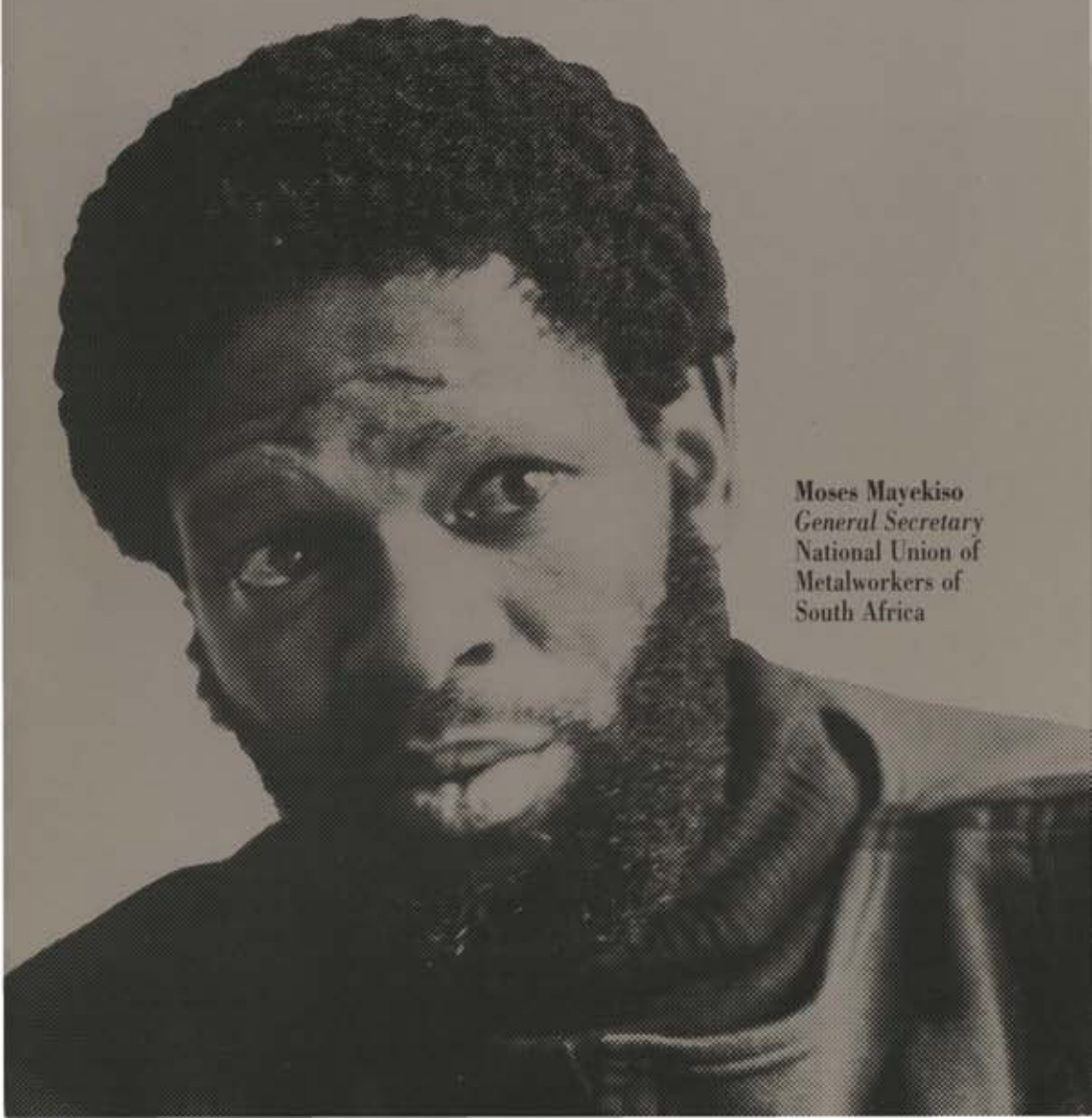


**DON'T
LET SOUTH AFRICA
HANG
THIS
LABOR
LEADER.**



Moses Mayekiso
General Secretary
National Union of
Metalworkers of
South Africa

THE DEATH PENALTY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING?

Even the headquarters of South African labor unions are not safe—here the Security Forces stage a raid on the offices of the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

Impact Visuals



South Africa's apartheid government may execute—by hanging—one of that nation's leading black trade unionists—Moses Mayekiso—a former autoworker who has been charged with treason.

After his June, 1986, arrest when he returned to the Johannesburg airport from trade union meetings in Europe, Moses was confined in prison even though no charges had been filed against him. Finally in April, 1987, the other shoe fell on him: Moses Mayekiso, his brother and three others were formally charged with treason, sedition and subversion.

Mayekiso is the General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).

The charges focus on community organizing activities in the black township of Alexandra outside Johannesburg—ranging from organizing rent and consumer boycotts

against the town council to encouraging the South African police and security forces to leave the township.

The removal of Moses Mayekiso is a naked attempt to weaken South Africa's black trade unions, which in recent years have emerged as the key force opposing the repressive white-minority regime.

If Moses hangs—or even if he is jailed indefinitely—South Africa's black unions would suffer a severe setback. So would local community groups, students, church activists and many others in the forefront of the anti-apartheid movement.

That's why the UAW has launched a campaign in the United States to focus maximum international pressure on behalf of *freedom for Moses Mayekiso and the four others charged in his case: Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, Obed Bapela and Mzwanele Mayekiso.*

THE REALITY OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Today there are 33 million people who live in South Africa. Among them, less than 15 percent possess full rights of citizenship; these have been reserved for the 4.8 million white citizens.

Because of the color of their skin, more than 28 million black South Africans effectively have no political power and are subjected to controls which restrict where they can be born, where they can live, go to school, work and be buried after they die. *This is the reality of the apartheid system.*

The domestic and international pressures on that system to dissolve itself increase almost daily. Boycotts, massive demonstrations and strikes have been sweeping the country for several years. International economic and diplomatic pressure on the white-minority government also has grown.

Accordingly, this government has modified a few existing apartheid laws—without dismantling the basic structure of apartheid. Essentially, they continue to ignore the demands of black South Africans for majority rule in a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

But the reality of apartheid includes these stark statistics:

■ The land distribution under law is a perverse flip-flop of the population numbers: 13 percent of the land has been reserved for black South Africans, while 87 percent of the land belongs to the whites.

■ Many anti-apartheid activists are being detained for lengthy periods or arrested and charged under existing security laws for petty offenses in response to political actions.

■ For the numerous detainees, torture and death have been well-documented practices by the government's police and military for many years. Their methods include electric shock, beatings, whippings by the dreaded "sjambok," isolation and sleep deprivation.

■ The average daily prison population recently was nearly 115,000—more than 10 times the per capita prison population in the U.S.



WHO IS MOSES MAYEKISO?

Moses Mayekiso is a former auto-worker who today holds the top position in the second largest trade union in the most heavily industrialized nation in all of Africa: he is General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa.

Moses was born 38 years ago not far from Cape Town in South Africa's Cape Province. As a young man he became a migrant worker in the gold mines to the north, living after work each day in the harsh, prison-like conditions of the male-only hostels.

Mayekiso joined the Metal and Allied Workers Union, now part of the larger NUMSA, after going to work in an auto parts plant. Like so many of the men and women who lead America's major labor unions today, Moses promptly became a union activist, confronting managers accustomed to exploiting the black workforce with impunity.

Through MAWU, Moses helped pioneer the democratic, shop-floor-based trade unionism now widespread in South Africa. After a major "stayaway" strike in 1984, he was arrested and kept in solitary confinement at the notorious John Vorster Square prison. Twice again in 1985 the apartheid government jailed him—each time being eventually forced to drop charges and release him.

Mayekiso helped draft the constitution in late 1985 of the Congress



John Starrock/Friends of Moses Mayekiso

of South African Trade Unions—a militant, 700,000-member-strong federation of black trade unions—and carried the fight for justice into the black township of Alexandra where he lived with his wife and seven children.

When South Africa declared its State of Emergency on June 12, 1986, Mayekiso was meeting with unionists in Sweden. The white minority government refused to renew his passport, which expired June 14, in an attempt to force one of South Africa's key black labor leaders into exile.

Instead, Mayekiso flew home to South Africa soon after—where he was immediately jailed. He has been without his freedom for more than a year.

WHY IS THE UAW INVOLVED IN THIS CASE?

UAW President Owen Bieber led several hundred rank-and-file UAW members at a "Free Moses" demonstration last spring in front of the South African Embassy in Washington.



The UAW has a long history of supporting the struggle of black workers not only in North America but in South Africa in the fight against apartheid.

Our union consistently has helped the independent black trade unions, particularly those in the automobile and metalworking sectors. American corporations for many years have operated subsidiaries in South Africa—and the UAW has intervened with U.S. management here on a number of occasions when requested to do so by the black unions involved in bargaining disputes and other problems.

The UAW's work is part of a broader international campaign for Mayekiso's freedom being waged by the International Metalworkers Federation—a trade union secretariat based in Switzerland. Both the UAW and Mayekiso's union belong to the IMF, which has a UAW member, Herman Rebhan, as its General Secretary.

The Moses Mayekiso case is crucial to the UAW because it is a frontal assault by the South African authorities on the black trade unions—precisely when they have emerged as the strongest grassroots force confronting the outrages of apartheid.

These unions in South Africa are standing up to injustices not only in the workplace but in the communities where their members live. Moses Mayekiso has been isolated for trial because he is a leader in his union and in his community.

As Moses faces the possibility of a death sentence, the UAW believes it is impossible to ignore the issues and principles at stake. Any further injury to Moses Mayekiso immediately becomes an injury to us all.

As UAW rank-and-file demonstrators at the South African embassy in Washington called out several months ago in protest of Moses' indictment, "*None of us is free—until all of us are free!*"

WHAT ARE THE CHARGES AGAINST MOSES?

This is how the South African police treat labor leaders: Moses Mayekiso being placed under arrest in 1986.



Friends of Moses Mayekiso

Having been charged with treason, sedition and subversion, Moses Mayekiso and the four others specifically are accused of forming a "residents' committee" which the South African government claims undermined the existing government administrative and judicial authority in Alexandra.

The white-minority government alleges that Mayekiso's activities harmed the authority of government—and, accordingly, amount to treason.

The fact is that throughout South Africa residents of black townships increasingly have become dissatisfied with the inability of the local governmental structures empowered by the apartheid government to deal with deteriorating sanitation and health problems, declining housing conditions, crime and other issues.

Strong civic organizations formed as alternatives to these town councils have evoked violent reactions

from the white-minority government, which has occupied a number of the black townships with South African police and security forces.

The government now seeks to make an example of Alexandra by prosecuting Mayekiso and his fellow community activists—punishing its residents for the organization of non-violent community structures—in hopes of discouraging the growth of similar civic groups elsewhere.

Black unions, such as NUMSA, say it is the duty of their members to fight for justice in their communities.

In a civilized democracy, such community organizing activities hardly would constitute "crimes"—and certainly none for which the death penalty could be imposed. But South Africa, as we are reminded every day by events occurring there, is a far cry from being a civilized democracy.

HOW CAN WE HELP MOSES MAYEKISO?

South African metalworkers celebrate the consolidation of their unions early in 1987 into the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, electing Moses Mayekiso as their first General Secretary.



Santa Mofokeng/Impact Visuals

The UAW has launched a nationwide postcard campaign on behalf of Mayekiso. The cards demand his freedom and are being sent to the South African ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C.

You can obtain a package of these postcards by writing to the UAW's Governmental and International Affairs Department at 1757 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Better yet, you can write directly to Ambassador Dr. Pieter G.J. Koornhof at the Embassy of South Africa, 3051 Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008. In your own words, demand that Mayekiso and the other political prisoners be released.

Many times in the past, international pressure such as this cam-

paign has resulted in trade union prisoners winning their freedom.

UAW President Owen Bieber has convened a committee of prominent American judges and attorneys who will be monitoring the legal developments in the Mayekiso case. We hope to send one or more of these highly respected jurists to South Africa to witness as much of the trial as possible.

The UAW is working closely with human rights groups—such as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Amnesty International, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and the International Human Rights Law Group—and you may wish to contact one of these organizations.

*Young South Africans
behind a fence which
separates them from
the white community of
Johannesburg.*

International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and
Agricultural Implement Workers of America
1757 N Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
202/828-8500

