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FOSATU WORKER NEWS

REGISTRATION - THE BIG TEST

THE TEST IS COMING.

FOSATU has made its position quite clear. We believe that the law should not divide workers by race. Workers must be allowed to join the unions of their choice.

FOSATU affiliates are only prepared to register as non-racial unions. Sometime in February all FOSATU unregistered affiliates will apply for registration as non-racial unions and the Minister will have to decide whether he wants to advance to retreat. The registered National Union of Motor Assembly Workers will apply to open its ranks and the unregistered United Automobile Rubber Workers and Allied will start a three way merger to form a new non-racial union for the motor industry. Even if the application for registration is successful this will be a complicated process taking time.

So step one is the Ministers decision. If it is yes we start the process of registration which as we have just said will take some time.

The Non-Racial Stand

If the Minister says no to non-racial unions then FOSATU believes that the next challenge will be that for management. Will they continue to talk to FOSATU if we refuse to be part of racist legislation? What would registration be worth if it merely continues to be part of the apartheid laws? Foreign companies have hid behind the laws of the land for too long. Even the Codes of Conduct have only had a small effect. Surely the foreign companies cannot



refuse to talk to unions who are not registered because they take a non-racial stand. If they do, then the evidence will be clear for all to see - foreign investment hides behind and benefits from apartheid.

Registration does not mean Recognition

However, the most important point of all is that registration does not mean recognition. Recognition only comes from organisation and workers strength in struggling for their rights.

Management have used registration as an excuse not to deal with strong unions, just as from 1977 they used the Wiehahn Commission as an excuse.

DONT'T WAIT FOR REGISTRATION - ORGANISE FOR RECOGNITION since nowhere in the history of the workers struggle has any change of law led to the recognition of worker strength.

THE FORD STRIKE

On the 9th January, 1980 a settlement was reached which ended the Ford Strike in Port Elizabeth. However, the effects and lessons of the Strike will not end that easily. There are many lessons to be learnt.

For the Union its clear that our need is to build stronger, clearer Shop Steward leadership to provide the lead in these situations. Workers interests will always be best served by their own organisation but if this organisation is weak then it will be swept aside. For employers the lessons are clear. The position of Black workers is still bad and leads to great frustrations. Weak and stooge union will never deal with these problems and if employers support them they can expect more problems in future.

FOSATU GUIDE TO UNIONS ORGANISING AFRICAN WORKERS

PARALLELS		INDEPENDENTS		
TUCSA	OTHERS	FOSATU	CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS	OTHERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African Leather Workers Union - African Transport Workers Union - African Trunk and Box Workers Union - National Union of Clothing Workers - S.A. Bank Employees Union - Textile Workers Union - National Union of Engineering Industrial and Allied Workers - Motor Industry Workers Union <p>FOSATU COMMENT: We are very critical of these unions. See article on parallel unions. They are weak and racially divided. They are prepared to register on a non-racial basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African Tobacco Workers Union - Electrical and Allied Workers Union of S.A. <p>FOSATU COMMENT: We are also very critical of these other parallel unions. See article below. They are weak, and have strong dependence on registered unions to negotiate for them at Industrial Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chemical Workers Industrial Union - Eastern Province Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union - Engineering and Allied Workers Union - Glass and Allied Workers Union - Metal and Allied Workers Union - National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of S.A. - National Union of Textile Workers - Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union - Transport and General Workers Union - Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union - United Automobile Rubber and Allied Workers Union. <p>FOSATU COMMENT: We are committed to building strong non-racial independent unions based on strong shop floor organization and strong shop stewards. We are only prepared to register on a non-racial basis and will submit non-racial applications to test the law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building, Construction and Allied Workers Union - Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union - Laundry, Dry Cleaning, Dyeing Workers Association - S.A. Chemical Workers Union - Transport and Allied Workers Union - Food, Beverage and Allied Workers Union - Steel Engineering Workers Union. <p>FOSATU COMMENT: Their policy position is unclear. They disagreed with FOSATU on non-racial stand. Majority of these unions are weak and not based on strong shop floor organization. Their policy on registration unclear and has not been stated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African Food and Canning Workers Union - Western Province General Workers Union - S. African Allied Workers Union - Black and Allied Workers Union. <p>FOSATU COMMENT: African Food and Canning Workers Union-Independent Unions committed to strong factory based organization and non-racial stand. Not prepared to register with present law. SAAWU position is unclear. It used to be a branch of BAWU. Policies are unclear and weakly organized. BAWU position unclear and strength of organization unclear. May have support in some areas.</p>

» WHAT ARE PARALLEL UNIONS? «

PARALLEL UNIONS are like elephants. We all know an elephant when we see one but if asked to describe one we have to stop and think for a while.

So it is with PARALLEL UNIONS, we know that they are weak and that they will not truly be of benefit to workers. Let us take some time and describe why these unions are so weak. Workers must understand this before they are led astray.

PARALLEL UNIONS are unions that have been started by registered unions as a way of organising African workers. Their great weakness is that they have no organizational strength.

Their members are not well organised, they are not well informed and as a result they are not active. Their Shop Stewards either do not exist or are weak and not seen as important by the unions or management. These weaknesses cause their executive committees, where they exist, to be weak and dominated by the registered union officials.

The PARALLELS, therefore, do not represent any organised worker strength. This great weakness leads to others.

- It leads to PARALLELS being very dependent on their registered "mothers".

- It leads them to be very dependent on the registered unions negotiation at the Industrial Council. So the PARALLELS negotiate through the registered union.

- So the PARALLELS depend on their registered "mother" and the Industrial Councils not on the strength of their organisation in the factories.

- These weaknesses mean that the PARALLELS have to also depend on management because they don't have the power to do otherwise.

- this then leads them to work hand-in-hand with management because management usually welcome a weak union so as to keep out the strong.

- The PARALLELS also depend on the discredited Liaison Committees since they are never strong enough to challenge or dominate the Liaison Committee.

These are the things that make the PARALLEL UNIONS

weak, ineffective and, therefore, against the interests of workers. Now these PARALLELS are appearing like flowers at the first rain. They and their registered "mothers" are playing an opportunist game. Where were these unions when the going was tough and those who organised African workers were being banned? Why are these unions so ready to register even though they will be racially segregated? Why don't they challenge the Government to allow non-racial trade union, something they have talked about for so long?

Their actions are selling out workers because it gives the Government the excuse they need to carry on dividing workers by race.

Workers should be clear on this. We need a strong trade union movement. We need to join the FOSATU unions some of which are strong, but some of which are weak, but the weakness of FOSATU unions is that of the young tree - if workers feed them they will grow to touch the sky. WORKERS CHOOSE WISELY!

REGISTRATION - THE BIG TEST.

**PARALLEL UNIONS -
HOW DO THEY WORK ?**

In 1979 the Parallel unions mainly with the support of TUCSA and its affiliates began to be very active. The important question is - How do these Parallel unions work? Last year FOSATU prepared a long report on the activities of the Parallel Unions. Here is one example of the way Parallels work that is taken from that report.

**PARALLEL UNION ACTIVITY AT
S. AFRICAN GENERAL ELECTRIC
BENONI.**

PARALLEL UNION INVOLVED:
Electrical Allied Workers of
S.A.

Around the end of September the Black Personnel Officer called the Liaison Committee members and told them that officials from a trade union were coming the next day to speak to them. These officials, the next day explained to the workers about the union and how the union would help them. These were the main points.

1. If they lost their jobs the union will support them with R2,50 a week while they looked for another job.
2. If they died their dependents would get money (the amount not specified).
3. They would be members of a sick-pay fund and receive R3,00 a week whilst sick.

The were told the subscriptions were 50 cents a week and this would be deducted from their wages. A question was raised by the workers about the Liaison Committee - union relationship. Workers asked whether they would be able to form a Works Committee in the firm, rather than a Liaison Committee. One of the officials replied that the management would not allow it. He said that the Liaison Committee and the trade union would work together in the firm. He also told the liaison committee members that they must not fight in the factory.

Joining forms were given to the Personnel Officer. He gave them to the Liaison Committee members and told them to tell workers about the Union and to give out forms in their departments.

The Liaison Committee members and the Personnel Officer were invited to a Union meeting in Riger Park, Boksburg. The liaison committee members did not attend, but the Personnel Officer reported to them that a Chairman and Treasurer for the East Rand had been elected at the meeting.

The Liaison Committee members were told that the joining forms would be collected by the Personnel Officer on 26 Oct. 1979. No further meetings were arranged between the liaison committee members and union officials, either at the firm or at the Union Offices.

The liaison committee members report that they are unhappy about this union: They have said "It seems just like liaison committee or Industrial Council ... They don't want to solve our problems. They talk about canteens and first aid but if you talk about money, they don't want to hear you".

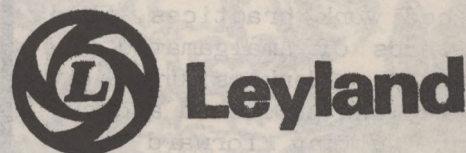
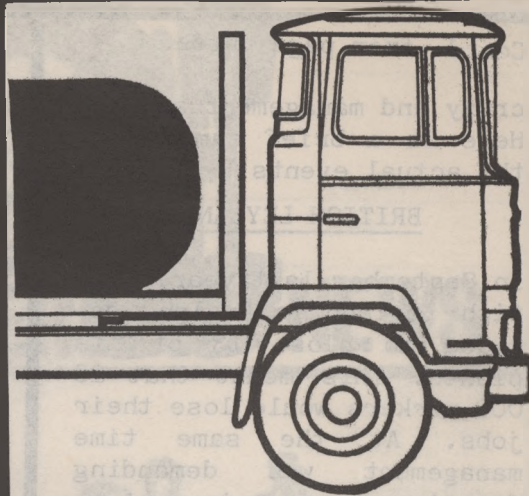
"This Union helps us when we are dead. When we are still alive it doesn't help us".

They report that workers are also suspicious, especially about the 50 cent deduction.

FOREIGN COMPANIES

A FOSATU report released in February shows that in general the record of foreign companies on Union recognition remains bad.

FOSATU stated that the most important test of the Codes was whether they promoted Union recognition. By this test the Codes had been a failure. FOSATU's report which is the most detailed information that has yet been presented in the Codes showed how Companies have delayed, blocked and refused Union recognition.



SOUTH AFRICA

After reaching a deadlock and having to go to arbitration the FOSATU affiliate Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union and Leyland reached a new agreement covering the Cape plants.

The Agreement contained wage increases and more important greater rights of union recognition and important new conditions of employment. Its believed that this agreement is probably the most progressive signed by any registered union in South Africa.

CONGRATULATIONS LEYLAND WORKERS.

STRIKE

The seriousness of the wage problem was shown when workers at the Elsie's River plant of Leyland went on a wildcat strike on the . Despite initial management refusal they then agreed to talk to the Union. During the negotiations it was agreed that management would consider wage increases. The strong role of the Union and their discipline saved the situation from chaos. On 12th February, 1979 the management announced increases of between 10c and 20c per hour bringing the minimum hourly wage to 98c per hour.

BRITAIN

Judging by our newspapers one would think that British Leyland shop stewards were

...please turn over

OVERSEAS NEWS

Contd. from page three

crazy and management angels. Here is a brief summary of the actual events.

BRITISH LEYLAND

In September last year, British Leyland in England decided to close 13 of its plants. This meant that 25 000 workers would lose their jobs. At the same time management was demanding drastic changes in established work practices. Shop Stewards of Amalgamated Engineering Workers Union at B. Leyland published a document putting forward suggestions to the B. Leyland on how to prevent this decline of the company. They felt that if their suggestions were put into action no workers would need to lose their jobs.

For writing this document management fired senior shop steward Derek Robinson. Almost immediately 30,000 B. Leyland workers went on strike in protest against this. Management refused to re-instate Robinson but said they would allow a union inquiry into the reasons for his dismissal, on condition that the workers would go back to work. The inquiry recommended that Robinson be given back his job because the reasons for his dismissal were unfair. The union has said that if management does not agree to this they will be forced to call their 80,000 workers out on strike.



This letter was sent by the union members at the Atlas Copco plant in Sweden. MAWU is organising at Atlas Copco in Benoni near Johannesburg.

" To our friends in FOSATU
A few words about Atlas Copco's local union "Nacko" situated a few miles from Stockholm, Sweden.

We have about 700 members in our local union. We belong to the Swedish Metal Workers Union. Nearly everybody here are members of the union. At this plant we produce rock drilling machines and compressors.

We have a local executive committee into which members are elected every year. The name of our chairman is Per Erik Njholm and he works with trade union issues full time.

In every department we have one "contact person" and one "safety shop-steward". The "contact person" has to inform workers in his/her department, about discussions, negotiations and agreements with management. The duty of the safety shop steward is to see that all safety regulations are followed and to point out to the supervisors if some machines or other things are out of order.

Five years ago, we in the local union demanded free working clothes from the company. The company agreed to our demand. Every second week we get clean shoes. Also the shoes are free of charge. We have special shoes with iron-toes.

One of the big questions during the last few years has been the wage system. Before nearly everybody worked with piece-rate (ie. we get paid according to how much of one article we

Götestrom, full time union safety shop steward in his office at the Atlas Copco factory in Stockholm, Sweden. All depts have a safety shop steward.

finish in an hour). But most of us felt that this system put too much pressure on the workers. There were always disputes with the supervisors about how much piece-rate should be too. That is why we demanded a fixed monthly rate. Now the wage is set in two different ways depending on the type of the work like if it is heavy, noisy, very boring and on top of that we have a system with "points". You get extra points depending on how long you have been working at Atlas Copco, your occupational experience and how good you are at your work. In the union we often discuss whether the wage gaps are still big.

The workshops are both good and bad. We have some new and modern workshops with air condition and good daylight, but we also have dark and noisy workshop which have too many machines on a small surface. That is why we demand that the company install new modern air-conditioners. Some machines at our plant are very modern and are operated with a computer system, instead of using human labour like before. These machines are very expensive and the management wants to introduce new machines all the time. That is our problem. Employment is decreasing at our plant.

We work 40 hours a week, Monday to Friday. We have five weeks paid holiday in the summer. We earn about Sw. Cr 29/hour (that is about R6 hour but cost of living in Sweden is about 4 times as high as it is here).

Because Atlas Copco is a multi-national company and we here in Sweden are very interested to keep contact with our friends overseas. We think there are many common problems that we could help each other with. We have a special S.Africa group and their task is to keep contact with our friends in S. Africa and to spread information about you and your trade union work to our members.

Until the next time, many warm greetings to all of you from up here in the North!"

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