

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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - African Tobacco Workers Union - Electrical and Allied Workers Union of S.A. | <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. | <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. | <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: 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> | <p>FOSATU COMMENT: We are also very critical of these other parallel unions. See articles below. They are weak, and have strong dependence on registered unions to negotiate for them at Industrial Council.</p> | <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> | <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> | <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. SAAMU 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.