



# Workers put their skills into action on the Community Arts Project (CAP) dance floor

## Swopping the factory floor for the arts

FIFTEEN workers from centres throughout South Africa have swapped the grind of the factory floor for the rigour of an intensive six-week-long theatre training course at the Community Arts Project (CAP) in Woodstock.

The workers are members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) and have come to Cape Town to equip themselves with the skills needed to develop worker- and community-based cultural groups.

Patti Henderson, the course

coordinator, explains: "Workers — as many others from oppressed communities — have been denied access to skills in the arts.

### Organisational

"They have also been denied opportunities to develop planning and organisational skills. This is often reflected in our cultural organisations and cultural events."

One participant, Jubilant Dlam-

ini, explains he was sent on the course by the Highveld Cosatu cultural unit to develop basic theatre skills which he could impart when he returns home.

"Most workers in the unit have had no training in theatre, but there are many plays which they have written and in which they have performed.

"We need to develop our community art to a high standard. For this we need resources and training."

Mbongani Zindela of the Southern Natal Unemployed Workers Cultural Local, says: "Worker and community culture must be strengthened so that we can sabotage the culture of the capitalists."

### Unions

Philly Kungoane of the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) in Johannesburg explains it is important for unions to take the initiative in culture as structures of the Joint Management Centres are already using culture to recruit school students on school cultural days.

"These activities are coordinated to keep people away from

political activities."

"Plays need to be good because they could be a source of income for the many unemployed," Kungoane adds.

The idea for a full-time, short and intensive training course arose out of CAP's discussions with Mi Hlatswayo, head of Cosatu's Cultural Unit

According to Henderson, the course aims to train workers in

♦ basic theatre skills such as improvisation, songwriting and performance poetry

♦ the use of theatre as a tool for social analysis and organisation

♦ organising and sustaining a theatre group, and

♦ organising a cultural event

Participants will gain practical experience in using theatre to conscientise people by creating a play for performance at local

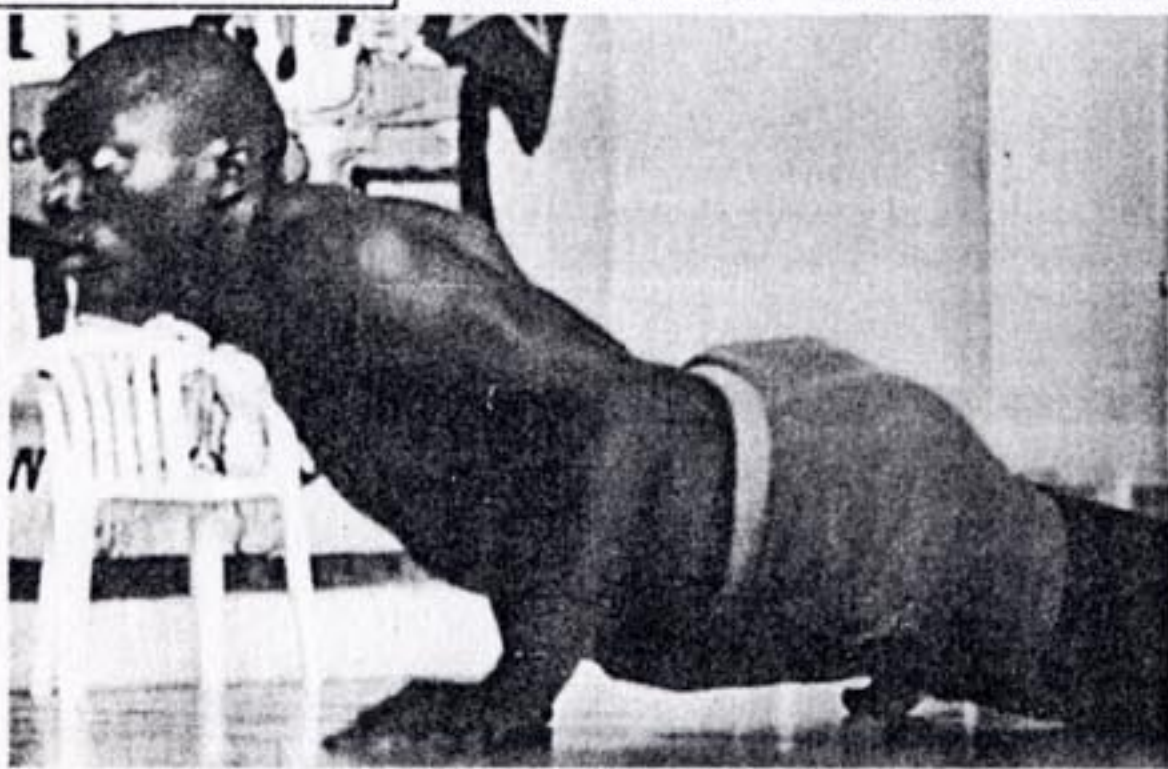
May Day rallies

They will also participate in seminars on cultural issues facing workers today.

Although only two Cape workers are on the course, Mike van Graan, CAP's theatre coordinator, believes the programme could assist in developing cultural work in the Cape, where Cosatu cultural locals have not developed on the same scale as in other regions.

The workers, who have sacrificed their annual leave for a theatre workout in the shadow of Table Mountain, have clearly been hooked by the fun, magic and meaning of drama.

As one of them said, "Drama is a mobile press to the people. It stretches our minds and bodies and makes us creative. It builds cooperation and confidence." — Heather Robertson



# Deep in concentration



# Fancy footwork