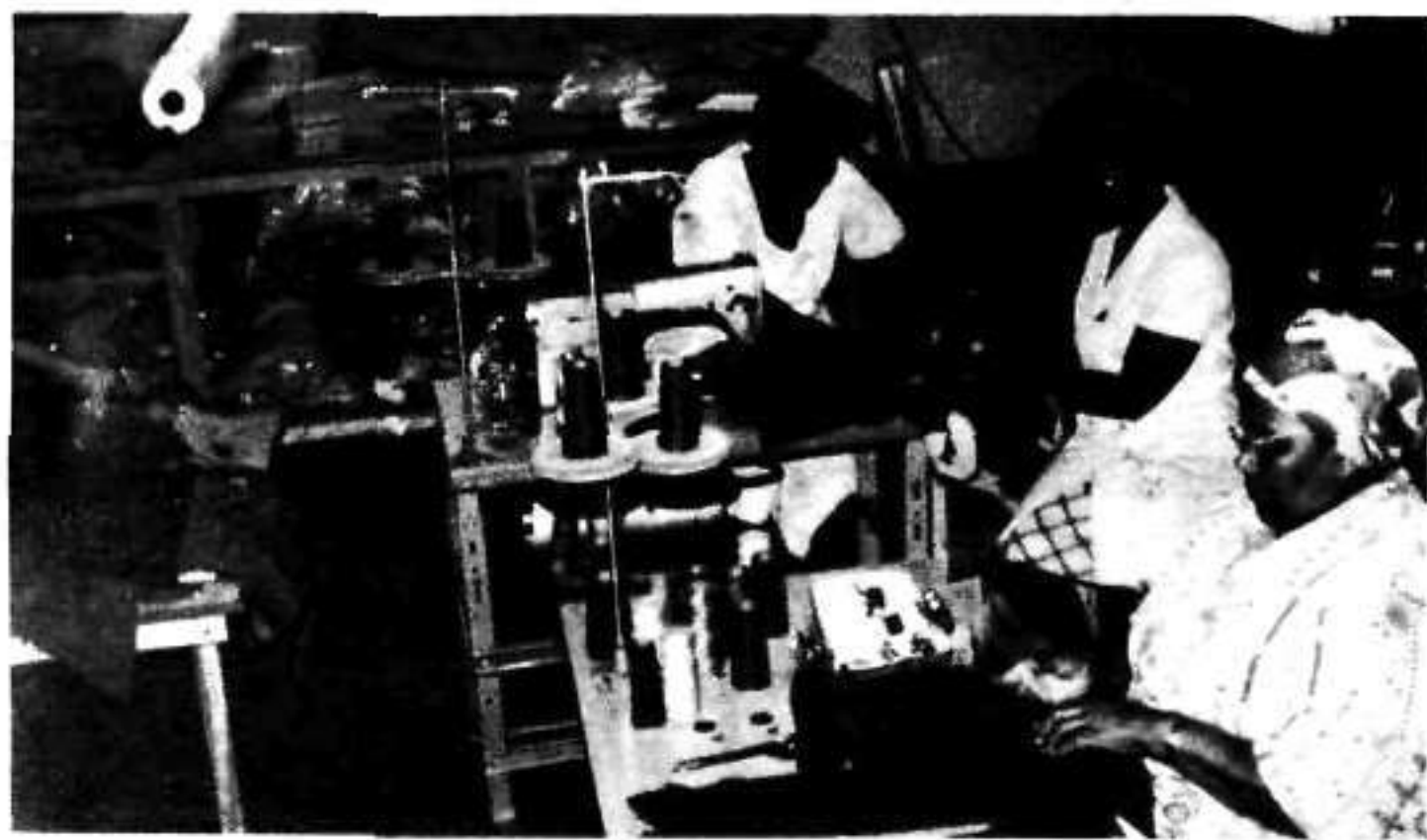


# THE ZISIZENI BASEBENZI PROJECT

## BIG START TO FOSATU EDUCATION PROGRAMME.



Workers at ZB.

The Zisizeni Basebenzi Project was set up in Durban in June 1978 as a result of money donated by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The I.C.F.T.U. is the largest co-ordinating body of trade unions in the West. The most successful unit in ZB is the sewing unit which employs 4 workers. Of these 4 three are unemployed textile union members. The project has 4 sewing machines doing different types of work. All the ZB workers have become

fully skilled in sewing since joining the Project. At present, the workers are making school uniforms for children, but are concentrating on making gym-tunics, dresses, skirts and blouses. The garments are sold mainly to union members. The ZB Project is not a profit-making project but mainly to assist union members. If production improves then prices can be fixed far below the prices in the shops and in this way workers can benefit.

FOSATU's Education Programme started in a big way in July. Affiliates sent 35 organisers to a 3 week training course held at the University of Natal in Durban. For a first attempt this proved very successful.

FOSATU officials and invited experts who ran the course which covered the economic system, labour law and organisational skills. In addition guest speakers such as the experienced trade unionist Dulcie Hartwell of the National Union of Distributive Workers, spoke to the organisers. The idea was to force organisers into thinking about FOSATU and its relationship to other organisations in South Africa.

The programme was strenuous although the relaxation periods seem to have been well used. But there was no doubt that at the end of the course organisers appreciated that very high standards were demanded of them if we are to build strong worker controlled unions in FOSATU.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RECOGNITION

It means:

- 1) The Management of a Company agrees to recognise the Union.
- 2) Management agrees to recognise only the Union shop stewards as the representatives of the workers in the factory.
- 3) That management agrees to talk with their workers through the Union - through shop steward groups and union officials.
- 4) There can be no other body representing the interests of the workers in the factory like a Liaison Committee or a Company Council.
- 5) Management must put it into writing that they recognise the Union - this is an Agreement between the Union and the Company.
- 6) This Agreement, should make clear the rights of the Shop Stewards, members and Union officials eg. Management should agree to discuss all dismissals with the shop stewards, and also agree to discuss all working conditions with shop stewards, and Union officials.

## The New Labour Law Continued from Page 1.

- there is still not full freedom of association
- because non-racial unions will not be allowed to register unless the Minister gives them an exemption.
- because some workers are still excluded from union membership.
- because membership depends on the Ministers exemption and is not written into the Law.
- The need for provisional registration is unclear and gives the Registrar power to decide without giving reasons.
- Various new measures in the Act give the Government greater powers to intervene in trade union affairs.
- There is still a veto right for existing registered unions on Industrial Councils.

Organisers learnt that the key to success is strong, active and well informed membership. The law and clever negotiators can never replace this but only add to it.

We were very fortunate to have Bob Ashworth present for a few days. His experience as a senior shop steward in Leyland in England taught everyone a great deal. It was also important to hear the British workers' story which is very different from the strange stories we are told by management and the newspapers.

The notes prepared for the course are being made into booklets. These will be printed for the FOSATU EDUCATION SERIES and distributed to each Region.

## FOSATU'S POSITION.

The Central Committee that met on the 29th & 30th September in Durban discussed the new Act and the question of registration.

It was decided that:

- FOSATU and its affiliates would consider the exemption weighing it against our

remaining criticisms of the Act.

- Another Central Committee Meeting would be convened soon where a joint decision would be taken.

- FOSATU will make strenuous efforts to consult other unregistered unions so that there could be a common stand.