

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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FOSATU SLAMS LABOUR PARTY

Sell Out By Opportunist Leaders

Call For United Stand

THE FOSATU Executive has called for a united stand by workers against the Government's growing propaganda campaign for its so called plan for reform.

At a meeting on January 29 at Wilgespruit, representatives of all five of FOSATU's regions reported strong membership hostility to the recent decision by the Labour Party to participate in the toothless three-chamber parliament.

The Executive endorsed the FOSATU statement condemning the Labour party and discussed plans for mobilising members against the 'false and meaningless' constitutional changes proposed by the Government.

These plans have been submitted to affiliated unions which will submit reports to the Central Committee — FOSATU's top decision making body — so that further steps can be taken.

FOSATU will also seek co-operation from other progressive unions in the forthcoming unity meeting in order to form a united front on this issue.

It was felt by members of the Executive that a major problem had been the lack of unity amongst community and political organisations.

Guidelines were issued to all the regions urging them to support united and progressive campaigns against the Government's attempts to win support for its racially divisive policies.

However, it was agreed that FOSATU would not get involved in petty division.

It was clear from the mood of the meeting that the Labour Party's sell-out has roused FOSATU's anger.

FOSATU's general secretary, Joe Foster said 'Many of us have seen this coming for a long time. Last year Labour Party leader, Rev. Allan Hendrickse showed the party's true colours when he attacked motor workers in the Eastern Cape for striking for a living wage. Now they are abandoning the principles of unity which we in FOSATU will never abandon. We are fighting for economic and political justice for all — irrespective of race. We can have nothing to do with racially divided puppet parliaments.'



FOSATU Executive at Wilgespruit: Back left — J. Mthinyane (N Natal); J. Dampies (W Province); J. Ntuli (Transvaal); A. Zulu (Vice President); J. Foster (General Secretary); C. Dlamini (President); A. Erwin (Education Secretary); F. Sauls (E Province); J. Gommomo (E Province); Middle left: T. McKenna (W Province); A. Wilson (W Province); T. Dladla (N Natal); N. Buthelezi (N Natal); R. Mofokeng (Transvaal); J. Mkalipi (E Province); N. Gantana (Treasurer); Front: E. Mabaso (Natal); J. Mawbey (Natal).

Labour Party's 'Dangerous Game'

Since it started the Labour Party has played a dangerous game of racial politics. Against the wishes of the majority of people it decided to enter the Coloured Representative Council (CRC). It managed to confuse many by saying that it was only going in so as to destroy the CRC. However, once it was in the Labour Party stayed there and accepted the government label of Coloured.

Only when it became clear that even the government wanted to change the CRC did they lamely withdraw. However, having tasted false power they made their next move against the wishes of the majority. They participated in the Coloured Local Management Committees which were the government's poor substitute for removing so-called coloured people from the municipal councils. They even held talks with government about these Manage-

ment Committees. Desperately they looked for ways to appear politically powerful even though they were collapsing on the ground.

They next joined Inkatha and the Indian Reform Party in a so-called South African Black Alliance. No one was ever clear what this Alliance did and clearly the Labour Party could find no political direction.

So finally seeking an easy road they have now betrayed their partners in the Alliance and more than 80% of South Africa's population and sided with the Nationalist Government.

What is the great system that they say offers hope for all in South Africa?

* It is a so-called parliament with three separate racial chambers or sections. So it is nothing other than the old apartheid CRC, SAIC and

Cape Town Parliament dressed in new clothes.

* The whites, "coloureds" and Indians will only sit together in the so-called Presents Council. This has 35 elected members and 25 government appointed members. Of the 35 elected members 20 are white, 10 so-called coloured and 5 Indian.

* The President will certainly be white and no doubt a member of the present National Party. The President will have powers that will be envied by many of the world's dictators.

So Labour Party hopes to negotiate for a non-racial South Africa are little more than a joke. However, there is no doubt they will be able to negotiate a big fat salary for sitting in the Presidents Council.

As a worker was heard to say "They talk about a Parliament with 3 chambers — they must mean the kind that my grandmother keeps under her bed."

FOSATU has strongly condemned the Labour Party's decision to participate in the Government's farcical constitutional reform.

In a statement released shortly after the Labour Party decided to participate in the so called constitutional reforms put forward by the Government at the party's Eshowe Congress, FOSATU said the Labour Party had now paraded their political opportunism for all to see.

'The Labour Party had shown its true colours to workers last year when it sided with employers and attacked workers and their unions while they were striking for a living wage in the Eastern Cape,' the statement said.

It added that this latest decision finally confirms the Labour Party's political irrelevance for workers.

The decision can only be seen as a desperate attempt by an unrepresentative leadership to prolong their own personal careers.

To do this the Labour Party has been prepared to sacrifice unity in the struggle and have finally bowed down to racist political divisions by abandoning 80 percent of South Africa's population, the statement said.

FOSATU said the Labour Party had embraced the label of so called coloured and were prepared to sit around the negotiating table in the hope that a few coloured crumbs will pass their way.

'By doing this they have sided with the very forces of apartheid that continue to oppress and exploit workers,' the statement said.

FOSATU and its members, which have been at the forefront of the non-racial struggle in this country, totally reject this short-sighted opportunism.

FOSATU has shown that only through complete unity will oppressed workers achieve a fair share of the misdirected wealth of South Africa.

Clearly the coloured Labour Party cannot give workers assistance in their struggle for economic and political justice in South Africa whereas FOSATU remains committed to this struggle and will never abandon it.

WORKERS FACE GUNS

ARMED white security guards confronted CWIU members at Triomf's Richards Bay plant when they attempted to discuss with the factory manager his 'first and final' wage offer of a 5 percent wage increase.

Workers were walking towards the administration block during their lunch break when they were met by a line of armed security men threatening to shoot.

'When workers want to talk management want to shoot,' one worker said.