

## FOSATU GRANTED NON-RACIAL — EXEMPTIONS.

Last month the State hastily granted non-racial exemptions to 6 FOSATU affiliates shortly after prohibiting FOSATU from raising funds. As a result the full implications of the exemptions were not dealt with in the national press.

In their applications the Unions stated their position on the non-racial stand boldly and clearly. The Minister was told that at no time in their history had a member ever challenged the desirability of their non-racial constitutions. Furthermore, the unions stated that limiting their membership to Black workers "would lead to a racial polarisation of relationships between employees rather than build a spirit of Trade Unionism and would be divisive and crippling to the ability of employees to bargain collectively with their employers."

FOSATU has been guardedly pro-registration in the crucial debate over a strategy for the non-racial union movement. Its view was that the State would have to concede and allow completely non-racial unions to regis-

ter if it was challenged directly on the issue.

FOSATU unions are the only ones who have taken a clear stand on non-racial registration - no separate branches, no racially separate meetings, no separate executives. As the applications said "such practices would be abhorrent to the entire membership of the applicant union."

The FOSATU exemption has important implications for the trade union world.

Firstly it exposes the racism and paternalism in those unions whose applications stopped short of non-racism by limiting membership racially or by retaining racial segregation in their branches and executives.

Secondly it exposes the lack of political insight and inflexibility of those who saw application for registration as necessarily abandoning central trade union principles.

It now remains to be seen whether the Registrar tries to slip racial definitions into the certificates of registration and if so what steps FOSATU will take to resist this.

### FOSATU BOOSTS



### NATIONAL ORGANISATION

Any good unionist knows that national unions are essential if worker organisation is going to be truly effective.

Realising this FOSATU stressed its policy of close cooperation so that affiliates could help each other establish other branches and become truly national unions.

The policy has been a major success for FOSATU. In July NUTW started its National Executive following the inauguration of the Eastern Province Branch in April and CWIU inaugurated its Transvaal Branch and will form a National Executive soon.

Similar initiatives are in progress with SFAWU and PWA-WU.

In 1974 the NUTW experienced the break-away of its Transvaal branch under the influence



of Lucy Mvubelo and the National Union of Clothing Workers. Says Obed Zuma newly elected Secretary "It was a bitter lesson teaching us that national unity can never be based on individuals, but needs a national organisation".

The Transvaal Branch of CWIU was inaugurated on July 5th at a large meeting held in FOSATU's Benoni office.

There was a spirit of excitement as Natal and Transvaal workers met and reported on their common problems and struggles.

Organisation is growing surprisingly rapid from the initial efforts of workers in Colgate and Reef Chemical.

The Chemical Industry is big and complex so the road to national organisation will



## National Manpower Commission —

### The Presidents Council?

The composition of the National Manpower Commission a body which will advise the Minister of Manpower Utilisation on all matters affecting workers in South Africa, has been announced. The Minister it seems is not to have a single advisor with any known sympathy to the non-racial trade union movement. Not surprisingly the minister's confidence in the advice of employers and his own department has meant 12 members are direct representatives of employer interests and 14 are state representatives. A further 5 are conservative academics. The lone trade unionist voice is found in 7 representatives - 3 from TUCSA and the rest even further removed from the non-racial union movement.

"On looking at the composition of this commission one can only hope the Minister doesn't need advice too often" quips Alec Erwin General Secretary of FOSATU. "Anyway I don't think workers need be unduly concerned. Labour relations aren't determined by Manpower Commissioners whispering in the Minister's ear. They grow out of factory struggles and FOSATU is better represented on the factory floor."

### Paper Union Strengthens

The Paper Wood and Allied Workers Union had a tough time as a new affiliate of FOSATU.



Their first problem was to dismiss an ineffective General Secretary.

However, the worker Executive responded magnificently to the crisis and have boosted income by a few hundred percent and initiated recognition approaches to major paper companies.

FOSATU is also assisting PWA-WU to organise in Port Elizabeth and the Western Cape and there are also prospects in Natal. With hard work and clear thinking the prospects of an effective national union are good.

be a long one but CWIU are on their way.