

Press Statement on the Industrial Conciliation Act following a Joint Meeting between the Federation of S.A. Trade Unions, The Western Province General Workers Union, The Food and Canning Workers Union and The African Food and Canning Workers' Union

At a joint meeting of the 14 FOSATU unions, the Food and Canning Workers' Union, the African Food and Canning Workers Union and the Western Province General Workers' Union to discuss their stand on the amended Industrial Conciliation Act, the unions agreed that their struggle was not for registration but for the maintenance of certain basic principles. These internationally accepted principles are the right of all workers to join unions of their choice and the right of workers to unrestricted control of their unions.

It was agreed that the amended legislation continued to violate these principles by continuing to racially segregate unions and by increasing state control at the expense of worker control of their unions.

The participating unions strongly condemned the majority of registered unions for abandoning these principles and, in collaboration with employers, attempting to enrol African members, whereas for many years they have bowed to government policy and have made no attempt to organise African workers.

The unions agreed that they would not be prepared to similarly abandon their principles. It was, therefore, agreed that they would not accept any registration which was not granted on the following basis:

1. unions must be completely non-racial in their membership and control;
2. provisional registration will not be accepted. Registration must at least accord with the present criteria for final registration and any additional controls will not be accepted;
3. existing unions must be acknowledged and registration should not be used as a means for fragmenting them. Our struggle has been to create effective, national, broad based industrial unions.