

Natal students moving toward tighter co-ordination

STUDENT organisation in Natal is progressing rapidly. A regional structure is to be launched and work to consolidate and establish SRC's is well under way.

Saspu National spoke to a Natal student organiser for an overview of organisation in the area.

"There is a strong feeling from SRC's and others students that they need this structure to coordinate activities both regionally and nationally", he said.

A meeting of all existing SRC's in the area is to form the regional body. It will be able to take up campaigns, help students form SRC's and develop alternative education programmes.

Students all over the region are refusing to pay school fees and demanding free and adequate books.

Prefects have been forcibly abolished by students in virtually all schools. But in some of these

schools teachers and principals refuse to recognise democratic SRC's.

The Maritzburg Students Congress (Masco), has already been set up as a sub-regional structure in the Pietermaritzburg area. It has branches in rural areas like Mphopomeni near Howick. Some schools in the area already set up SRC's.

In the Northern Natal area, Sibongile, Dundee students have an SRC, but in Newcastle students are still trying to set them up.

All schools in Lamontville, KwaMashu and Clermont have SRC's. Lamontville SRC's were developed as democratic alternative to the now defunct prefects. They have a good relationship with teachers.

The KwaMashu SRC coordinates SRCs in different schools in KwaMashu.

On the South Coast in Umlazi, Klaarwater and Umbumbulu many

of the schools have SRC's. The Committee of Austerville Organised Students (Caos) is spearheading the campaign for SRC's in Wentworth.

In many areas students still have to overcome resistance from the DET, Inkatha-inspired Amabutho and teachers.

In the 1980 school boycotts Inkatha joined police in attacking students. Ever since then they have been trying to crush progressive student organisation.

Last year a Cosas leader was killed and other student organisers face assassination threats. Inkatha doesn't want democratic SRC's in KwaZulu. SRC members and other students face constant harassment, especially in the rural areas.

School fees were supposed to be abolished, but Inkatha MP Sabello announced on Radio Zulu that students must pay up.

The most recent case was the attack on National Education Crisis Conference delegates in Durban.



Natal students are refusing to pay school fees



Natal workers are paid starvation wages

Kwazulu don't want Cosatu

AMIGO International Textiles in Madadeni is paying workers R15-R20 a week. And they seem to have the Kwazulu government's blessing for these wages.

When Cosatu tried to get recognition for a union to fight these wages, management said the Kwazulu government had told them not to recognise any union, because they did not want unions in KwaZulu.

Now Inkatha says Cosatu organisers should not even live in KwaZulu because they are enemies of Inkatha.

This was said during a raid on Cosatu offices in Newcastle by Inkatha and the police. They searched the offices and instructed organisers to take the posters off the wall.

After this raid, 3000 workers from all seven Cosatu affiliates in New-

castle met to discuss what was to be done about Inkatha's attacks, and about the bad conditions facing workers.

They condemned the "super-exploitation and starvation wages paid to workers by factories operating in bantustans," listing places in Kwazulu where conditions are particularly bad.

They condemned the KwaZulu Transport Company for increasing fares too often, and resolved to form a democratic Commuters Committee to take the issue up with the company.

Unskilled workers in Northern Natal earn less than R300 a month, and so the fight for a living wage and better working conditions is a pressing issue they will be taking up jointly.

They also resolved to set up joint



Newcastle Cosatu members meet to discuss Inkatha raid

shop-steward councils in the area, and are looking seriously at the issue of one union per industry.

They strongly condemned the formation of Inkatha's Allied Workers Union of SA (Awusa). "The workers do not regard Awusa as a union, because it is going to assist and pro-

mote the free enterprise system," says Mandla Cele, Mwusa organiser.

"This move is divisive and can only benefit the employers and their collaborators," the meeting agreed.

The meeting expressed full confidence in Cosatu and its leaders, condemned the attacks by Inkatha, and encouraged workers to participate in forming civic, youth and student organisations in the area.

At a meeting of all Cosatu unions in Newcastle at the end of February, representatives of the eight unions present passed these resolutions:

- that they have full confidence in Cosatu and Cosatu's leaders;
- they support one union per industry because its strengthens worker unity;
- they condemn super-exploitation and the payment of starvation wages to bantustan workers in places like Madadeni, eZakheni and KwaSithembe;
- that a joint shop stewards' council will be formed in Newcastle and surrounding areas;

● they will fight for a living wage and better conditions of employment;

● they condemn the government's failure to create more jobs; where jobs are created, this must not be in the bantustans;

● they condemn the KwaZulu Transport Company for increasing fares too often, and resolved to elect democratic Commuters Committee to handle the issue of bus fares, and meet with the Board of Directors of the company;

● they will encourage workers to participate fully in the formation of Civic, Youth and Students organisations in and around Newcastle;

● they condemn in the strongest possible terms the formation of a rival union to Cosatu, and disagree that there were workers who were dissatisfied with the resolutions taken at the formation of Cosatu; the rival union can only benefit the employers.

The last resolution followed the invasion of Newcastle's Cosatu offices by Inkatha members who assaulted people there.

Community unity in Sibongile

RESIDENTS IN Sibongile near Dundee may never have to pay rent again.

When councillors tried to increase rents to R28 in February last year, people stopped paying altogether.

They later discovered that according to the township title deeds, after twenty years, Sibongile residents no longer had to pay rent.

The township was built in the 1960's, and since then, with every rent increase, residents have been promised roads and water-borne sewerage. But the councillors have consistently broken their promises.

As community unity grew around the rents issue, community councillors brought in vigilantes from sur-

rounding areas like Washbank, Newcastle and Ladysmith.

They were however, driven away by the youth.

The Youth Organisation and Civic Association were both formed in February last year to oppose the rent increases and the alliance between the two has strengthened their struggle.

Sibongile students were also so strongly organised, that Mr Mazibuko, the principal of Talana High School in Dundee, warned other principals to refuse them admission because they were 'trouble makers'.

Mazibuko had admitted students from other areas claiming there was

no room for the Sibongile students.

When schools opened on January 8, students demanded the resignation of Mazibuko, blaming him for the resignation of two very popular teachers.

Students marched in protest to the principal's office. The police were called and used teargas, birdshot and sjamboks to 'deal' with the students.

Fifteen students were detained. Those detained alleged further assault inside the police hippos.

On January 12, parents met to discuss the issue, despite a heavy police presence outside the hall.

Students returned to school on January 20 and succeeded in forcing Mazibuko out of the school.