

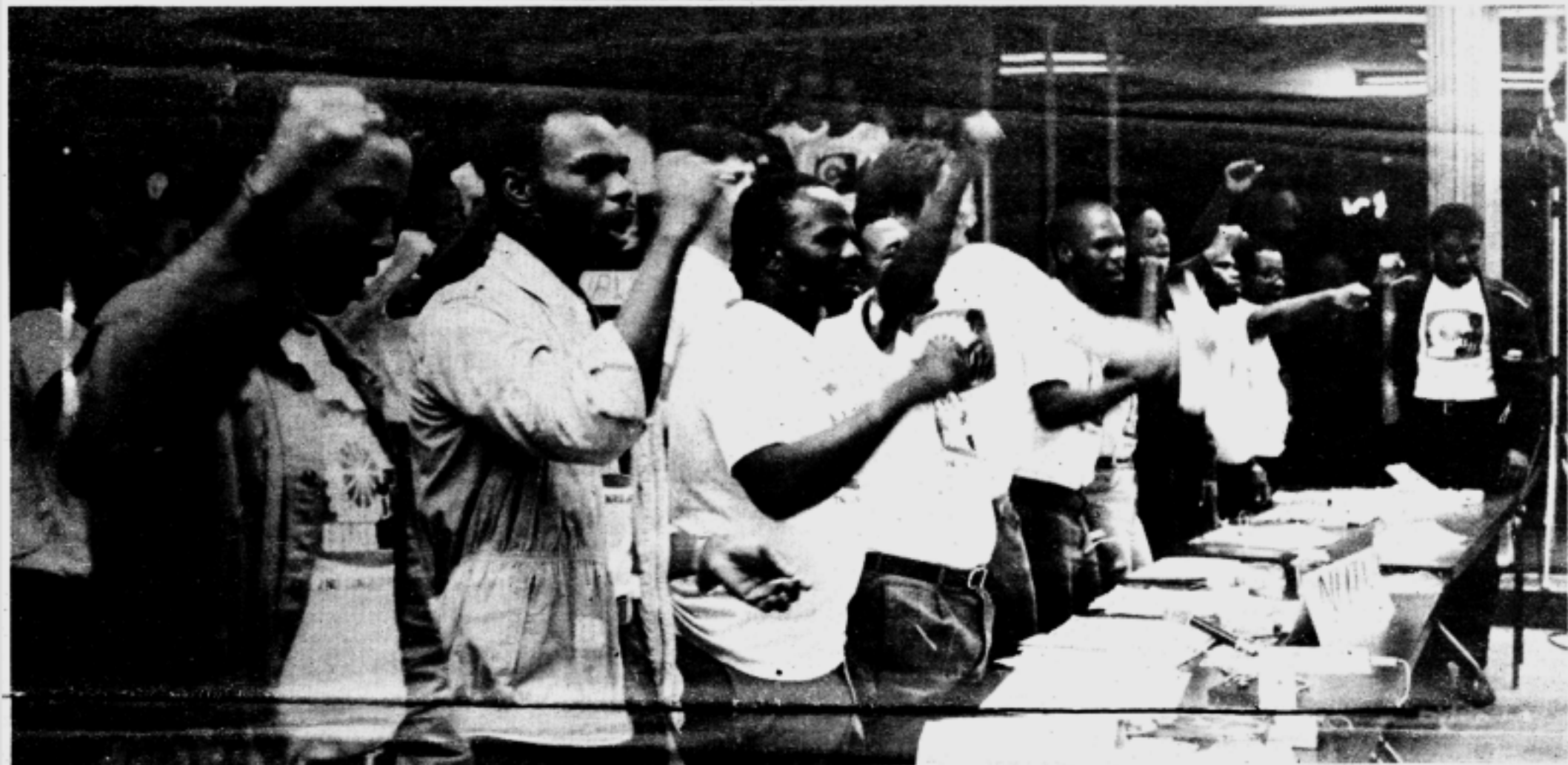
FOSATU

WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



April 1982



DELEGATES at FOSATU's second national congress sing a workers' song before starting a new debating session.

Congress gives a new lead

Delegates spell out policy on unity, politics

FOSATU is facing the future with renewed strength and confidence following its second national congress held at Hammanskraal earlier this month.

A total of 135 delegates representing almost 100,000 workers met for the first time since FOSATU was formed to discuss progress made during the past three years and to lay down new policy directives.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

One of the highlights of the congress was a keynote address by general secretary Joe Foster in which he analysed the workers' struggle in South Africa and examined the role FOSATU should play.

He argued that a real working class movement with a clear political direction should be developed and that FOSATU should play a leading role in bringing this about (see page 3).

Delegates received the speech with acclaim and adopted it as a guideline to FOSATU policy.

Congress also ruled that the speech should be released as a public document and that it should be discussed by shop stewards and members in the factories.

Key points made in the speech were reflected in several important decisions taken by delegates.

UNITY PROGRAMME

In one resolution, congress

reaffirmed FOSATU's commitment to build a united working class movement in South Africa and to unite with other non-racial trade unions to achieve this.

It also spelled out a detailed programme for starting unity talks with other worker organisations.

However, congress made it clear that FOSATU would not accept any form of unity and that a united workers' organisation would have to be disciplined, non-racial and democratic.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

In another resolution, congress fully committed FOSATU to the struggle for the political emancipation of workers, and said it would continue efforts to organise workers into one movement so that an effective organ for change can be created.

While FOSATU would not affiliate to any party political organisation, it would also take part in community campaigns aimed at winning political and other rights for workers in a way which would strengthen the working class movement.

However, congress said, it would only do so after discussion with its members and when all the organisations taking part in such campaigns have agreed on their aims.

CONSTITUTION

Congress also amended FOSATU's constitution to improve its structure

in the light of experience gained over the past three years, and to provide for more worker participation in decision-making at all levels within the organisation.

Delegates debated the industrial council system and industry-wide bargaining but time ran out and the various proposals were referred back to the membership for further discussion before the next central committee meeting.

DELEGATE

The keynote speech was followed by an intensive date on the workers' struggle.

Delegates put forward different opinions but expressed a common commitment to the struggle for workers' rights, and a renewed

determination to promote worker organisation.

Also, it was clear that the address had started a process of discussion within FOSATU which will help workers to further clarify future policies.

One delegate said: 'The struggle stretches far before us — but we are committed, and whatever happens we will keep on keeping on.'

Another said: 'Years have gone by in the struggle and many organisations have perished. However, I hope that FOSATU will endure.'

'If the trade union movement can unite, we can liberate everyone in South Africa.'

He argued that workers should work together and use their unity, and added:

'I'm happy that we have a body like FOSATU so that we can control our lives. We must tell all workers how good this has been, and we must make them aware that we are with them and what our struggle is.'

CONFIDENCE

Another said: 'When we leave this congress, we must go to workers and conscientise them. We must help them to be proud of themselves and to have confidence in themselves.'

'As shop stewards, we have to represent workers — but if you represent yourself as a slave, it is difficult to represent workers.'

'The solution is to help workers kill the slave in themselves — but first, we must kill the slaves in ourselves.'

'Congress was a great success'

CHRIS Dlamini, national president of FOSATU, has expressed great satisfaction about the outcome of the second national congress.

'All the resolutions passed were progressive and constructive,' he said. 'If they can be implemented — and it is part of my task to see that they are — they can only mean progress for FOSATU and serve the interest of all members.'

'FOSATU is moving in the right

direction and taking up all the challenges facing workers in South Africa.'

Chris added: 'I am also very satisfied with the congress' decision on unity. It clearly spells out how meaningful unity can be achieved.'

'Up to now, discussion at the solidarity committees have been unsatisfactory. Their structures have been too loose and because of this no constructive decisions could

be taken.

'Now, our delegates have been given a definite structure in terms of which to work and which can be used to monitor progress.'

Bro. Dlamini added: 'Progress towards our goal of unity will now depend on whether the other unions will approach unity talks in the same constructive way.'