

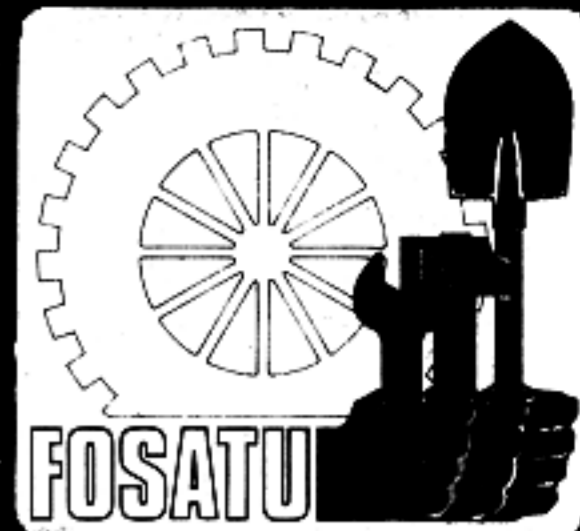
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On 14/15th April 1979 at Hammanskraal in Pretoria the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) was established. This marked an important development in the history of workers organisation. Today FOSATU is the largest representative organisation of Black workers in South Africa. At its first Congress on the 14/15 April the 150 representatives from all its affiliated unions setup FOSATU as the new federation.

They elected a president-brother Johnny Mke the chairman of United Automobile Rubber and Allied Workers, a Vice-president-Brother David Sebabi the Transvaal Chairman of MAWU and the General Secretary Brother Alec Erwin the former Secretary of TUACC. The Congress adopted the constitution and passed certain important policy resolutions which will be very important for the working of FOSATU.

WHAT ARE THE UNIONS IN FOSATU

THE Metal Section:

The Metal and Allied Workers Union of South Africa - with branches in Natal and Transvaal.
The Engineering and Allied Workers Union with a branch in the Transvaal.
The National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers

of S.A. - branches in Eastern Cape, Natal, Transvaal.
The United Automobile Rubber and Allied Workers - branches in E.C., Natal & Transvaal.
The Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union - Cape Town.

The Chemical Section

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union - Natal.
The Chemical & General Workers Union - Eastern Cape.

Food Section:

The Sweet Food & Allied Workers Union - Transvaal.
The Eastern Province S.F. & Allied Workers Union - Eastern Province.

Other Industries:

The Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union - Transvaal.
The Glass and Allied Workers Union - Transvaal.
The Transport & General Workers Union - Natal & Transvaal.
The National Union of Textile Workers - Natal.

THE FOSATU SYMBOL

FOSATU has adopted a symbol to identify the organisation. As you can see this symbol which is on the top right hand corner of the newspaper consist of 3 hands holding 3 implements, an industrial cog and the name FOSATU. Unfortunately we have not been able to print the symbol in colour as it

what does Fosatu stand for ?

- The unity of workers without regard to race, creed or sex.
- The shopfloor organisation of workers around a shopfloor union committee in each factory.
- That workers, not union officials, control and lead their organisation.
- That the Federation makes its own decisions independent of all political parties, or foreign organisations or governments.
- That workers rights are protected in the workplace through the recognition of the right of shopstewards to be involved in negotiating all changes, grievances and dismissals.
- The right of all workers through their organisations to be involved in the negotiation of National minimum conditions in each industry.
- To act on a National level to establish workers rights and to remove arbitrary and unfair legislation affecting workers.

should be. The name FOSATU should be in gold and so is the industrial cog; this gold standing for wealth and hope of the future. The background colour should be red which is the colour chosen by most worker organisations throughout the world and has come to mean for many, many years now the worker colour. The 3 hands signifies the unity of workers in industry and signifies their strength in holding the implements with which they work. Such symbols are a good way of binding us together and identifying ourselves as FOSATU members.

WHAT DOES FOSATU AIM

TO DO

FOSATU aims are to build a strong Federation of Trade Unions so as to better represent workers in this country. It was hoped that a new Federation would be started based on principles of non-racialism, close cooperation amongst the affiliates and strong shop-floor organisation of workers because it was felt none of the existing federations emphasized these points. FOSATU'S aim was not to divide workers by starting a new federation but to unite them by starting a new kind of federation. One that may be able to do things which the present federations of Trade Unions had not managed to do either because of their racial position where they would exclude black workers, or because they have not managed even though they are non-racial to achieve enough common policies and enough close cooperation.

FOSATU does not just want to be a collection of unions formed into a Federation; our aim is to form a federation of trade unions who agree on common policies, aims and objects. Our aim is to form a federation of trade unions controlled by worker leaders and elected worker representatives. In the constitution of FOSATU worker representatives are the majority on all committees.

WHAT LED TO FOSATU

There have been trade union organisations with African workers before. In the 1920's there was the Industrial Commercial Union (I.C.U. - a general union for African workers) in 1940's there was CNETU (Council of Non-European Trade Unions) and in the 1950's and early sixties there was S.A.C.T.U. This last federation was forced out of existence and into exile because of its close links with political organisations. After this worker organisations were not active for about 10 years. It is important for us in our federation to learn from the successes and failures of these past federations; we will examine these in later issues of FOSATU news.

RENEWED ACTIVISM - THE 1970's

In the early 1970's following the renewed militancy shown by workers in Durban in 1973 and by other workers throughout South Africa trade union organisation of African workers again emerged in the form of unregistered unions. These unions, whose members were mainly African, were excluded from being registered since African workers under the 1956 Industrial Conciliation Act are excluded from the definition of "Employee".

The two major bodies around which this organisation took place was the Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Council in Natal and the UTP (or Black Consultative) in Johannesburg.

It was not only African workers who were looking for a new home however. Among some registered unions for Whites, Coloured and Indians the need to develop a strong and more broadly based federation of unions including all workers became apparent. It was particularly those unions in the automobile industry who saw this need.

In 1976 the National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa (NUM-ARWOSA) decided to withdraw from the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) because of this federations failure to do anything concrete about the organisation of African workers. The membership then mandated their officials to seek the formation of unity with the unregistered unions.

THE FINAL STAGES LEADING TO FOSATU:

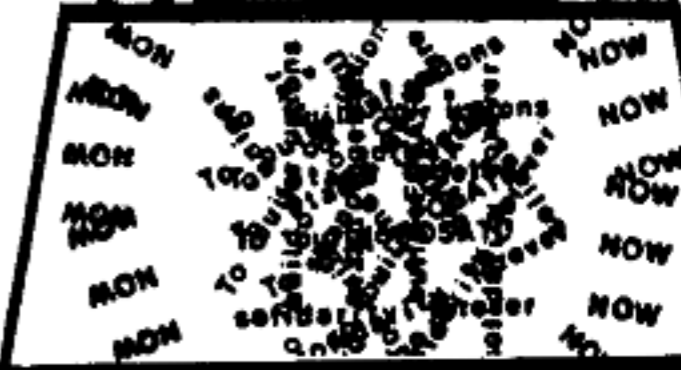
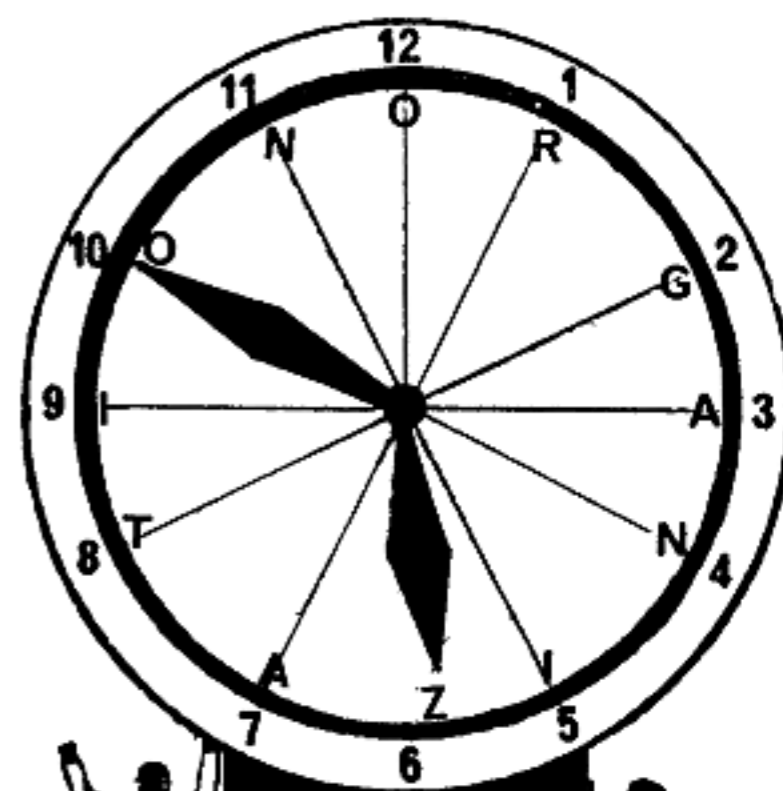
Approaches were made to TUACC and its sister organisation the Council of Industrial Workers of the Witwatersrand, and to the unions forming the Black Consultative and an initial exploratory meeting took place in Johannesburg in March 1977.

There had long been differences in outlook between the two major groups representing African workers. TUACC stood for union open to all races, the Black Consultative for "Black Unions". TUACC for

workers control of the unions while the Black Consultative allowed officials a dominant role. These differences again emerged at this meeting. Despite this, however, it was agreed to take further steps to investigate the establishment of a new federation. A Feasibility Committee was established. At this early stage the Western Province General Workers Union also participated but later withdrew.

Through the Feasibility Committee and further joint meetings the conditions for the establishment of FOSATU were achieved but not without difficulties. The major obstacle to FOSATU's smooth birth resulted from officials within the Black Consultative who hid from the workers in their unions the moves being made to establish a broader unity. The message seeped through however and workers demanded to be involved in discussions. As a result splits emerged both within the unions themselves and between these unions. Two Black Consultative Unions and the major part of a third agreed to join FOSATU (later a fourth union has joined). FOSATU could now be formed.

What time is it ?



TIME TO ORGANISE!

This is our 1st edition and we need your comments and articles for following editions. Start writing now whether you are an official or worker.

FACTORY REPORTS FACTORY REPORTS FACTORY RE

In the FOSATU newsletter we will try and always provide information about what is happening in FOSATU and one of the things we shall keep people informed of is what is happening in the organisation of workers in FOSATU. At this time there are many factories in which workers are struggling for the recognition of their unions. Many of these struggles have been long and here we shall just give a brief account of what has happened in some of the factories.

LEYLAND

Leyland is a large British Company making cars and trucks in South Africa. Its two factories in Cape Town are organised by the Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union (WPMWU), a registered union.

The Union has two year Agreement with Leyland covering wages and working conditions in these factories.

In 1978 WPMWU proposed important changes to the Agreement. The changes will more clearly recognise the Union and Shop Stewards inside the factory and improve the job security of workers in the

factory. For example the Union wants to be involved when there are changes in production method that affect workers and they want the notice period to be longer, the longer the workers service. WPMWU also wanted a 25% wage increase over the next two years.

However, management offered a 10% increase and claimed that the other conditions were already part of company policy. WPMWU wanted these conditions to be part of the Agreement so that the Company could not just change them by itself. This security is important for workers but Leyland don't seem to agree.

WPMWU declared a dispute and it was decided to meet management on 3rd July. This Meeting failed and the dispute now goes to arbitration.

GLACIER BEARINGS

After a strike at the Pine-town factory in 1974 the organisation fell in strength. Then in 1977 workers began to organise themselves and in April 1978 when Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) had a majority they asked this British Company to recognise the Union.

However, the Company response was to set up a new kind of committee in the factory. Workers rejected this as they saw it as an attempt to block the Union. This recognition struggle has been long and ever changing. On one occasion the whole factory was stopped as management tried to get workers to vote

for or against the Company Committee. Workers stood strong and only a few voted.

The Union and Shop Stewards had to seek many ways of pressuring management. They used the law, which required brave Stewards to sign statements and face up to management. They used large general meetings in the factory. They called for the support of their brother workers in England. But most of all they organised hard to keep members well informed and committed.

This struggle still continues since as usual management don't want to place workers' rights on paper. They prefer the Union outside the factory where they can talk to Union officials as they wish.

Glacier workers want their Union recognised inside the factory.

KELLOGGS

The other recognition campaigns covered in this issue are against British owned companies. This is understandable since there are more British companies than those of any other country. Kelloggs are an American owned food company.

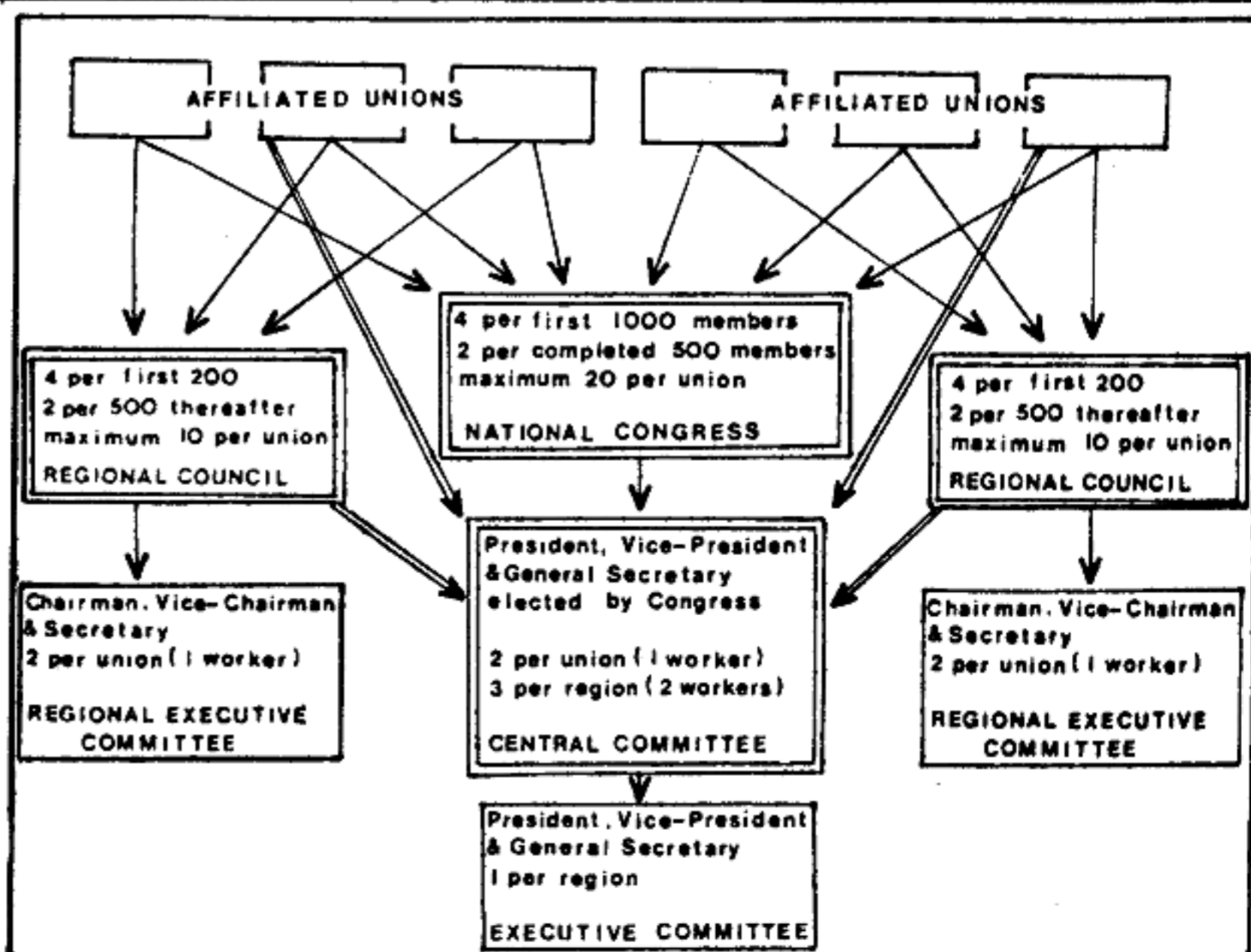
The Company is being organised by the unregistered Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (S.F.AWU). An approach was made to management in 1978 and a draft agreement submitted to them. However, after that the Secretary at
(continued on back page)

THE STRUCTURE OF FOSATU

The constitutional structure of FOSATU is designed to bring together workers and their unions in a way that will create close cooperation. This is done at Local and Regional levels where it is easiest for workers to meet.

However, if we want common policies adopted by all affiliates this requires strong national bodies. These are the National Congress and the Central Committee. The Congress has about 150 delegates and it meets at least once every three years. The Central Committee has representatives from all affiliates and regions and meets once every 6 months.

Constitutions do not create cooperation or worker control of the organisation. An active well informed membership will achieve this. This newspaper is one step in informing workers about their organisation.



that time took no further action. It was a poor start to a recognition campaign.

Unfortunately, the Union was then involved in a long struggle with the Secretary, who was dismissed by his Executive. Workers suffered from such disruptive actions by individuals. However, the SFAWU began reorganizing the factory. By this time the Company seemed quick to cooperate. This seems to be because of pressure overseas.

The Union organiser has been given access to the factory and it has been agreed that a lawyer will check the signatures on stop order forms. Then will come the negotiation for an agreement. We wish Kellogg workers success and hope theirs will be a shorter struggle than elsewhere.

CADBURY'S

Cadbury's is a British owned factory in Port Elizabeth. It probably takes the prize for the grandest company committee used to block union recognition. This committee is so grand that they even call it a trade union.

Cadbury's is being organised by the Eastern Province Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union (E.P.SFAWU) which is a registered union. When the Union approached the Company for recognition the Company response was to set up its own union in the factory providing an office for the so called secretary of that union.

Such a union set up by management with no outside contact is the same as any committee in a factory and just as weak. The name union means nothing. However, the Company were bold enough to tell the British government in the reports required by the Code of Conduct that it recognised a union.

Unfortunately the British government were prepared to accept this information because the Code reports do not give Unions a reasonable chance to comment on these reports.

So the struggle for recognition continues at Cadbury's and we hope FOSATU will be able to assist these workers.

WIEHAHN

THE WIEHAHN COMMISSION AND THE NEW LAW

Unions for African workers have existed for 60 years in South Africa but for all those years employers and the government have done as much as possible to weaken them. Since 1924 Black Unions have been left out of the Industrial Conciliation Act and the collective bargaining structure.

By 1977 the problem could no longer be ignored. The unregistered unions were growing and were starting to be recognised by employers in various stages. Overseas people, unions and governments were becoming very critical about the conditions of Black workers and the discrimination against their organisations. It was also clear that the committee system was a failure.

So the government appointed the Wiehahn Commission to investigate matters. It took two years before the Wiehahn Commission reported and now after all that time the position of the unregistered unions is no better.

The Wiehahn Report was divided with a majority report and a minority report on many matters.

On two matters there were important majority recommendations. The first was that there would be no restriction on who could join a union. The second was that unions could decide for themselves what races could join.

This would have meant that all present unregistered unions would have had a chance to register and to become non-racial unions. However not everything in the report was satisfactory and in fact some of the recommendations were worse than the old laws in certain respects.

However, it was very soon clear from the government White Paper that they were not prepared to make big changes. The two important positive things disappeared so that all the small problems came together to form one big problem.

When the government placed the proposed new law before

parliament it was a disaster. It was clearly a step backwards since about 3/4 of African workers would not be allowed to join registered unions and no mixed unions would be allowed. With small changes this is what is now the law.

The Minister of Labour says that all problems will be solved by him. He will give what are called exemptions. But how can Unions accept a system of exemptions to decide everything rather than a system of law.

However, we should all be clear: WE DON'T HAVE TO REGISTER. WE CAN CARRY ON AS BEFORE AND WE WILL REMAIN A LEGAL ORGANISATION. MANAGEMENT CAN STILL RECOGNISE AN UNREGISTERED UNION.

THE CHOICE IS OURS AND WE MUST DECIDE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF WORKERS BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

WHAT IS FOSATU'S POSITION ON THE NEW LAW?

WE REJECT

- ALL RESTRICTIONS ON UNION MEMBERSHIP.
- THE INCREASED POWERS AND DISCRETION OF THE MINISTER AND OFFICIALS IN THE NEW ACT.
- THE IDEA THAT WE WILL BE RULED BY EXEMPTIONS AND NOT LAWS.
- THE VETO RIGHTS IN THE INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL ADMISSIONS.
- PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION WHICH GIVES NO RIGHTS BUT ONLY POWER TO THE REGISTRAR TO ACT WITHOUT GIVING REASONS.

WE ARE UNHAPPY WITH AND WOULD WISH CHANGED

- THE COMPOSITION, SCOPE AND POWERS OF THE NATIONAL MANPOWER COMMISSION.
- THE COMPOSITION, SCOPE, POWERS AND LIKELY PROCEDURES OF THE INDUSTRIAL COURT AND THE RESTRICTED RIGHT OF APPEAL FROM THIS COURT TO THE SUPREME COURT.

FOSATU stands by its belief that for the present the easiest and most acceptable step toward stable industrial relations is to eliminate racial distinctions in the old Industrial Conciliation Act.