

SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A group of five individuals have recently circulated an attack on the South African Congress of Trade Unions. We have no intention to use our precious space in a detailed reply to them; but our readers and all friends should know the facts. We therefore issue the following statement on behalf of SACTU's National Executive Committee:

1. The five individuals concerned are Peter Collins, Paula Ensor, David Hemson, Martin Legassick and Robert Petersen. They were asked at different times to assist SACTU in office work and in certain technical and clerical tasks.
2. These individuals are not members of SACTU affiliates, were never elected to official positions in our organisations, and were never entrusted with policy-making powers by any section of the trade-union movement. The only one who was in any way connected with trade-union work in South Africa is David Hemson.
3. During their period of being associated with SACTU work, these individuals formed themselves into a clandestine group with the object of usurping the constitutional policy-making powers of the National Executive Committee.
4. The National Executive Committee of SACTU consists of duly and democratically elected officials and executive members of South African trade unions and it is obvious that the NEC would be failing in its responsibilities if it allowed a group of unrepresentative persons to interfere with, and to subvert, the policy-making process within SACTU.
5. For this reason, the NEC decided to dispense with the services of Paula Ensor, who worked in the SACTU office as a typist, and Robert Petersen, who worked on the editorial board of Workers' Unity.
6. However, it appears that before departing, they removed, without authority, confidential information - such as mailing lists- which they now use to attack SACTU.
7. We draw attention to the fact that the purported "criticism" of SACTU by these persons is in substance identical with the allegations broadcast by the South Africa racist regime. This consists in the main of subtle insinuations that SACTU is not an independent trade-union co-ordinating body with its own policy-making machinery, but is manipulated by some sinister outside influences, thus undermining the legitimate struggle of the black workers.
8. These statements are designed to give ammunition to the enemy, the South African racist regime, who are persecuting and attempting to silence the trusted trade-union leadership in the country.

We ask our friends, affiliates and supporters to disregard the irresponsible statements of individuals, and to continue steadfastly to support us. The South African Congress of Trade Unions has proved itself in the 25 years of its history as the legitimate custodian of the true interests of all workers in South Africa, irrespective of race, colour, sex or occupation. Help us to continue to play this important role.

John Gaetsewe  
General Secretary  
21.11.79.