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FOSATU WORKER NEWS

WORKER PROGRESS — UNION UNITY IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

In an historic unity conference held in Port Elizabeth on the 25th and 26th October the Executive Councils of FOSATU's three motor unions cemented their unification into one national non-racial union.

With a paid-up membership of 10 000 spread throughout the country the new union will almost certainly dominate the union scene in the motor assembly, motor components and rubber industries.

The unity conference was attended by the full Execu-

tive Councils of NUMARWOSA, UAW, and WPMWU and committee members from the various branches.

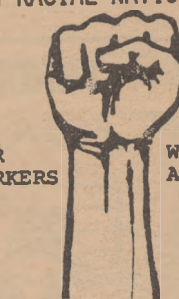
The conference followed a great deal of previous work toward the unification. Earlier in October the final hurdle was overcome when NUMARWOSA'S application for full non-racial status was granted following similar success for six other FOSATU affiliates.

The task of merging three unions of this size isn't something that happens every day and the conference was concerned with passing the resolutions to carry out the practical unification. They resolved that the

UNITED AUTOMOBILE WORKERS
started 1973
unregistered
4000 members
NON RACIAL NATIONAL UNITY

NATIONAL UNION OF MOTOR
ASSEMBLY AND RUBBER WORKERS
started 1967
registered
6700 members

WESTERN PROVINCE MOTOR
ASSEMBLY WORKERS UNION
started 1961
registered
1300 members



12 000 and more

three present Executives will form the Executive Advisory Council to give effect to the complete consolidation of the three unions and to ensure full integration of all facilities. Their tasks will be to supervise the integration of the membership, prepare for elections in the new Union, discuss possible constitutional changes, decide on a name for the new Union and act as an advisory body to the NUMARWOSA Executive.

To make the unification as smooth and as simple as possible the constitution and registration of NUMARWOSA will be used by the Union.

Steps to full unification are proceeding rapidly. On the 9th November the UAW membership will become members of NUMARWOSA fol-

lowed on the 1st January by WPMWU membership. All that will be left will be the adoption of a new name and elections and the process will be complete.

The unification has received wide support and enthusiasm from workers both in South Africa and internationally through the International Metal Workers Federation (IMF) which played an important role in giving the unions support. FOSATU welcomes the move as a great example of our policy of non-racial, national, industrial unions. FOSATU does not believe in small industrial unions. We believe in building national unions covering large industries and united in a powerful federation. This great move points the way for our future growth.



Motor Union Unity Conference delegates.

RICHARDS BAY BRANCH OPENS — FOSATU GROWS

On the 25th October, 350 workers gathered to open a Metal and Allied Workers Union branch at Richards Bay. The meeting was attended by observers from other FOSATU unions in Natal and Transvaal.

MAWU have been given stop order facilities at the large ALUSAF factory and the opening of the Branch was an important breakthrough.

Besides MAWU other FOSATU unions are organising in the Richards Bay/Empangeni area and the meeting was seen as the expansion of FOSATU to the area. A permanent office has also been opened.

But as John Makhathini, Natal Branch Secretary said in his speech "opening a MAWU Branch is only a first step".



Part of the large worker gathering at Richards Bay.

FWN SPEAKS TO SFAWU SECRETARY

Interview with Sister Maggie Magubane, General Secretary of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU) - a FOSATU affiliate.

FWN: Sister Maggie when did you first become a full time organiser in the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union?

Magubane: It was in 1975. FWN: Before becoming an organiser what were you doing?

Magubane: I worked at the Western Biscuit Company on the East Rand.

FWN: When did you join the Union?

Magubane: Well we were the first people to form the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union in February 1974.

FWN: Why did you join the Union?

Magubane: After we had struggled to form a Works Committee in the plant we realised that we needed a Trade Union. We were assisted by the Urban Training Project (U.T.P.) in forming the Union.

FWN: Having been in the Union for some years now do you feel that there are any particular problems in our Union structures.

Magubane: As an organiser I feel that there are not enough women in our

Executive structures.

FWN: Why is that?

Magubane: Well I cannot say exactly but in my own feeling some women are

restricted by their families. For instance their husbands don't want them to attend evening meetings or to participate in trade union activities. So it's not because women are not active enough but it's because of the difficulties of having families.

FWN: Do you think FOSATU is aware of this problem - does it do enough about it?

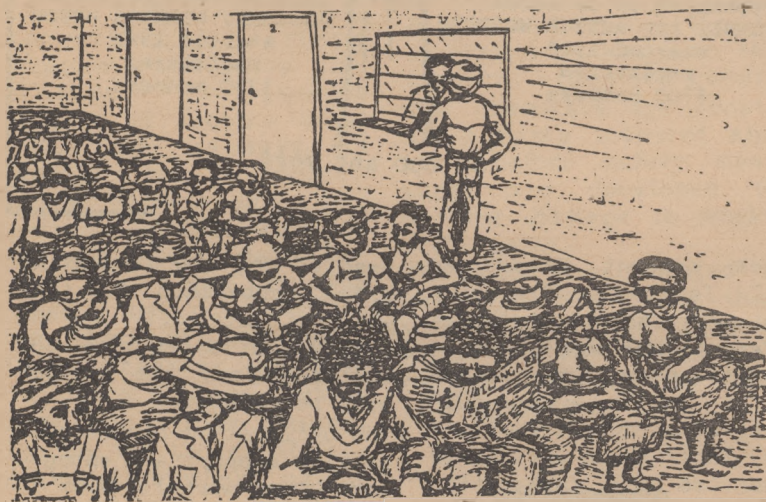
Magubane: Well FOSATU hasn't yet discussed that problem.

FWN: Thank you.



M. Magubane, SFAWU secretary.

UNEMPLOYMENT — TRADE UNIONS CAN FIGHT IT! says FOSATU



At a recent conference on Unemployment FOSATU's General Secretary argued strongly that the Trade Union Movement could and should fight against unemployment.

It is not the workers or their unions that create unemployment. In South Africa we have low wages, rising prices, more and more mechanization and high unemployment. Workers suffer in all ways because unemployment is part of economic system and it won't just go away by itself.

Can Trade Unions do anything? The answer is YES. Firstly they must protect workers in their jobs by negotiating dismissal and grievance procedures. They must negotiate to protect workers against retrenchment. When times are bad profit must also take the burden and not push everything onto workers.

Secondly unions must negotiate to protect workers against new machinery which throws workers out of their jobs. Machines must be used to benefit all people and not just to improve profits.

Thirdly unions must bargain

for higher wages. Higher wages will reduce poverty and unemployment because workers will have more to spend so that more things will have to be made. Higher wages will be one step to correcting the terrible conditions in our country side since people will be able to buy the things they need to use the land.

Fourthly and most important we must build a powerful workers movement to truly protect workers. The State must be persuaded to act seriously against the problems causing unemployment. This is a great challenge to the Trade Union movement and they must begin the struggle now.

Chemical Union Strengthens

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) was formed in 1974. When the organizing started in Natal there had been a longterm goal of this union to move to other provinces so as to fulfil its quest for the national organisation of chemical workers.

July 1980 saw this happen with the Transvaal forming a Branch. This was the dawn of the National Executive Committee which had been a dream over the years.

Arrangements were made there-after and on the 21st September 1980 twelve delegates and alternates from both branches met as the National Executive Committee. Elected to be the first President of the CWIU was Abbey Cwele Chairman of the Henkel shop steward committee in Durban; J. Ngwane Chairman of the Transvaal Branch was elected Vice-President; E. Shabalala of Reef Chemicals in the Transvaal was elected to be Treasurer and C. Ngema as General Secretary.

We owe many thanks to our FOSATU brother unions who have contributed a great deal towards us achieving this.

CHARLES NGEMA.

UNION RECOGNITION SETTLES LEGAL BATTLE

The company Precision Tools Ltd in Johannesburg has agreed to recognize the Metal and Allied Workers Union provided the union dropped its case against the company. MAWU had laid a complaint with the Industrial Court that the company had refused to renew the contract of employment of union shop steward, Steven Maponya for his union activities. The union said this was an unfair labour practice.

Under the pass laws, migrant workers from homelands have to go back to their homeland each year to get their contracts renewed before they can come back to the city to work. Precision Tools refused to renew Maponya's contract when he applied to renew it.

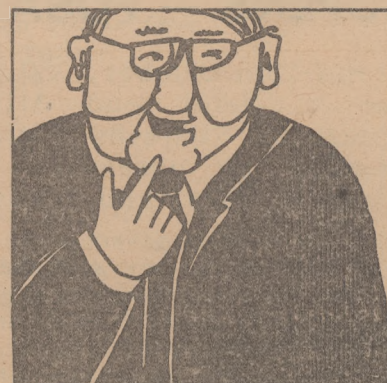
But in August this year the Industrial Court decided that an unregistered union can bring a complaint of "unfair labour practice" to it. The Court then laid down a date at which verbal evidence was to be taken. But the company decided to settle the matter out of Court and reached an agreement with the union. Under this agreement, the company agreed to recognise the union, to pay all the legal expenses for the case and to pay R1 000 to Maponya who is now employed elsewhere.



Look, my son, when I said you got to work harder if you want more pay



.... I didn't mean if you worked harder ...



.... I wouldn't retrench you!

"Stop-orders a Privilege" says Company

Hullels Aluminium in Pietermaritzburg has decided to reject the recommendation of SEIFSA (the Employers association) that certain unregistered trade unions including Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) be given stop-order facilities. The company says it is not bound to follow SEIFSA regulations and states that it sees stop-orders "as a privilege which should be extended to a union only in the later stages of recognition". The Company also claims it cannot deal with MAWU until it is registered and further more until it is satisfied that the union is representative and that its members participate in the company "negotiating machinery".

Workers see this action as a clear attempt to block the union inside the plant. MAWU agrees that representivity should be the crucial thing for recognition, but says that now that they have an opportunity of demonstrating their representivity through stop-orders the Company is refusing them this facility.

One angry worker said "It is even more ridiculous for the Company to believe that it can deceive workers about its impartiality towards trade unions".

The Company which is a subsidiary of Anglo American seems determined to fight trade unionism on every front.

The members say "we are being denied basic trade union rights to be represented by bodies of our own choice. However our struggle in the factory will be intensified by management's uncooperative attitude."

CUSA — A HOME FOR BLACKS ONLY?

Eighteen months after the formation of FOSATU nine Unions have formed CUSA - the Council of Unions of South Africa - the first federation of industrial unions promoting "Blacks only unions".

At least this is the way that it appears. CUSA's President Albert Mosenthal put it this way "Our Constitution is very clear, we are not racialistic. But we believe that in order to overcome some of our problems we have to develop Black Leadership".

What this means in practice is hard to tell since CUSA affiliates have applied for registration on a Blacks only ticket.

TEXTILE TRAINING SEMINAR

by A. Joyisa

Andrew Joyisa, is the Chairman of the Shop Steward Committee at S.A. Fabrics in Durban.

In the middle of September, I attended a three day seminar for the shop stewards from my factory.

We were not given lectures by organizers, instead we had many discussions, and by the organizers asking us questions we realized how much knowledge we already had.

The seminar was divided into four different sessions. These were "know your factory", "know your union", "the duties of the

shop stewards" and "know your rights in the factory".

In the session on "Know your factory" we discussed why it was important to have information about the factory if we wanted to negotiate. I had taken it for granted that I knew every thing about the factory, but after that session I realized that there were many important things I didn't know.

In the session on "Know your Union", I properly understood for the first time that to build a strong and effective organization it must be controlled by workers themselves.

In the session on the "Duties of the Shop Steward", we discussed how important the shop steward was since he was the link between the

workers and organizers, and workers and management.

We played a negotiating game which was filmed on a T.V. Afterwards we were able to watch the film and discuss our mistakes.

The session I found most interesting was on "Know your Rights". If workers do not know what their rights are what can they struggle for?

The most important lesson we learnt was that only by being properly organized and strong is it possible to use the law, and that through hard struggle it is possible for workers to change laws and provide new rights for themselves.

In discussing FOSATU we discussed why it was important for workers from industries to get together in a federation to build a strong worker movement.

SFAWU BRANCH OPENING

by M. Sineke

Mfizeko Sineke, is Chairman of the Natal Region and President of the National Union of Textile Workers

The organisation of Sweet Food, and Allied factories in Natal was largely due to the fact that the workers themselves felt that they urgently need a trade union for their industry.

Late in 1979 and early in 1980 several attempts had been made for organising in some factories but not very much was achieved. However, workers in other factories were showing incredible interest to form a union and the Executive Committee of Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union in the Transvaal gave the Natal Region a green light for establishing a branch. A Caretaker Committee set

a target of at least two factories per local to form a branch and that a date be set for an inauguration of the branch of the Union.

It was a pleasure to note that in all these factories within a very short time workers were organised speedily and this proved beyond doubt that they really needed a trade union.

An interim Branch Executive Committee was formed and on the 21st September a Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union Branch in Natal was inaugurated. This event marked a victory for workers. The success of this was shown by high attendance of workers to the meeting and was ultimately endorsed by the fraternal greetings which were sent by other workers through their unions in FOSATU.

The Natal Region did a lot in the formation of SFAWU and intends to do that with the formation of other unions in FOSATU with the purpose of national expansion as outlined within the aims of FOSATU.

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stories by Mbulelo Mzamane.

Egoli

a play by Matsemela Manaka.

How workers will respond to the new federation is hard to tell. However, the CUSA Constitution doesn't place much importance on worker involvement and control. CUSA has also not set out any Regional Committees in its Constitution so its not clear how it will really operate at a national level. At present CUSA affiliates are operating mainly in the Witwatersrand.

"Its too early to comment on CUSA" says a FOSATU spokesman, "they have't really said what their policies are or what they want to do, so lets see how they survive the next six months or so".



SFAWU executive at branch opening.

INTERNATIONAL WORKER NEWS —

ICEF REPORTS

In October 1980 the 17th Congress of the International Chemical and Energy Workers Federation (ICEF) was held in Mexico City. The ICEF represents 4, 6 million workers in 179 unions all over the world. Three FOSATU unions, the Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union (PWAU), Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) and Glass and Allied Workers Union (GAWU), have links with the ICEF.

In his report to the Congress, the General Secretary Charles Levinson, said that the last few years have been difficult ones for workers in the chemical and allied industries. Workers have been hit hard by rising inflation, increasing unemployment and growing numbers of factory closures. This, he says, is especially true in Europe. Another point made by Mr. Levinson is that with the economic crisis, managements are going on the attack against workers and their organisations. Many companies are moving from areas where there are strong unions, like in the United States, to countries where unions are weak and wages lower. He noted that in many companies in the United States, union breaking consultants have



been called in to try and push unions out of the plant.

The ICEF has been involved in support action for many of its affiliates in their struggles. The report makes special mention of the ICEF support of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union and their struggle for recognition at Colgate.

Another major campaign reported to the Congress is the ICEF campaign on Health and Safety. This is specially important in the chemical industry where new chemicals are constantly being invented and used before safety measures are developed to prevent damage to workers' health.

The ICEF has started a campaign demanding that workers have the right to know about potential dangers to health in their own factories.



FOSATU SPEAKS TO INDUSTRIAL NURSES

At a recent talk to nurses from various Natal factories, Taffy Adler - FOSATU's Transvaal Regional Secretary - pointed out that the answer to better Industrial Health was strong trade unions.

Workers see nurses as part of managements, "whose role it was to keep them on the job and cut down sick leave", he said.

Production is the most important thing and too little attention is given to preventing dangers and accidents. Industrial injuries suffered by workers were horrifying especially as too many were unnecessary and often caused by managements shortsightedness and even negligence.

Brother Adler's challenge to the nurses was to stop being used to "patch-up" workers so as to get them back to work. Rather they should support the cause of trade unionism.

The trade unions were more interested in prevention than cure. Their aim was to bargain for agreements that improved safety and gave specially trained Health and Safety shop stewards rights such as stopping dangerous machines.

Agreements such as these would mark real progress where nurses could use their skills to improve the conditions of workers and not be first aid attendants to patch-up workers.

LEATHER WORKERS TO ELECT NEW COMMITTEE

A general meeting of all members of the Leather Workers Benefit Fund is to be held on Saturday the 29th of November 1980 at 10 a.m. at the show grounds in Pietermaritzburg. The meeting is to be chaired by the Advocate Brian Law and he is asking the employers to give the workers time off to attend the meeting.

After months of struggle between two Committees as to who really represented the workers, the members of the Pietermaritzburg Leather Workers Benefit Fund are to elect a new non-racial committee.

An old National Union of Leather Workers Committee which was elected only by Coloured and Indian workers was until this year running the affairs of the Fund. When no elections took place this year for a new committee many members got fed up with that situation and elected a new non-racial committee where African workers were also represented. The two committees then got involved in a legal tussle over the control of the Funds. However, in November an agreement was finally reached to let the workers themselves decide whether they wanted the National Union of Leather committee or an independent committee to control the funds.



A WORKER'S SPEECH TO A DOCTOR

We know what makes us ill.
When we are ill we are told
That it's you who will heal us.

For ten years, we are told
You learned healing in fine schools
Built at the people's expense
And to get your knowledge
Spent a fortune.
So you must be able to heal

Are you able to heal?
When we come to you
Our rags are torn off us
And you listen all over our naked body.
As to the cause of our illness
One glance at our rags would
Tell you more. It is the same cause that
wears out
Our bodies and our clothes.

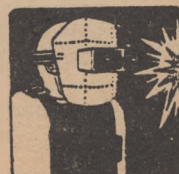
The pain in our shoulder comes
You say, from the damp; and this is also
the reason
For the stain on the wall of our flat.
So tell us:
Where does the damp come from?

Too much work and too little food
Makes us feeble and thin.
Your prescription says:
Put on more weight.
You might as well tell a bullrush
Not to get wet.

How much time can you give us?
We see: one carpet in your flat costs
The fees you earn from
Five thousand consultations

You'll no doubt say
You are innocent. The damp patch
On the walls of our flats
Tells the same story.

BERTOLD BRECHT.



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