

It is an enlightened party, but it would make no changes in how the wealth of South Africa is distributed. Its main supporters are often rich businessmen, like Mr. Harry Oppenheimer, who owns many of the mines. It offers some black people a share in the government, but it does not offer black workers a share in the wealth that those workers produce.

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#### AFRICAN WORKERS TAKE HOLD IN NATAL

Following the concerted efforts of workers in Durban and Pietermaritzburg the African trade unions which were started there last year are continuing to expand and become firmly established. Three unions are now operating in Durban - in the Textile, Clothing and Metal and Allied industries. Meanwhile, membership of the General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund (which offers death benefits to its members) has reached 15,000. The Benefit Fund and the three unions also have branches in Pietermaritzburg.

In the short time in which these unions have been operating in Natal, their membership has increased dramatically. The membership of the Metal and Allied Union stands at over 3000, that of the Textile Workers Union at 2000 and that of the Clothing Workers Union at 1000. The unions are at present embarking on extensive training programmes to train workers in union organisation at a factory level.

This progress has been made in spite of attempts by Government and employers to halt the expansion of these unions. Employers have in many cases refused to negotiate with the unions - but as the power of the unions has increased, so more employers have been forced to recognise that their workers want to be represented by a union. At the recent strikes in the textile industry in Durban, for example, the management for the first time negotiated with union officials.

The Government has also attempted to halt the expansion of unions amongst Black workers by banning four of the white trade union organisers who had been active in establishing these unions. Following the bannings, however, hundreds of workers streamed to the trade union offices in Durban to offer their assistance and it is clear that the unions are not going to be defeated by arbitrary Government action of this sort.

#### ADVICE BUREAU TO OFFER BENEFITS TO MEMBERS

In an important move which will benefit thousands of workers in the Western Cape, the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau has proposed offering death and retirement benefits to all its members. This is to form the subject of a special general meeting of members of the Bureau.

The Executive Committee of the Bureau has proposed that for a subscription of 20c/week, all its members be offered death benefits which cover the member's entire family, and retirement benefits which are paid to the member when he retires or leaves the Bureau. Under the proposed scheme, the following death benefits are offered:

On death of a member	R100
On death of his wife/her husband	R100
On death of child between 14 and 21 years old	R100
On death of child between 10 and 14 years old	R 60
On death of child between 6 and 10 years old	R 40
On death of child between 3 and 6 years old	R 30
On death of child under 3 years old	R 20
On death of parent over 65 years old	R 20

Retirement Benefits

These benefits depend on how long the person has been a member of the Fund. If a member simply leaves the Fund before reaching retirement age (sixty years for males, fifty five for females) he will receive the following amount according to his number of completed years of membership of the Fund.

No. of completed years membership	Total payment	No. of completed years membership	Total payment
1	4,70	5	25,80
10	56,20	15	91,30
20	131,10	25	175,50
30	224,70	35	278,50
40	337,00	44	387,20

Proportional payments will be made for the years between those shown on the table.

If the member leaves the Fund at retirement age then in addition to the above benefit he will receive a bonus which will be determined from time to time by the Committee of Management of the Fund (dependant on how much money is in the Fund at the time). The bonus will also be based on how long the person has been a member of the Fund.

These moves are obviously important to the thousands of workers who at present have no financial protection against death or retirement. The Executive Committee of the Bureau is confident that the benefit will be extremely popular with workers and expect a large attendance at their Meeting.

While the meeting is only for members of the Bureau, all workers over the age of 16yrs can become members of the Bureau, and can join at the Meeting where they will also be able to apply to join the benefit scheme.

STRIKES AT LEYLAND

On March 4th and 5th workers at the Mobeni (Durban) plant of Leyland went on strike. 175 out of the 220 workers, all assembly line workers, went out on strike. They were all members of Mr. Mthethwas African Metal and Allied Workers Union.

The cause of the strike was management's refusal to negotiate with the Union who represent a vast majority of the workers at the plant. The Chairman of the parent company in Britain was in South Africa during the time of the strike. The Union asked Lord Stokes, the Chairman, to come to Durban to settle the unrest. He refused to do this.

All the strikers were taken back after two days having forfeited their pay for the days on which they struck, and thus the strike ended. On Wednesday the 16th and Thursday 17th of March, 65 workers were retrenched. All these workers were assembly line workers, all had struck and 14 of the lot were members of the Works Committee which originally had six members.

The agreement that was reached that ended the strike was that Leyland recognised that its members belong to trade unions. Although management refused to negotiate with the unions directly it will negotiate with the union via any union official who is employed by Leyland. The reason given for refusing to negotiate with the union is that 'the union is unregistered - it has nothing to do with the colour of the employees'.