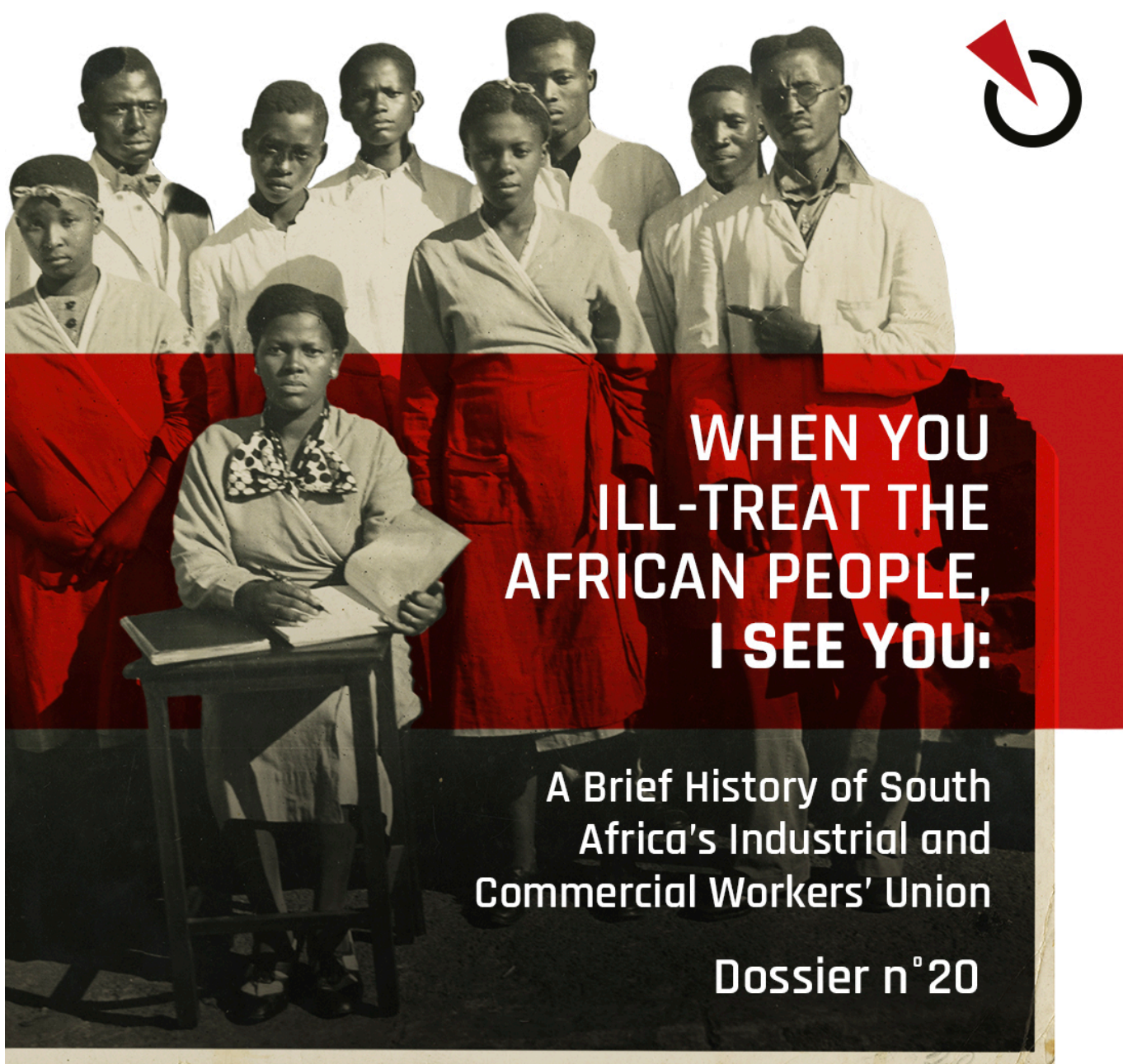


A Brief History of South Africa's Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (1919-1931)



**WHEN YOU
ILL-TREAT THE
AFRICAN PEOPLE,
I SEE YOU:**

**A Brief History of South
Africa's Industrial and
Commercial Workers' Union**

Dossier n° 20

The Industrial & Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) – a trade union, rural peasant movement, and urban squatters' movement – formed on the docks in Cape Town in 1919. Within a decade, the ICU had expanded across Southern Africa without regard for national borders and counted people from various African countries and the Caribbean in its leadership, as well as people who were Indian and mixed race. The largely forgotten history of the ICU is well worth recovering in a time of escalating chauvinism and xenophobia. Our Dossier #20 offers an introduction to this extraordinary popular movement.