

# 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.



Police - Council's answer to workers problems?

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

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)



## 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.

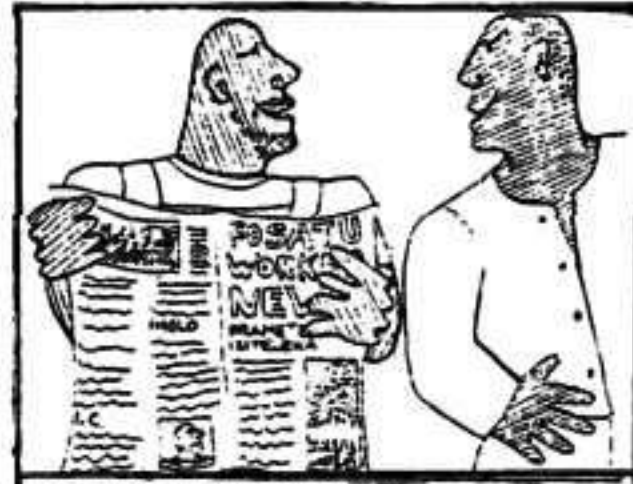
The meeting was called to discuss and examine FOSATU's strengths and weaknesses and the effect of the government ban on FOSATU fund raising.

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.

