

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

MUNICIPAL WORKERS' STRIKE

THE FACTS

On the 14th July, 600 workers from the Orlando Power Station went on strike. By 17th July there were 10 000 municipal workers on strike.

FWN summarises some of the major points of the bitter struggle which followed:

The burning grievance of the municipal workers was their wage - most were earning R33 per week which was just not keeping up with rising prices.

The Council dismissing the 600 Orlando Power Workers was too much for thousands of others who then took to the streets demanding a living wage of R58 per week.

Notwithstanding the strike the City Council refused to accept that workers had grievances.

Instead of negotiating riot police were called in. Workers were locked in their compounds and guarded by riot police day and night during the last two days of the strike.

The president of the Black Municipal Workers Union, Mavi was arrested at the Supreme Court as he tried to get protection for his Union members from alleged police intimidation.

It seems that the agreement reached between the Black Municipal Workers Union and the City Council to stop sending workers back to the homelands was ignored and over 1000 workers were sent back to the homelands, many forcibly without pay and without even being given the choice to return to work.

Other migrants were 'endorsed out' of the area to find their own way to the homelands.



Municipal workers packed in compound listen to Council's ultimatum.

THE ANTI-UNION LINE

The Municipal strike again showed how strong the anti-union feeling is. The new labour laws are not being used to open the way for union recognition. More and more employers are refusing to negotiate with unions chosen by workers and instead talking to other "tame" unions even though workers don't wish to be represented by these unions.

In the Municipal strike there was no doubt that although the Union (BMWU) did not start the strike its rapidly growing support among workers made it the only body capable of negotiating a settlement between the Council and the strikers. The Council however, insisted that it would only negotiate with a registered trade union.

The Johannesburg Municipal Workers Union (JMWU) was the Council's answer to its problem. The JMWU had virtually no members, all its committee members were nominated by management and not elected and in fact the JMWU even saw fit to ask management for permission to speak to the press.

burst of efficiency into granting provisional registration to the JMWU so that the Council had a "union to talk to". Speedy registration of this Union seemed to have solved the Council's problems - but what about the workers, their wages and their problems?

BAN ON FUNDS — FOSATU STANDS FIRM

FOSATU's affiliates are to fight the government ban on funds. At the Central Committee they decided to fight as a united FOSATU rather than to apply for permission to raise funds separately. At present FOSATU is using the proceeds of the sale of its film to finance its activities. However, economy measures have already been taken and more will follow. But as they say "out of adversity comes strength" and the Central Committee has set a two year target, for all affiliates to reach a position where they can

FULL-TIME SHOP STEWARDS BREAKTHROUGH



While the Johannesburg Municipality was showing everyone how NOT to achieve industrial peace FOSATU affiliates and the Ford Motor Co. in Port Elizabeth reached agreement on improved worker representation.

Ford and the FOSATU affiliated National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers (NUMARWOSA) and the United Automobile Rubber and Allied Workers Union (UAW) reached agreement on a system of one full time Shop Steward for every 750 workers.

The full time Shop Steward is elected by Union members and must report back to the Union Executive Committees at Ford. He remains an employee of the Company and is paid by them but he can only lose his position or his job by agreement with the Union.

An important part of the agreement is that part-time Shop Stewards will continue to handle grievances. One of the jobs of the full-time Shop Stewards will be to work with them and coordinate their activities.

"Worker problems arise on the factory floor and it is there the union must be effective - trade unionism must live on the shop floor" says Johnny Mke, President of UAW and FOSATU.

TRAINING

In another important step, Ford have agreed to make their facilities available to NUMARWOSA and UAW for union training courses for Shop Stewards. Unions need trained and effective Shop Stewards to assist their members and the agreement is another advance in the right direction for better working conditions and more stable labour relations.

MUNICIPAL WORKERS SPEAK

Management "squeezed" at Colgate

The National press seldom covers what the workers themselves are saying. FWN spoke to municipal workers about their views on the whole event.

On the strike and how it started.

"Without Barnard's (Manager at Orlando) hardline attitude there would never have been a strike. Most workers initially went on strike to support the Orlando workers who were dismissed. The strike was not about anything except money and food not about fighting. The strike shows that when workers are hungry, the bosses call the police. That shows we won the strike, they had to use violence because we are stronger than them".

On the outcome of the strike.

"The strike has succeeded even if we are sacked because it has opened the eyes of all workers that if we are united we have strength; also that R33,00 is too little to live".

On whether the Union had been smashed.

"We are confident that the Union will grow because workers have been told by others who



Police - Council's answer to workers problems?

have lost their jobs through this thing (the union) that they must go on".

On the Johannesburg Municipal Workers Union (JMWU).

"We find it laughable to hear that JMWU claims 2000 membership. We do not see it in anyway as being a threat to worker organisation but rather see it as a non-issue".

On the fact that strikes are illegal in essential services.

"We didn't make that law. We know nothing about it. Workers will always strike when they are hungry, no matter where they work".

On whether they chose to return to the homelands.

"It is very difficult to argue with a gun".

On their future in the homelands.

"We have not lost hope. Many of us are from the same villages; we will meet again at home and we will spread these ideas to other workers when we get jobs".

Colgate management appear to be getting some tips from "Union - busters" in the United States of America. "Union - busters" are special consultants who advise management on how to use new and better tactics to break the power of the unions.

Colgate's latest trick has been to attempt to prove to workers that they don't need a Union. Management introduced a FREE burial scheme with a R500 death benefit which is a much larger sum than the Union's death benefit.

Workers responded with one voice saying "we want what we're asking for now, not when we're dead" and refused the burial scheme. The following week management tried to direct all grievances through the Liaison Committee.

Workers successfully boycotted this system as two hundred workers had petitioned their liaison committee members to resign. Management still refuses to talk to the union. Their present excuse is that Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) is unregistered.

However it will be interesting to see management's next anti-union move following Sullivan's recent statement that they must talk to unregistered unions.

REEF CHEMICAL WORKERS' DETERMINATION BRINGS RESULTS

Workers at Reef Chemical in Benoni have won many issues in the short time that the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) has been organising there. This is despite management's attempts to introduce another Chemical Union. Workers remained steadfast in their determination to join the Union of their

choice. At the first stage of negotiations workers won recognition for their Shop Stewards, and access to the factory for Union officials. More recently management has agreed to

- allow Shop Stewards to take up worker grievances
- give the Union special facilities for collect-

ing subscriptions in the factory

- free overalls for all workers
- new and more effective health and safety measures in the factory

Although working conditions are still far from satisfactory, with constant union pressure they should continue to improve.



THE FOSATU CLOTHING PROJECT

SUPPORT US

SEE OUR CATALOGUE AT YOUR LOCAL

FOSATU UNION OFFICE

HOW DO YOU RATE AS A UNION MEMBER?

Do you know.....

- Who owns your factory?
- Where does your Union meet at your factory?
- Can your foreman dismiss you for no reason?
- How much profit did your company make last year?
- How much have you contributed to your Company's Pension Fund?

(See page 4 for answers)



TUCSA TRIES AGAIN

from "parallel" to "mixed" but hardly non-racial

TUCSA the Federation that expelled African workers from its ranks in 1969 when told to "get its house in order" is now making a come back.

Their affiliates have dropped the idea of parallel unions and many have started "mixed" unions open to African workers.

As always it seems as if TUCSA style non-racialism stops short of real trade unionism. While enrolling African members they keep racially separate branches, with the union controlled by a racially segregated Executive.

FWN looks at how the mixed unions try and persuade workers of their new line.

MIXED UNIONS BY P.A.Y.E.

Garment workers in Natal are being organised by the PAYE method - no questions, no answers, just employers being told to start deductions on workers' wages. So it is that workers are now members of mixed unions and know as much about their union as they do about their tax.

WORKERS REJECT THE PAYE ROAD

- at a Pinetown motor company workers got a notice about a union in their pay packets with a stop order form. The personnel officer then asked workers if they had signed the forms yet. Since these workers were unorganised some gave in to this pressure and joined. However, the majority weren't happy and decided to seek out other unions.

After making contact with FOSATU's Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) and its non-racial line they felt strong enough to reject management pressure for the "mixed" union.

Workers are now actively organising others into MAWU who as a result have gained new members and a new factory.

MIXED UNION BLOCK WORKER RIGHTS

At Veldspun in Uitenhage workers organised themselves against Textile Workers Industrial Union (TWIU) attempts to organise them into a mixed union. Under worker pressure the Company agreed to a referendum in the factory which FOSATU's National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) won hands down. Following this the company agreed to recognise NUTW and to grant it stop order facilities IF TWIU, which has an agreement at the factory, agreed. When approached, the General Secretary of TWIU said he would have to refer the matter to his National Executive Committee. This seems strange since his racially segregated NEC, will only meet again next year, and never approved the agreement in the first place.

FOSATU CONDEMNS MIXED UNIONS

FOSATU will have nothing to do with mixed unions. "Separate Branches and separate Executives are the children of apartheid's 'separate but equal' idea. Employers and the State have built up racial division for their own benefit. Only a united NON-RACIAL Trade Union movement can break it down", says FOSATU's Alec Erwin.

INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL FOR THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY (NATAL)

1st August 1980

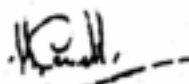
TO ALL CLOTHING MANUFACTURERS

Dear Sirs

TRADE UNION SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Garment Workers Industrial Union (Natal) was registered as a Mixed Trade Union on 25th July 1980, which means that all your Black employees are now also eligible for membership. Would you please therefore deduct Trade Union Subscriptions of 21 cents per week from all members' wages and forward same to the Trade Union through us in the normal way with your other levies each month.

Yours faithfully


M. ANSELL
SECRETARY

How to form a mixed union - write to management!



FOSATU boosts National Unity

Fred Sauls, General Secretary of National Union of Motor Assemblies and Rubber Workers addresses the 7th AGM of the Natal Branch of NUTW on 31st August. On his left is Obed Zuma General Secretary and seated next to him is Jabulani Gwala Branch Chairman.

WORKER REPORT

FOSATU ORGANIZERS IN RICHARDS BAY

by Rodney Mwambo

In May workers at Richards Bay factories approached FOSATU for organising assistance.

The Natal Region responded and in July I joined some FOSATU organisers on an organising visit there.

By the end of May seventy three workers had joined at Alusaf, a metal factory, and by the end of July there were 365 members out of a workforce of about 1100.

Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) members at Alusaf met and elected leaders amongst themselves to coordinate the recruiting campaign at Alusaf. These leaders called a meeting of the Shop Stewards from different factories.

At this meeting the leaders showed enthusiasm to go ahead in organising workers at Alusaf and other factories where they had made contact with workers. The following night there was a workers' general meeting at Eskhawini township. Workers from different factories attended this meeting at which FOSATU structures were discussed.

Workers at this meeting criticised the Liaison Committee structures used by

MAWU negotiates wage increases

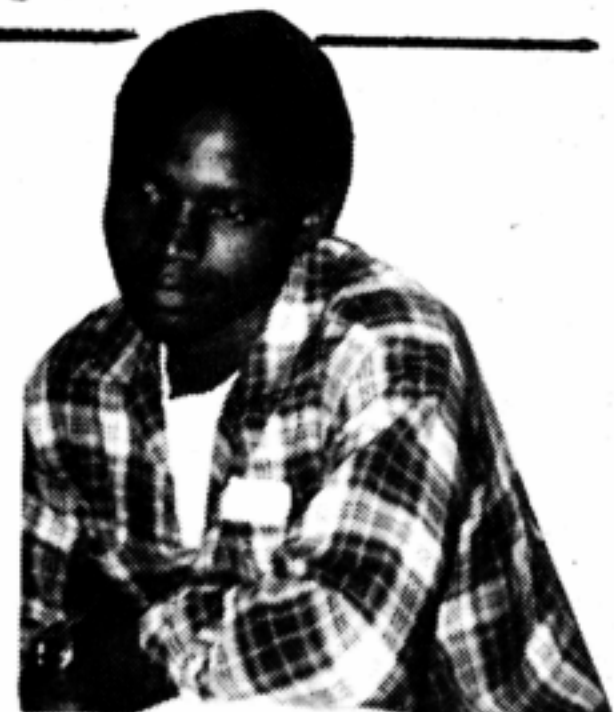
Stormy wage negotiations between the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) and Tensile Rubber (Pty) Ltd in Johannesburg were finally settled in mid-August.

This is the third time this year that the Shop Stewards have negotiated increases.

In April minimum weekly wages for women were raised from R22 to R28 and for men from R26 to R35.

Delays in further negotiations resulted in a work stoppage on the 30th July and led to workers banning overtime for a week in a factory where normally overtime is about 14 hours per week.

Finally Shop Stewards settled for an increase of R3,00 per week by 1st September and new rates for each job by 1st January 1981. The total increases are likely to be from R6 to R8 per week for most grades.



Rodney Mwambo is a MAWU Shop Steward at a Benoni factory. During his July annual leave he joined a FOSATU organising team at Richards Bay.

management inside the factories and agreed with one voice that they would assist in organising all workers from big factories into FOSATU unions.

There was another general meeting for all workers at Nseleni Township the following night. At this meeting again workers showed unity and willingness to join FOSATU unions. One of the problems which was uncovered by FOSATU was that at these factories there were house agreements signed by managements and liaison committees, without consulting with workers.

However workers know that the only way of solving these problems is by coming together into unions.

The Richards Bay worker leaders activities left us with the impression that by the end of September FOSATU will be well established there.

FACTORY FLASHES

Light Castings - union lawyers postpone enquiry to October to consider admission of negligence by Company manager on eve of enquiry into Brother Dlamini's death.

Rely Precision - 55 workers convicted of striking and sentenced to R60 fines PLUS a 6 months sentence suspended for 5 years.

Uitenhage - breakthrough for living wage principle - Swedish company agrees to R1,70 per hour minimum wage following June strikes. Strike reawakens union organisation in Uitenhage.

More than 200 workers resign from TUCSA affiliate and join FOSATU's UAW at engineering company.

Cadbury - Eastern Province Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (EPSFAWU) win stop order facilities despite Company union. EPSFAWU also granted non-racial status in July.

SKF and Fagersta - FOSATU's Engineering and Allied Workers Union (EAWU) continues to negotiate at both Swedish companies for full agreements. At SKF the registered Iron Moulders Society used the closed shop clause in the Industrial Council Agreement to force African iron moulders into their Union.

Kelloggs - Shop Stewards and Union officials negotiating full grievance procedure.

YOUR RATING

How many questions could you answer?

- 0 - Were you employed yesterday?
- 1 - You must be the Boss's favourite worker!
- 2 - Don't worry you're still in line for promotion.
- 3 - Keep attending union meetings - you're learning.
- 4 - Organise! Knowledge is strength in our struggle.
- 5 - You are a good Trade Unionist - or the manager!

SET BACK FOR FOOD UNION COUNCIL

The South African Coordinating Council of the IUF (the international federation of food worker unions) suffered a major setback with the withdrawal of FOSATU's Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU) from its meetings. SFAWU withdrew from the Council because of the attendance at a recent meeting of Skakes Sikakane the Secretary of the Sweet, Food and Beverages Union which is not an affiliate of IUF and whose position had not been discussed by the Council.

In their letter SFAWU state "that although we are withdrawing from the S.A. Coordinating Council, we are not disaffiliating from the I.U.F. We also wish to make it clear that we will continue to cooperate with workers inside and outside our own industry in South Africa in the wider struggle of workers".

FOSATU WORKER NEWS GROWS

FOSATU Worker News (FWN) started off as a worker newspaper to report mainly on factory issues directly affecting the federation. As a worker movement however FOSATU cannot ignore the fact that workers throughout the country have no newspaper of their own.

We have tried to cover other issues as seen from the position of workers. The response of workers to FWN has made us determined to develop into a regular worker newspaper.

However to do this we will have to start covering the costs of the paper. It is only when we reach the point where workers pay to keep the paper going that it can truly act as a worker mouthpiece. Following issues of FWN will be longer free and we will charge for it in certain areas as we move towards a worker newspaper.

We need your support to build a workers newspaper.

Unionize Workers say FOSATU Central Committee

At a special Central Committee Meeting on the 26th and 27th July FOSATU set itself the task of unionising workers.

The meeting was called to discuss and examine FOSATU's strengths and weaknesses and the effect of the government ban on FOSATU fund raising.

Two days of tough self-criticism and frank debate ended with resolutions that committed FOSATU to a campaign to unionise workers. They set themselves the goals of:

- organising active and committed supporters of the trade union movement and its long struggle for worker rights
- even greater cooperation between affiliates in Regional campaigns to build up National trade unions

- building stronger FOSATU affiliates through a strengthening of our FOSATU Local structures

- getting the membership to use their union structures and those of FOSATU to build democratic and independent unions.

Members of FOSATU affiliates should be on the lookout for more activity in their areas.

FWN will report on progress in achieving these goals.



ORGANIZE! Pass your paper on.

THE JOYS OF HIRING AND FIRING

Perhaps the most powerful anti-union tool in South African factories is managements' uncontrolled right to dismiss workers without giving a reason.

Victimization is so difficult to prove that our courts haven't convicted an employer of victimizing any worker in the last 30 years.

"Job security is mean-

ingless without protection against unfair dismissal" says Alec Erwin FOSATU's General Secretary. "The time for organised labour to set out a 'fair dismissal' procedure is long overdue" he says.

As a start FOSATU Worker News sets out a basic fair dismissal procedure.

FOSATU WORKER NEWS DISMISSAL CODE

1. All workers should be entitled to 3 warnings before being dismissed for a particular offence.
2. All warnings must be acknowledged by the worker with his signature.
3. All warnings must fall away after a maximum of 3 months if the offence is not repeated.
4. Workers shall receive reasons for the warning and in the case of the second and third warnings such reasons should be placed in writing.
5. The worker with his Shop Steward shall have the right to know the reasons for the warning.
6. It should be clearly stated who in management has the power to dismiss workers.
7. No worker should be signed-off or required to leave the Company's premises until: (a) he has had an opportunity to speak to his Shop Steward, and (b) together with the Shop Steward been able to defend himself, question the management and their witnesses about the dismissal.
8. The dismissal procedure must be supported by a grievance procedure involving union officials which leads to the speedy settlement of disputes over dismissals and other matters.

