



FOSATU WORKER NEWS

FOSATU THE FIRST YEAR

On the 14th April it will be one year since we started to build a national federation of trade unions. The aim of the 130 delegates who met at Hammanskraal was to unite all those trade unions, irrespective of race or creed, who were dedicated to the struggle for the rights of all workers.

We knew the task would be difficult but we were building on those that had gone before us. The present is even more difficult and uncertain for workers. The racist Industrial Conciliation Act has been changed after 23 years but it remains with racial distinctions. We still have to see whether we will be able to register as non-racial unions. So far it has been management and certain registered unions that have really used the law. They have used it to set up their tame parallel and company unions.

Despite these obstacles we are building a national federation. FOSATU has offices in Pretoria, Johannesburg, (three offices), Vereeniging,

Springs, Benoni, Durban (three offices), Pinetown, Pietermaritzburg, Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Cape Town and Bellville. FOSATU and its affiliates employ 61 paid officials whose job it is to organise and assist workers. We use 19 FOSATU vehicles from 16 offices in four Regions.

We have the printing press that printed this newspaper and other FOSATU publications. We have started a project to produce school uniforms and clothing for members. Our Legal Fund and complaint services assist both organised and unorganised workers as other articles in this edition show.

However we must see this as only the start. We have a long way to go. By March 1980 our total paid-up membership in FOSATU was just under 20 000 and our paper membership close to 50 000. So we have a big task to get the full support and participation of our members and to expand our membership.

The first year has been difficult but successful - let us continue to build.

RECOGNITION SUCCESSSES

FOSATU unions have made some important advances for union recognition. These advances are all the more important because the majority of companies are using the new law as an excuse to delay recognition.

Two Swedish companies Fagersta and SKF in the Transvaal have signed procedural agreements with the Engineering and Allied Workers Union. The agreements recognise the Union and its Shop Stewards, give Union officials access to the factory and the companies agree to further negotiations covering wages and working conditions.

These agreements are the third and fourth written agreements between a unregistered union and a company. Elsewhere progress is also being made. At South African Fabrics in Durban the National Union of Textile Workers had access to the factory to conduct Shop Steward elections with both Indian and African workers participating. The Metal and Allied Workers Union had access at Craft Engineering in Johannesburg to conduct Shop Steward elections. At both these factories the Shop Stewards and Union officials will begin negotiating full agreements.

THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR; COMPANIES DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR REGISTRATION TO NEGOTIATE WITH AND RECOGNISE UNREGISTERED NON-RACIAL UNIONS.

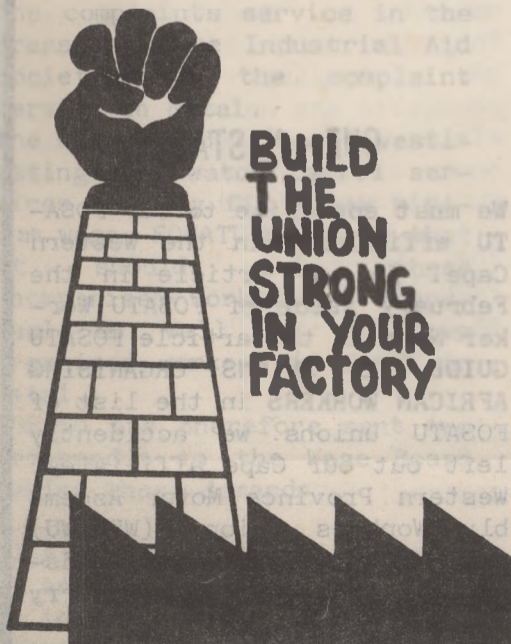
Workers was carried out by the FOSATU Eastern Province Region in cooperation with NUTW. One of their main problems was a "parallel" union trying to organise as well. The Eastern Province affiliates through their FOSATU Region have made a great contribution to worker unity.

FOSATU BUILDS UNIONS

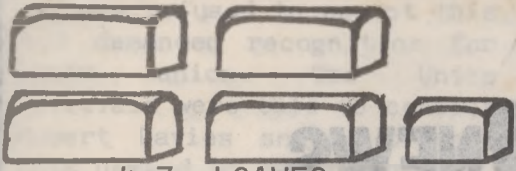

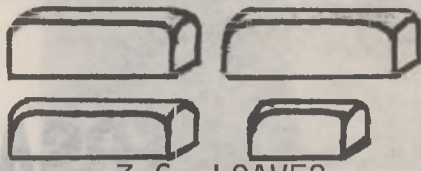


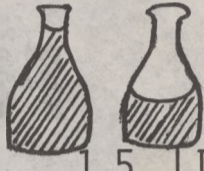
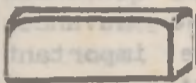

On the 13th April 1980 the benefits of FOSATU's policy of close cooperation between affiliates was shown. A Branch of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) was inaugurated in the Eastern Province Region.

The Branch covers Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage and has over 1400 paid up members and 2000 signed up members. Negotiations have been started with companies and at Industex the Union has got stop order facilities.

Organisation of the Textile



**BUILD
THE
UNION
STRONG
IN YOUR
FACTORY**

HOW MUCH FOOD CAN			ONE HOUR OF YOUR			WAGES BUY?		
METAL INDUSTRY WORKERS			TEXTILE INDUSTRY WORKERS			CHEMICAL INDUSTRY WORKERS		
 4,7 LOAVES			 3 LOAVES			 3,6 LOAVES		
 1,9 LITRES			 1,2 LITRES			 1,5 LITRES		
 = 1 LOAF BROWN BREAD			 = 1 LITRE MILK					
FOSATU UNITES ALL WORKERS TO FIGHT FOR EQUAL WAGES								

FOSATU SAYS – ITS A RICH MAN'S BUDGET

FOSATU is very critical of the last budget. It was a budget for the rich and not the poor. Workers are used to budgets like this so why are we so critical of this one? What is new?

What is new is that South Africa received a large gift from the world. For complicated reasons the price of gold has risen to figures that were not even dreamed of a few years ago.

This is the kind of jackpot that does not happen often. It should have been used to build a better world for all in South Africa, especially Black workers who continue to suffer amidst all this wealth.

Let us take a few examples to show what could have been done. From the tax on gold production alone the Government received R1630 million more than it expected. Could't this have been used to make real changes to help Blacks? The Government will spend R150 million on increasing pensions for all races. If we'd added R150 million to that the effect on Black pensions would have been much greater. Who can live on R33 per month?

The Department of Community Development will spend R73 million on Black housing. If we added R300 million to this another 60000 reasonable houses could have been built.

On Black Education R204 million will be spent. If this was doubled it would then have equalled the amount spent on

white education.

The subsidy on bread will be R141 million which could also have been doubled which may have prevented the bread price increase. If we take the increases proposed here they would have cost the government R795 million. So other measures could have been taken such as doing away with sales tax on food and clothing.

Spent as we propose the golden gift would have helped the very poor, created jobs and created an educated and trained workforce. IS THIS NOT THE WAY TO BUILD OUR FUTURE?

The Government decided not to do this - most of the benefit went to the rich not the poor.

THE LATEST ON REGISTRATION

FOSATU unions all over the country have started to apply for registration.

In some regions the Department of Manpower has already visited union offices to check membership lists.

The FOSATU unions are the largest group of unregistered, independent unions that have made their applications together.

As we have said before, the big test is whether the Minister will accept the FOSATU unions as NON-RACIAL unions.

DEATH OF BROTHER DLAMINI

Brother Dlamini was a shop steward and BEC member of MAWU from the Light Castings factory in Boksburg, Transvaal for more than two years.

He was a very strong union member.

He was killed in an accident at work on 3 March 1980.

The Union is investigating the accident. The shop stewards, members and officials are planning to look into the whole question of health and safety, especially foundries.

All the members of the unions of FOSATU send their support to the family of Brother Dlamini and to the workers of Light Castings.

OUR MISTAKE

We must apologize to our FOSATU affiliates in the Western Cape. In our article in the February issue of FOSATU Worker News in the article FOSATU GUIDE TO UNIONS ORGANISING AFRICAN WORKERS in the list of FOSATU unions we accidentally left out our Cape affiliates, Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union, (WPMWU) and the Jewellers and Goldsmiths Union (JGU) We are sorry that this happened.



Watchmen in Johannesburg.

FOSATU is moving to help watchmen and workers in Watch Patrol Services.

In Natal they are weakly organised while in Transvaal they have no union. They earn a minimum weekly wage of R23,77 for working an 84-hour week. Because they are not well organised they have not been able to bargain for a fair deal from their employers.

FOSATU learned of their terrible working conditions through the complaints service in the Transvaal, the Industrial Aid Society and the complaint service in Natal.

The Wage Board is now investigating the watch patrol services and may fix a new minimum wage. FOSATU believes that it should help these unorganised workers in Transvaal as well as its own organised workers in T&GWU in Natal.

FOSATU has therefore sent two memorandum to the Wage Board making these demands.

1. A weekly wage of R50 with an increase each year. The increase should be decided after a study of the

- increase in cost of living for the year.
2. A working week of 48 hours.
3. A minimum notice period of one week - not 24 hours.
4. Three free uniforms a year. These must be maintained by the employers to protect them from rain, wind, sun and cold.
5. Watchmen be employed as permanent staff and not as casual staff. Many companies are keeping permanent workers as casual staff for many years.
6. Employers be prosecuted by the law for not keeping to the wage determination covering Watch Patrol workers.

EAWU GETS RECOGNITION AT FAGERSTA

The Engineering and Allied Workers Union has won recognition from Fagersta Steels (Pty) Ltd. The workers and the company signed an agreement on Monday, March 3.

Fagersta, a Swedish company near Springs in the Transvaal, has 260 workers. Half of them belong to the union. They make drill bits for the mines.

This was the third agreement signed between a company and an unregistered union. It shows once again that unregistered unions can get agreements. The first two signed were Smith and Nephew and Kelloggs.

The Agreement states that management recognises the union and the union shop stewards. Union shop stewards will now be able to take up grievances and to negotiate working conditions inside the factory.

The agreement also permits union officials to go into the factory every Wednesday at lunchtime. The management will also provide an office for small union meetings.

In a press statement, Fagersta shop stewards said they saw the agreement as a step forward in the struggle of all workers for their rights in South Africa. The EAWU was also pleased by the signing of the agreement and said that it was the most important step in the history of the union, founded in 1963.

HEINEMANN WORKERS WIN CLAIMS

The Minister of Police will pay R21 359,50 to 20 workers and a union official who were injured three years ago.

In March 1976, workers at Heinemann Electric Company had a dispute with management. The police were called. They made a baton charge to disperse the workers. Many of the workers suffered broken limbs and head injuries and one worker lost the sight of an eye.

These events led to a number of court cases which ended in October 1979 when the Minister agreed to pay more than R21 000 to the workers.

The Minister has said that he does not accept the blame for what happened. But it is clear to us that the amount paid to the workers shows that the workers were innocent. It also shows that the police needlessly injured many workers.

The large payment after three years does not cancel all the bitterness. There should have been no need to call the police in the first place.

ADVANCE IN CRAFT STRUGGLE

WORKERS at Craft Industries are writing their own agreement. Soon they will meet management to negotiate this agreement.

Craft was one of the first MAWU factories in the Transvaal. The union has been active there since 1976 with no recognition.

Now management has seen the workers vote for their own shop stewards. The workers voted for five out of six shop stewards they had already chosen.

Workers from Craft have played a big part building the Union in the Transvaal. These workers have served on the Branch Committee and National Executive Committees for a long time.

At the same time, MAWU members at Craft have struggled to get the Union recognised at their own factory. The owner of the factory refused to accept the Union even though it was clear that the majority of workers supported the Union.

In 1979 the owner of Craft sold his factory to a company called Hubert Davies (Pty)

Ltd. Hubert Davies is owned by a British Company called Blue Circle. The new management of Craft tried to set up a liaison committee. But the members refused to accept this and demanded recognition for their union. The Union officials were told to contact Hubert Davies and to present this demand to management.

Union officials met with Hubert Davies. The company checked the Union membership at Craft and agreed that the Union was representative. The Company agreed to negotiate with the Union. The Union officials then demanded that the shop stewards from Craft must take part in all negotiations.

The Company said they wanted to watch the elections of shop stewards to check that they were fair, then they would meet the shop stewards to negotiate.

On Monday, March 10 the Union held a general meeting at the factory in working hours. At this meeting the union officials were present and the management were invited to watch. The election rules were discussed and nominations for shop stewards were taken.

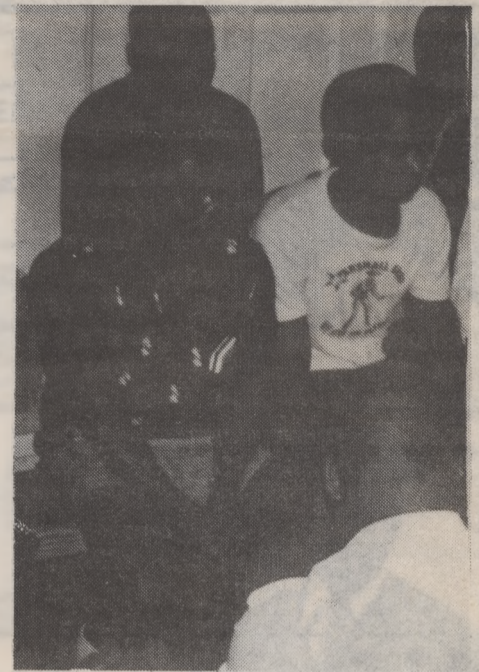
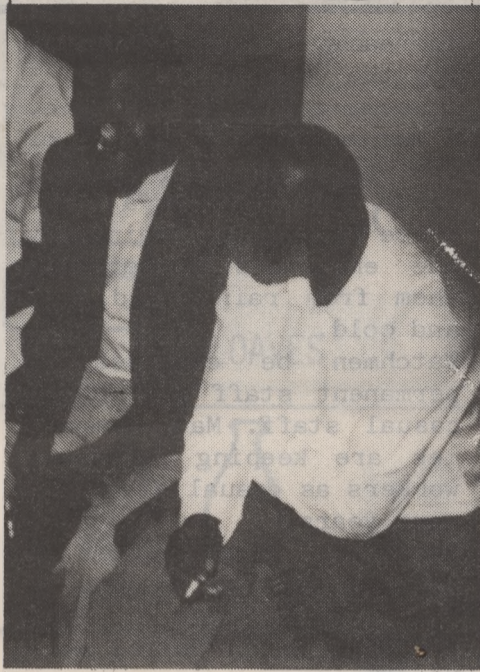
Then on Friday, March 14 at 7.00 am. the Union held shop steward elections at Craft. Once again the management were invited to watch.

Five of the 6 original shop stewards were re-elected by the members to represent them. The management has now agreed that the Union can make proposals for an agreement. The management will then meet to discuss these proposals with the shop stewards and union officials.

Workers at Craft are very pleased at the progress in the relationship between the Company and the Union. The struggle is not over yet. The most important job is still facing the Union in Craft: to try to negotiate a good agreement with management, which will give greater protection for the rights of workers and proper recognition of the Union.

But Craft members should be congratulated for their achievements. They have won an important battle.

We hope that workers in other factories will be inspired by this victory to struggle harder for their rights in their own factories.



Krommenie Shop Stewards at a meeting in Jacobs, Durban.

WORKERS STRUGGLE AT FORBO-KROMMENIE CONTINUES

The workers at Forbo-Krommenie have been struggling hard for the recognition of their union since June 1978. But the management is very uncooperative. Management met union officials once in July 1978 but have refused to meet them again.

The Company has tried many tricks to break the union. Let us give you an example of this. In the Novilon Department in which the union was very strong workers were involved in a dispute with management. The union said that the management had "locked the workers out" (when a company stops workers from working this is called a lock-out).

Because the company said that the lockout was really a "strike" the labour dept. tried prosecuting the workers. They were found not guilty. The workers remained united and all the workers in the dept. except one got their jobs back in the Novilon dept. The worker who didn't get his job back was a strong shop steward. The union then took the company to court. After an out of Court settlement the company was forced to pay the shop steward's wages for two months after the lockout and the union lawyer for his expense.

In 1979 the company tried setting up a Works Council. The workers rejected this and kept pushing for the recognition of their union. The com-

pany fired two more of the strong shop stewards during the year.

OVERSEAS SHOP STEWARD VISIT

Forbo-Krommenie is owned by a Swiss Company called Forbo which has factories all over Europe. One of them is Forbo Forshaga in Sweden. The workers there are organised into their union and management recognises that union. When workers there heard about the struggle in S. Africa they demanded an explanation from their management. They decided to send one of their shop stewards Hugo Persson to S. Africa to find out what was happening here.

In November last year Hugo and a Union official Ernst Hollander came to S. Africa and met workers and management. They were surprised by the strength of the union. They went back to Sweden and wrote a long report about how strongly the workers are united in Forbo-Krommenie. They are now pushing the mother company Forbo to recognise the union here in S. Africa. They now know that their struggle is the same as our struggle here.

The Krommenie workers are fighting a long and hard struggle - we wish them success.

**WORKERS! THIS IS YOUR NEWSPAPER
WRITE TO US AND TELL US ABOUT
THE STRUGGLES IN YOUR FACTORY.**

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