

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 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 cause, and has intervened to help striking workers on several occasions. He has also addressed workers' meetings and encouraged the formation of trade unions.

WORKERS' ADVISORY PROJECT

The Workers' Advisory Project was established by a group of people which includes workers, students on the UCT Wages Commission, lecturers from the University and others. The aim of the project is to provide workers with background information on the labour situation in Cape Town, to provide education on the industrial legislation, and training in how to run works committees or trade unions, how to handle complaints, how to negotiate with management and so on.

The project consists of a lengthy "training manual" covering all these aspects (in English and Xhosa), and weekly meetings on a Saturday afternoon where discussions on the se different subjects take place.

The first meeting was held on Saturday, 4th May. Workers from 11 different factories and firms attended the meeting, which covered a general introduction to the course, and where workers gave their ideas of what should be dealt with in the course. The first sections of the manual were given to those who attended.

Workers were very excited about the course and keen to learn about the information they need in order to form a strong, united worker organisation. They were particularly keen to learn about the negotiating procedures laid down by law for determining their wages and working conditions and to be trained in the techniques of negotiating with management at their factories. These subjects will be covered soon in the course.

The workers also emphasised the need for more workers to join them and combine to form a united, well-informed force through which the workers could all strive together for better wages and working conditions. They emphasised the need for thorough education and training of workers if they were to be successful in their efforts and called on other factory committees to come to the Advice Project meetings, and on workers without committees to come and hear how to set up these committees.