally reserved for

whites. If you are working, your employer must sign your pass book every month.

This pass book must be shown to any policeman on demand. If you don't have it, or if any detail is wrong, you can be arrested immediately. Last year 200,000 people were arrested for these pass law offenses.

The pass laws are also a powerful tool against strikes. For the up to 60% of African workers classified as "migrants," loss of a job brings deportation to a barren rural area incapable of supporting life. If you are fired for going on strike, as often happens in South Africa, you and your family face a future of destitution and hunger.

The August strike by the General Workers Union against P.A. Concrete Products showed how the pass laws are used against strikers. The company fired forty workers for striking, then had them arrested for remaining in the area illegally. In 1980, the Johannesburg city administration broke a strike of 10,000 municipal workers, most of whom were "migrants." Everyone who refused to return to work was picked up by the police and herded into a compound where they were kept overnight, 60 to a room. In the morning the police used clubs, and rifle butts to herd the workers onto busses, sending them out of the city.

## Council Pursuing Ban on South Africa Purchases

Following a June 28 City Council hearing on Intro. 619, the bill designed to prohibit the city from purchasing South African products and restrict it from doing business with companies connected to that regime, discussions got underway between labor representatives and government leaders to reach agreement on a version of the bill acceptable to all parties.

"Revisions of the bill have been drafted," said Vincent Montalbano, District Council 37's Associate Director of Political Action. "We expect there to be another City Council hearing on Intro. 619 in the near future. We feel confident that the city will adopt a strong bill that will set an example for other cities around the country."

Since the June 28 hearing, at which testimony was given by international and local union representatives, government officials and others speaking for a variety of groups, two significant events that strengthened the bill's chances of passing occurred: a New York City Mayor's Task Force in its 34-page

report supported the basic tenets of Intro. 619; and the trustees of the NYC Retirement System, the largest public pension fund in the United States, voted unanimously to withdraw investments of approximately \$665 million over a five-year period from companies doing business in South Africa.

Intro. 619 was initiated by AFSCME Local 371 in June 1983, when its workers at a city-run shelter protested serving South African pineapple dessert products to the clients. The bill is sponsored by City Council President Carol Bellamy and members Ruth Messinger, Wendell Foster, Arthur Katzman, Carolyn Maloney and Enoch Williams. Hearings are held before the Government Operations Committee, chaired by Peter Vallone, who has also indicated support for the bill.



Lathe operators at the Railex Corporation in Queens, New York.

## Workers Teach Their Boss A Lesson About Liberty

The recognition of historical similarities between two countries has led one group of workers and their boss to the same conclusion: no matter how profitable, doing business with South Africa cannot be justified morally.

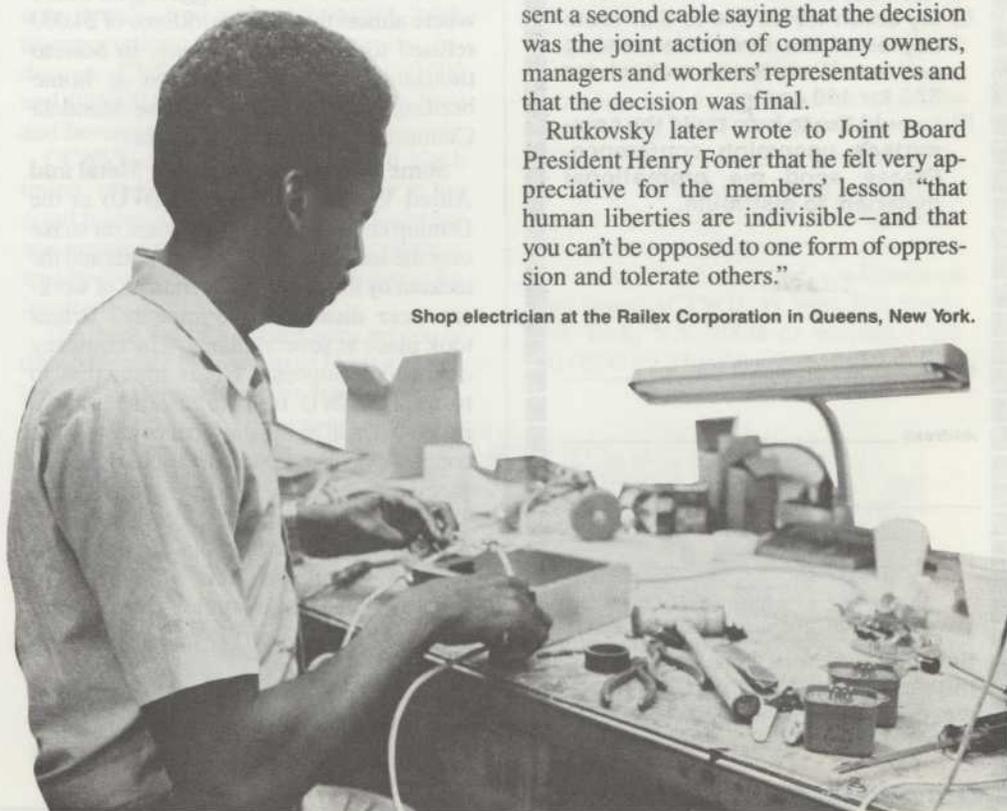
According to the Fur, Leather and Machine Workers' Joint Board UFCW, in 1972, the Railex Corporation of Queens, New York began work producing rails, conveyors and switches for a company in South Africa. But company president Abe Rutkovsky soon found that "the work just didn't seem to be moving through the shop." So, he called in his shipping and production managers, both black union members, to ask about the source of the bottlenecks.

"They looked at me and replied, 'Mr. Rutkovsky, you're Jewish. How would you feel if that equipment was going to Nazi Germany instead of South Africa?'"

Their question made such an impression on Rutkovsky that he cabled his South African customer that the deal was off because of the South African government's racist policies.

When the customer protested, Rutkovsky sent a second cable saying that the decision was the joint action of company owners, managers and workers' representatives and that the decision was final.

Rutkovsky later wrote to Joint Board President Henry Foner that he felt very appreciative for the members' lesson "that human liberties are indivisible—and that you can't be opposed to one form of oppression and tolerate others."



Shop electrician at the Railex Corporation in Queens, New York.

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If you are interested in supporting the independent black trade union movement in South Africa, we invite you to join the New York Area Labor Committee Against Apartheid. To receive meeting notices and/or to subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, please fill out the coupon below.

- I would like to participate. Please notify me of upcoming meetings and activities.
- I would like to receive the newsletter, *Labor Against Apartheid*. Here's a check for \$5 for the next four issues.
- My union would like to distribute copies of the newsletter among our members. Here's a check for \$25 for 100 copies.
- I would like to help build the committee's upcoming conference. Please send me promotional materials to distribute.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Union affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Send to New York Area Labor Committee Against Apartheid, c/o Headwear Joint Board ACTWU, 49 W. 37th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018.

## IN BRIEF

More than 40,000 miners went on their first "legal" strike after rejecting a wage offer made by the Chamber of Mines. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) reported that nine African miners were killed after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at them. More than 600 miners were injured. NUM's general secretary, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared that the police "attacked and inflicted injuries on workers who had gathered peacefully and in an orderly manner to consider the Chamber's offer." The strike was the strongest at the Vaal Reefs, the world's biggest gold mine, where almost the entire workforce of 24,000 refused to go down the mine. In Soweto thousands of workers stayed at home heeding the call of the Release Mandela Committee to support the strike.

Some 2000 members of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) at the Dunlop company in Durban went on strike over the suspension of shop stewards and the lockout by the company. Hundreds of workers were dismissed. "Sympathy" strikes took place at several plants. The company obtained a Supreme Court injunction to restrain MAWU from organizing what it called "illegal" sympathy strikes around the country. The issue of the Dunlop strike was raised at the recent conference of the British Trades Union Congress. Geoff Schreiner, MAWU branch secretary, has said that it is likely that Dunlop strikers will get a lot of support from overseas unions as the company was known world-wide as a "union basher."

About 2000 workers at the Progress Knitting factory in Hammarsdale went on strike to protest against the dismissal of a union member.

At the annual general meeting of the union, over 1,200 workers from the Sweet Ford and Allied Workers Union unanimously condemned the "new constitution" as racist, undemocratic and anti-worker. FOSATU and other unions conducted a nation-wide campaign to urge Coloured and Indian voters not to vote on the August elections to the racially segregated tri-cameral parliament.

SARMCOL shareholders were given a surprise when representatives of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union walked into their annual meeting and distributed a document detailing the union's grievances. The union accused the company of not negotiating a recognition agreement "constructively" and paying wages "far below" poverty scales. SARMCOL is a British company operating in South Africa.

Following a conference in Harare convened by the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), Dennis Akumu, secretary-general of the organization, said that West European and Australian seamen and dockworkers had resolved to implement an oil and arms embargo against South Africa.

The Minister of Manpower, Pietie du Plessis, reported in Parliament that the total number of industrial accidents in South Africa in 1983 was 311,648. A total of 23,305 black workers were permanently disabled and another 1,816 died as a result of injuries sustained at work in 1983.

A series of work stoppages took place at the Volkswagen plant in Uitenhage to protest against working hours and wages. The company closed its plant for 5 days.