

The South African Trade Union Struggle

By Bayard Rustin
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multi-racial unions with office equipment, peaceful transformation of South Africa.

In recent years, South Africa has been witness to a remarkable upsurge in the black trade union movement. Although the leaders of that movement are subjected to harassment, intimidation, arrest and, sometimes, death, although dozens of trade unionists languish in jails and are subjected to torture and degradation, a number of trade union federations have emerged and shown substantial growth since 1979. The largest of these unions is the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). FOSATU's membership has climbed within the last year from 59,000 to 95,000. The Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA) has likewise exhibited phenomenal growth and now includes 50,000 black workers in its membership.

In all, less than 200,000 of South Africa's black workers belong to trade unions. The organizing of a larger proportion of the black work force has been blocked through the South African government's repression of trade union leaders, through the impounding of union records and property, and through the disruption of union meetings.

Moreover, because some 60% of South Africa's must engage in a painstaking process of training and developing new black trade union leaders.

Without question, the road ahead for South Africa's black workers is perilous and difficult. But the amazing progress they have made in recent years indicates that the movement has unlimited potential for becoming a principal factor in the toppling of racism and in the establishment of democracy.

Like Poland's workers, South Africa's black workers are motivated by a simple desire to live in dignity, to speak freely, to work in a healthy environment at a decent rate of pay, and to determine their own destinies. It is this democratic impulse which makes support for South Africa's black trade unions so essential to the promotion of human rights. It, likewise, is the reason why in 1981 the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO adopted a "Program of Action in Support of Black Trade Unionists in South Africa". The program, which is raising funds from individual workers, international unions, and union locals, seeks to provide labor education for black South African trade unionists, to promote union organizing and recruit-

ment, to establish a legal fund to defend arrested and harassed workers, and to provide black and typewriters, and duplicating machines.

Some voices in the United States and in the black community have argued that the best strategy toward South Africa is one of boycotts and disinvestment. But in the view of many respected advocates of democracy and human rights, such a policy would lead to the isolation of democratic elements within South Africa. As Franklin Thomas, president of the Ford Foundation and a respected black leader, has argued, "Maximizing U.S. influence in South Africa requires both contact and actions and words that make our fundamental opposition to apartheid unmistakably clear."

Many South African black trade unionists agree. After all, they have made their most substantial progress in organizing workers in factories run by Western based multi-nationals. Such Western-based corporations are subject to pressures exerted by trade unions and human rights advocates within their own countries and are frequently less resistant to unionization.

In his recent speech to the members of the British Parliament in Westminster, President Reagan called for a worldwide crusade for democracy and freedom. If these words are to be more than empty rhetoric, they must be backed by significant American support for those organizations inside South Africa working for democratic change. And the cornerstone of any such democratic strategy must be the support of South Africa's young but growing black trade union movement. American trade unions, led by the AFL-CIO, are beginning to develop such concrete support. It remains to be seen whether they will be joined in this endeavor by other segments, both black and white, of the American community.

Committee Non-Endorsement

As a candidate who made a second run for the office of Sheriff of Durham County on June 29, 1982, I wish to thank all who endorsed as well as supported me in that election. I shall treasure the faith that you placed in me. I felt that I was more qualified to hold that office in terms of my former police work of 22 years, my training in criminal justice, and heading a program at North Carolina Central University since 1970. This is not said as a person who is on an ego trip and is bitter about the recent loss. I have never been a bitter person nor has the same been said or written about me in my former employment and twelve years in Durham. For such a reason this letter has two parts: one of genuine thanks to those who busied themselves to vote on all the candidates and the amendments, exercising their democratic right. Again, thanks to those who endorsed me and other individuals who supported me. The second part of this letter relates to the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People.

When I ran for the office of Durham County Sheriff in 1978, I was endorsed by the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People. In the election of June 29, 1982, I was not endorsed by that committee. Another gentleman received its support. What had happened between 1978 and 1982, as that time span related to me, remains a mystery. Since the reporting in *The Carolina Times*, July 3, 1982, I must in my own conscience set the record clear and the Committee in its proper perspective. When I appeared before the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People prior to the recent election, a basic question was put to me — never inquired of me at North Carolina Central University by the top administration in these twelve years, nor asked of me by this Committee in 1978. I was asked if I had employed any blacks in my NCCU program in Criminal Justice. My reply was that I had none at this time and further explained the "why". This minor official from NCCU's administration, objecting to my explanation, said to the Committee and to me: "This is an untruth. Don't mislead this Committee." I was flabbergasted. The inference was that I had prejudice against blacks in job employment, was a racist, and not worthy of the Committee's endorsement. In corroboration of this incident, *The Carolina Times* stated in its issue of July 3, 1982, "That backing fell through Sunday when it was noted at the committee's meeting on endorsements that Bowe's entire staff at NCCU is white and the chances of blacks joining the staff were slim to almost none."

The tragedy of this indictment makes it all the more pitiful because this minor official from NCCU understood fully that I have had part-time black teachers from the time I began the program in 1970; and that recently, I had a full-time black in the teaching program. This minor official knows first hand that it is most difficult to locate blacks with the minimum master's degree in Criminal Justice. He knows full well that from the Consent Decree between the North Carolina Board of Governors, HEW, and NCCU that no one could be hired, looking toward any degree of permanency, unless that person holds a terminal degree in the area of his or her specialization. Not being able to find black personnel, it was necessary to use part-time personnel and it was both black and white. It was equally necessary to let the one full-time instructor leave because we could not guarantee him any possible degree of permanency without the terminal degree. These results ensuing from the implementation of the Consent Decree and the effect it has upon personnel hiring policies were no decisions of mine. And, for this minor official to give the Committee on the Affairs of Black People the inference that this was an anti-racial decision on my part reveals a lack of knowledge about the guidelines under which the University operates, reveals a lack of academic integrity, reveals a lack of sheer character in the area of human relations, and reveals on his part a "cheap political shot."

If the Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People had made the choice of endorsing another candidate in the race for Durham County Sheriff and was using him to provide a reason for its non-endorsement — contrary to what was done in 1978 — then he was "used", which again, does not speak well for any person aspiring to higher levels of administration where truth is more important than untruth.

Again, I thank the committee on the Affairs of Black People for its endorsement in 1978. And, to refuse that endorsement in 1982 because of a blatant untruth simply says to me that there were more fundamental academic sources from which the Committee could have sought verification on statements made glibly, and especially by this minor official. After all, North Carolina Central University has a Chancellor and a Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs — high authorities on faculty personnel — who is hired and who is not hired. And, neither of these was running for the office of Durham County Sheriff. If *The Carolina Times* carries an accurate account of why I was not endorsed, and it seems that it does when I correlate the spoken statement that I was misleading the Committee, then, in my opinion the Committee owes me and NCCU an apology for maligning my name and letting stand the alleged assumption that the University permits the engagement of anti-racial policies.

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Letters to the Editor:

Thanks Independents

Allow me this opportunity to thank the 9,126 independent minded individuals of the greater Durham's voting public who of their own free will cast their ballots in my favor on June 29, 1982. I am indeed and shall always be grateful for this manifestation of support of my candidacy for one of three seats to which Durham County is entitled in the North Carolina House of Representatives.

What was most gratifying is that these 9,126 individuals supported my candidacy without the endorsement of any self centered faction, interest group, committee or population segment which attempts by prepared slate or other methods to persuade, influence, force, bully, intimidate or coerce others to their way of thinking on Election Day. Much appreciated is the fact that these 9,126 independent minded acting of their own free will dared to exercise their ballot with integrity and without fear or favor in behalf of my candidacy.

While my efforts to return to the North Carolina General Assembly as one of your three Representatives were unsuccessful on this occasion, please be

assured that I view my endeavors in this regard as an entirely positive experience from the date on which I formally declared as a candidate (May 5, 1982) through the present and certainly beyond.

It is my intention as has been my purpose for the past twenty-one years to continue to work for and in behalf of the greater Durham Community to help this area succeed as an All-American County — which in my perception it most deservedly is. Again, thank you for providing me with this opportunity. My wife Dolores, and our three daughters join me in this expression of gratitude.

Finally, permit me this occasion to urge all of the readers of this letter to exercise your free and independent will to vote for and support the individuals of your choice on July 27, 1982. Who you cast your ballot for on that date is important to me; however, it is more essential that you, your family, friends and associates exercise your precious franchise in an independent fashion on that Tuesday. Please vote.

A. J. Howard Clement, III

Ministers Contest

Letters to the editor MUST BE SIGNED BY THE WRITER and a return address given.

What appears to be a very legitimate letter pertaining to the Ministers Popularity Contest was received by *The Carolina Times* this week, but will not be published until the writer comes to sign his/her name.

However, the letter was misdirected. *The Carolina Times* DID NOT run this contest and only contributed space for the Edgemont group — a fact which was clearly stated in that space repeatedly. We did, however, try to advise the group, early in the proceedings, of the very points made in the letter. All correspondence pertaining to the contest should be addressed to the Edgemont Community Center, NOT to *The Carolina Times*.

If no one comes forth to sign the letter for publication by Monday, July 19, we will forward the letter to the Edgemont Community Center.

—Editor

OLDSMOBILE OMEGA... THE SMALL OLDS THAT LIVES UP TO A BIG REPUTATION.



OLDSMOBILE
OMEGA...

Even today,
there's still room
to do it with style.

The compact Omega offers Oldsmobile quality and style, and that says a lot! Olds has always meant superb styling, fine quality, advanced engineering; a smooth ride, plus value. Olds Omega for '82 offers all that...and more! More estimated miles per gallon than last year with the remarkably efficient electronic-fuel-injected, 4 cylinder engine. Impressive traction with front-wheel-drive, and a surprising amount of room for five adults. Omega is a truly handsome and prestigious small car that offers the quality and style you expect from Oldsmobile.

41 26
Hwy. Est. EPA Est. mpg

Use estimated mpg for comparison. Your mileage may differ depending upon speed, distance, weather. Actual highway mileage lower. Some Oldsmobiles are equipped with engines produced by other G.M. divisions, subsidiaries or affiliated companies worldwide. See your dealer for details.

Oldsmobile

We've had one built for you.