

EDUCATION

ANOTHER PART OF WORKER STRUGGLE

JUNE 16th now marks a special and tragic day for us. It is the day our children were tear gassed, beaten and even shot in their rejection of inferior education. It also reminds us that the struggle for liberation is also a struggle for a better education.

Workers can easily see the benefits of education. Factory workers know that those who work in good jobs have a higher education. Street sweepers and car washers know that those who own the BMW's and Mercedes Benz are university trained. Shop stewards know that management have been trained all their lives to negotiate. Management tries to show their ability to out talk, out argue and to confuse workers with law books and so-called educated facts.

Under the present system workers are taught to believe that you have to have education to be wealthy. However many workers know that because their wages are low, most of them will never be able to afford to educate themselves or their children. Even if they manage to send their children to school, they will not get education. Schools are ill-equipped and teachers are under-trained. There are few school books, and at home no lights or no space makes it impossible to study.

FOSATU realised right from the start the importance of worker education. A policy motion at the first FOSATU Congress in 1979 called for the establishment of an education programme.

When we looked at what was being taught in schools and universities we found there was very little about workers and their history. There was nothing about the history of popular struggles in which workers or their parents took part. We found that English and Maths courses helped the business community but did not teach basic literacy and numeracy. Medical schools were more concerned with the problems of the rich such as heart diseases, than kwashiorkor or industrial health problems of the poor.

And when FOSATU tried to work within those universities to give our members the kind of education only allowed to the sons and daughters of the rich, we were chased off the campus by the university councils. These councils are controlled by members of the business community and the government.

It became clear that workers would have to decide for themselves what sort of education was needed. It is for this reason that FOSATU has embarked on its own independent worker education programme. This programme will give workers the training that they need to build their organisation. Only a powerful worker movement will ensure that our children can also get a proper education. This education will not be designed by the wealthy, for the wealthy to ensure that the wealthy minority remain the only educated people. It will be an education programme which looks at the needs of our members who are the majority in this country. It will be an education programme made by workers, for workers.

Let us remember June 16 to renew the struggle for knowledge. Knowledge must become a right, not a privilege. Education must be freely available and freely given. It must be for the benefit of all in a free and just society.

NEW FOSATU WINTER SCHOOL

FOSATU's Education programme is on the move with the launching of the new Winter School.

This two week programme of union seminars and the Labour Studies Course will be held for the first time this year during July in Johannesburg.

The idea grew out of last year's rewarding experience of running a number of seminars at the same time.

WORKER LEADERS

More than 180 shop stewards and worker leaders from all over South Africa will gather at St Peters Seminary for courses on topics as different as book-keeping, wage negotiating and popular politics.

The Labour Studies Course will be still the central event of the Winter School and once again 15 shop stewards and organisers will attend lectures on labour history, bargaining and popular politics.

But at the same time other workers will be attending seminars organised by the National Union of Textile Workers, the Metal and Allied Workers Union and the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union.

SPECIAL COURSES

Also there will be a number of special courses - one on union accounting organised by SACHED; a course on Labour Law by Charles Nupen from the Legal Resources Centre and a negotiations course by FOSATU's assistant educational secretary, Taffy Adler.

PUBLIC TALKS

For the first time FOSATU has organised a number of public talks in order to develop a greater understanding between the worker movement and progressive people in the wider community.

These talks will be given by the worker leadership of FOSATU who have been meeting in small study groups during the past month in order to pre-



pare the talks on topics like the Shop Steward Movement in FOSATU and Women Workers.

The present is a crucial time for the worker movement in South Africa and within FOSATU and in other independent unions there has been a great deal of debate.

FOSATU hopes that these public talks will give people an insight into the debates that have been taking place as well as encouraging the worker leadership to present their ideas on a wider platform.

The worker lectures will obviously not represent the official policy of FOSATU (this can only be made at Central Committee level) but will represent the views of these worker leaders themselves.

WORKER CULTURE

Another first for FOSATU, is that a number of worker cultural activities have been organised for

the middle of the Winter School.

With the help of progressive artists and groups such as the Junction Avenue Theatre Group two plays have been produced within FOSATU.

These are not performed by professional actors but by factory workers who tell their story as they see it.

There will also be a workshop discussing the problems of producing such plays.

FOSATU SONGS

Within FOSATU songs have always played an important role in mobilising against hostile employers, so as part of the cultural programme a worker choir from Pretoria will sing worker songs.

Workers are becoming more and more aware that 'culture' is also an important level of struggle.

STRUGGLE OF IDEAS

For too long they have had to put up with the ideas put across by the ruling class through the radio, television and in films.

Now they are developing their own cultural ways to put across their struggles and ideas.

SONGS

PLAYS

TALKS

FULL PUBLIC PROGRAMME CARRIED ON NEXT PAGE



EVEN the worker struggle has its lighter moments - shop stewards and organisers at the last Labour Studies Course.