

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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MAY DAY CALL FOR UNITY

ONLY a united working class can contain the power of the mighty multinational companies operating in South Africa and worldwide – says FOSATU president Chris Dlamini.

Speaking at the May Day rally organised by the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union held near Pretoria, Brother Dlamini said a worker by himself resembled 'a pawn in a game of chess'.

'Why? Because he does not have the collective strength of workers who together can force management to give in to their demands,' he said.

'I am convinced that we workers, must first be unionised and then we must forge unity amongst all workers in this country,' he added.

Talking to more than a thousand workers, Brother Dlamini said FOSATU had been established to bring about unity among workers in South Africa.

FOSATU hoped, he said, that the recognition of common interest and the need for co-operation would eventually bring into being a trade union movement which would have a clear and workable programme of action.

This movement would have to be controlled by its members and be solely based on class solidarity so as to avoid a workers' org-



HLANGANANI Basebenzi – singing workers at the May Day Rally. May Day is recognised worldwide as Workers' Day.

anisation being hijacked by opportunistic mass movements or political organisations.

Brother Dlamini said it was clear that workers were economically exploited by 'the bosses' and therefore socially degraded.

'If a man is only able to provide himself and his family with the bare necessities of existence then that man and his family are living in poverty,' he said.

He said the workers had helped create the riches of civilisation but were deprived the fruits of it.

Brother Dlamini said that since the birth of the independent trade union movement some changes in wages and working cond-

itions had been seen.

But that had not been sufficient to hold off the fierce attack being made on the South African working class by giant companies and multinationals.

'Obviously this struggle can never be fought and won by individual unions, but only by a disciplined, non-racial, democratic worker movement,' he said.

To end his speech, Brother Dlamini said that there could never be a total stop to the worker struggle in this country while there were industries still existing.

'Forward with the worker organisations. Forward with the worker struggle. Forward with worker power,' he said.

ROMEO'S CHANGED HEART

ALFA Romeo in an amazing turn-around has agreed to recognise the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union and to take back three key union activists.

This Johannesburg-based motor firm was facing charges in the industrial court of victimising union members and of imposing a works committee on its workers.

The company's change of heart came after a meeting in Rome, Italy, between management representatives, NAAWU, the Italian Metal Workers Federation and the International Metalworkers Federation.

At the meeting Alfa agreed

to recognise NAAWU at its Wynberg and Tulisa Park depots.

It also agreed to take back the three union leaders who were fired by the company under the guise of retrenchment.

The company also told the meeting that it was not against NAAWU and that it would not interfere with any of the union's actions at the Alfa plant at Brits.

In turn the union agreed to withdraw its case against Alfa.

NAAWU took the company to court after it had embarked on what appeared to be a systematic campaign to kill the union.

In papers before the court, Alfa had claimed that the union was itself committing an

unfair labour practice by striving for democratic, non-racial trade unions.

Welcoming the outcome of the Rome meeting, NAAWU general secretary, Fred Sauls said it was clear that the only way to counter the power of multinational companies was to develop close links with unions worldwide.

'These links will prevent the companies from playing off workers in another country against workers in South Africa on the pretext of creating jobs and improving the conditions of black workers,' he added.