

# Congress votes for unity

IN an important move, delegates at the second national congress committed FOSATU to building a united working class movement and to unite with other non-racial trade unions.

Congress also took a major step forwards by spelling out a detailed programme for working towards unity — and said it was willing to dissolve FOSATU if this would help to achieve unity.

In a resolution adopted by congress, FOSATU pointed out that it was formed to bring about unity among all workers in South Africa, and has built up unity from the shop floor upwards over the past three years.

Also, congress said, many other democratic non-racial unions were now expressing interest in solidarity and unity with the non-racial union movement as a whole.

## PROGRAMME

It therefore voted to continue building up a united working class movement and to discuss unity with other unions on the basis of the following programme:

- FOSATU will seek out worker organisations which broadly agree with its policies.
- It will move closer to them by discussing FOSATU's policies and positions with them.
- FOSATU will then begin to discuss with them how disciplined unity should be achieved.
- It will then draft constitutions for these organisations.
- FOSATU will then plan to merge existing unions with others and to form joint organisations.

## Constitution changed: More power for workers

FOSATU has thoroughly reviewed its structure at its second national congress and has made some important changes to its constitution.

The review, which took up almost a day, was aimed at adapting FOSATU's structure in the light of experience gained during the past three years, and to ensure effective worker participation in decision-making at all levels within the organisation.

### NATIONAL LEVEL

At national level, congress created the new post of national treasurer. The treasurer, who must be a worker, will take over financial responsibilities from the general secretary.

The national executive committee will be enlarged to include more elected worker representatives from each region.

### REGIONAL LEVEL

The regional councils will now become regional congresses and will be larger, more representative bodies with more powers to take decisions about regional affairs.

Up to now, unions were restricted to a maximum number of delegates at regional level. These restrictions have now been removed so that workers in all unions will be equally represented at the regional congresses.

### LOCAL LEVEL

The constitution was also changed to provide for better organisation at local level.

This will allow more workers to take part in FOSATU decision-making.

Up to now, the constitution has not provided for shop stewards' councils, which already exist.

This has now been rectified and

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

## GUIDELINES

This was in line with guidelines set out by Joe Foster in his keynote speech when he said that the union movement could unite in different ways.

One kind of unity was the present form where separate unions and organisations try to take common stands on certain issues.

But this could only achieve anything on specific issues and would eventually become ineffective without more permanent organisational links.

Organisations could remain independent but try to set up permanent forms of contact. While organisations would be more closely linked, taking joint decisions would remain difficult.

Unions could also unite in a loose federation such as TUCSA but such a body would not be based on clear principles and would not lead to real unity either.

## DISCIPLINE

What was needed was disciplined unity where unions would be linked closely together in one organisation in which policies would be binding on all unions, he said.

Joe said FOSATU should take unity very seriously and work out a programme for achieving it.

He also warned: "We should not hesitate to attack those who are impeding the development of a working class movement."

shop stewards' councils will play an important role at local level in future.

The councils will consist of all shop stewards as well as union branch executive committee members in local areas.

The councils will elect office bearers and have been empowered to establish local executive committees.

These local organisations will now be formally linked to other FOSATU structures and will be represented at regional level.

## New office bearers elected

CHRIS Dlamini, chairman of the Transvaal region, has been elected as FOSATU's new national president.

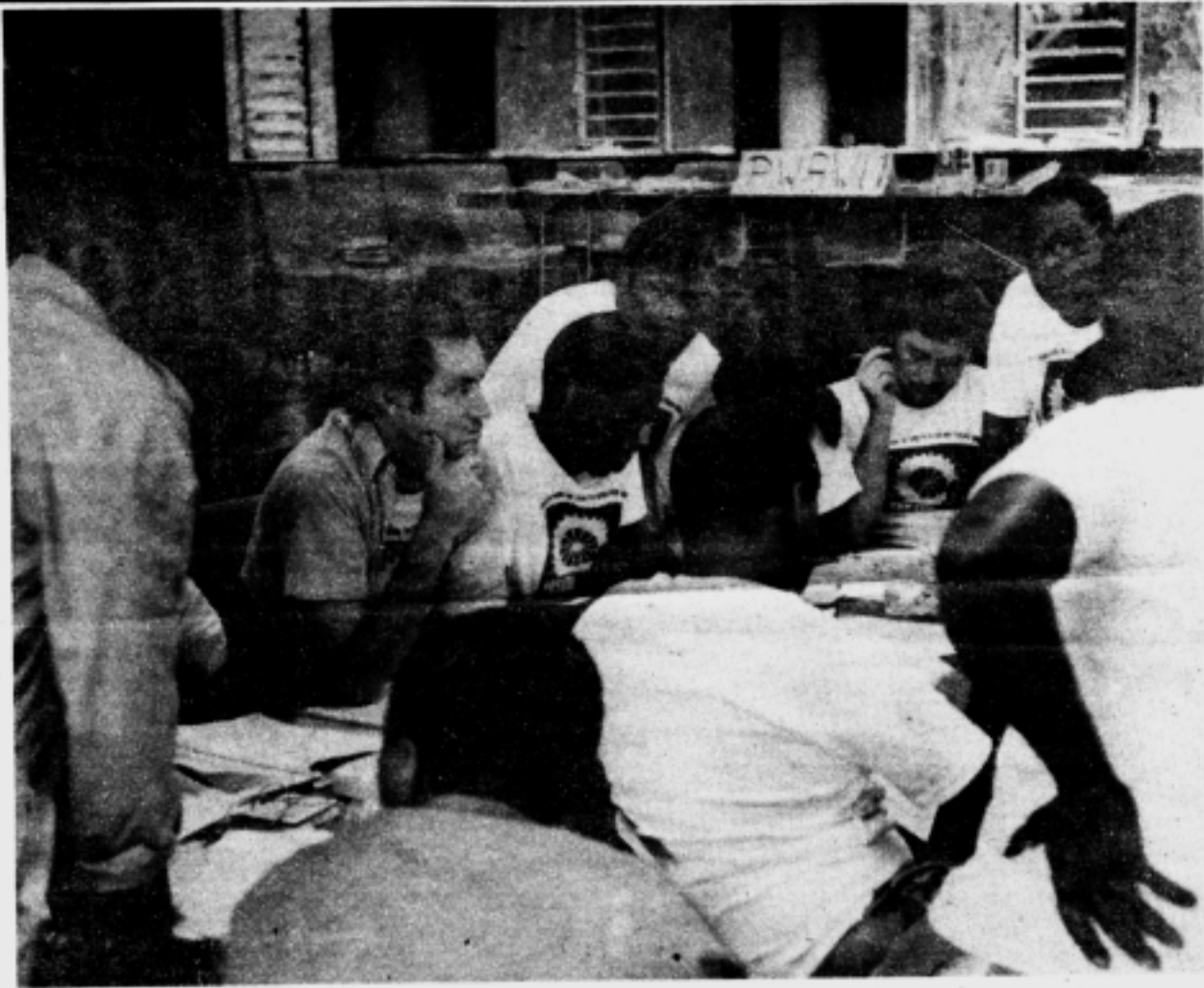
Chris, who takes over from Johnny Mke, was among several new national office bearers elected at FOSATU's second national congress.

Andrew Zulu, also president of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU), was elected as national vice-president.

Nathaniel Gantana was elected to the new post of national treasurer and Joe Foster, who has acted as general secretary, following the resignation of Alec Erwin last year, was unanimously elected as general secretary.

## LONG EXPERIENCE

Chris has had long experience in FOSATU and trade unions. He has served as chairman of his union, The Sweet, Food and Allied Workers' Union (SFAWU), is chairman of the Transvaal region and also serves on



DELEGATES at FOSATU's second national congress in earnest discussion between sessions.

IN one of the main resolutions adopted at congress, FOSATU committed itself to the struggle for workers' rights in all spheres, including their political emancipation.

Congress spelled out FOSATU's political policy after the keynote address by the general secretary, Joe Foster, in which he examined the political role FOSATU should play.

## WORKER ROLE

Bro. Foster made it clear that the role of worker organisation was fundamentally political and that the workers' movement should contribute to the wider political struggle.

At the same time, he said, there were different political groups in the community and it was impossible for FOSATU to ally itself with all these groups, or to ally itself with one particular group.

Both paths, he said, would destroy the unity of worker organisation. However, this did not mean that FOSATU did not want to be involved in politics.

"Our very existence is political and we welcome that," he said.

Three resolutions were submitted to congress to help it to determine FOSATU's political position.

Eventually, congress committed FOSATU to the following political policy:

## MAJORITY RULE

FOSATU believes that all the people of South Africa should take part in decision-making about the country's affairs, and reiterates its support for a democracy based on one man one vote and majority rule.

## Fosatu spells out its political policy

It rejects the homelands policy of the South African government which strips South Africans of their citizenship and turns them into foreigners in the country of their birth.

FOSATU believes that wealth should be democratically produced and equally distributed.

However, the majority of workers are forced to live and work in conditions that are either politically democratic nor economically equal, which results in poverty, hardship and social deprivation.

## POLITICAL STAND

In the last five years, as the powers of unions have grown, pressures have been exerted on them to take a political stand.

FOSATU believes that any organisation of workers to fight for a more just society will not succeed unless they are united through effective organisation on the factory floor.

FOSATU will not affiliate to any party political organisation but will engage in struggles to secure a better standard of living, social justice and the political emancipation of workers in the community, where members of its affiliates live.

FOSATU will therefore continue its efforts to organise all workers into one movement so that an effective organ for change can be created.

It will take part in campaigns aimed at establishing a more just society in such a way that the working class movement is strengthened.

## DEMOCRACY

However, it will do so only after thorough discussion with members at grass roots level to ensure that democracy is not merely spoken but also acted upon.

It will also only take part in such campaigns when all the participants have achieved unity of purpose and aims.



Chris Dlamini, Fosatu's new national president.

Bro. Gantana is chairman of the Western Cape branch of the National Automobile and Allied Workers' Union (NAAWU), and was president of the WP Motor

Assembly Workers' Union before it merged into NAAWU.

He has also served on the WP regional committee and the central committee.

## BRANCH CHAIRMAN

Andrew Zulu has been MAWU's Transvaal branch chairman for the past three years and has served on the regional executive and the central committee.

He is a shop steward in his factory, Stonestreet and Hanson, where he has led negotiations over the past three years.