

## HOW CAN REGISTERED UNIONS HELP AFRICAN WORKERS?

We have said elsewhere in Abasebenzi that workers should stand together to receive what is due to them from the employers - no worker should dominate another, no worker must discriminate against another and advance his own position at the expense of other workers.

But white workers are already in a privileged position at the expense of the black worker. Therefore when they offer to help the black worker, he will naturally be very suspicious of their motives. So what kind of help can the registered union give to the black worker?

We suggest the following :-

They can:

- 1) Protect existing black unions by supporting them and standing behind them. This will show the employers and the government that all the workers are prepared to stand together for their rights
- 2) Assist black workers who want to start unions where these do not exist - not by dominating or controlling them; but by providing practical assistance in establishing independent unions controlled by the workers
- 3) Inform black factory committees and unions about industrial negotiations with employers and the results of these negotiations
- 4) Insist that black unions be allowed to attend industrial negotiations. They should refuse to negotiate on behalf of the African workers and insist that the African representatives attend the negotiations themselves

#### HOMELAND LEADER ATTACKS PARALLEL UNIONS

At the same time, Mr Barney Dladla of the Kwazulu Cabinet, has attacked the idea of parallel unions. He said that TUCSA ( the Trade Union Council of South Africa - which has only White and Coloured unions ) was trying to control African unions by forming parallel unions. By establishing parallel unions, TUCSA hoped that the hand of white leadership would rest heavily on these new unions.

He claimed that TUCSA had moved to isolate the new African unions in Natal. It had not helped during the 1973 strikes, and it had not condemned the government when four trade unionists were put under house arrest in January 1974.

"The registered unions are turning their backs on the African workers". It is these trade unions that were responsible for negotiating for thousands of African workers and "in many cases I am sorry to say that they agreed to the most shocking levels of wages for African labourers".

Mr Dladla is well-known in Natal among workers as a champion of their causes, and has intervened to help striking workers on several occasions. He has also addressed workers' meetings and encouraged the formation of trade unions.