

GIWUSA Congress affiliates to Saftu

Step forward for workers movement

The Workers and Socialist Party congratulates the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa (GIWUSA), and all its members, office bearers and officials on their successful National Congress which took place over the weekend of 4-5 November.

This, GIWUSA's 4th National Congress, saw a landmark decision in the history of the union. Delegates voted in favour of affiliation to the new Saftu federation, founded earlier in the year as a militant alternative to the class collaboration and betrayals of the Cosatu leadership.

It was the rejection of the Cosatu leadership's betrayals, as far back as 2003, that brought the modern incarnation of GIWUSA into existence. For daring to defend the class and political independence of the workers' movement by questioning the continued participation of Cosatu in the ANC-led Tripartite 'Alliance', 16 office bearers and officials of the industrial workers' CEPPAWU union were undemocratically removed from office. Supported by more than 6,000 members they became the majority and the backbone of today's GIWUSA.

The creation of the new federation is a vindication of the correctness of what in 2003 was a view held by only a tiny minority in the workers movement – that the trade union movement needed to reclaim its independence by breaking-out of the pro-capitalist Tripartite Alliance. In WASP and our forerunners we shared this view, however we took the position to its logical



Delegates sit for GIWUSA's 4th National Congress

conclusion in our consistent championing of, and campaigning for, a new socialist mass workers party. We would argue that this is the only way to genuinely safeguard working class independence from the corrosive and corrupting influence of the bosses.

With the ANC, the main party of capitalism, in its most serious crisis yet, the question of the political independence of the working class is posed more sharply than ever. Now hundreds of thousands of organised workers are drawing the same conclusions in the founding of the new federation and in the developing discussions about the role Saftu could play in creating a new workers party. In the decision to join Saftu after 15 years without any affiliation, GIWUSA's worker-delegates have sent a clear message that they want their union to be at the heart of the new worker-controlled trade union movement that is emerging in South Africa.

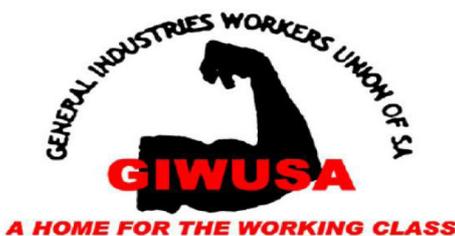
A new team of National Office Bearers were elected, including Mametlwe Sebei as President, left trade union activist John Appolis as General Secretary and Charles Phaahla as Deputy General Secretary.

Mametlwe Sebei is also a member of WASP's Executive Committee.

Over the past two years thousands of workers from the #OutsourcingMustFall campaign have made GIWUSA their home. In Tshwane #OMF activists were key in swelling the ranks of GIWUSA in the capital city to the nearly 4,000+ that are there today. This led to the re-founding of the Pretoria-Brits-Rustenburg GIWUSA branch in April this year. The elections for the branch leadership returned a full-house of #OMF activists, all of whom are also members of WASP.

In Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Mogale City workers from #OMF are also joining GIWUSA. Reflecting the important role that they are now playing inside GIWUSA, both #OMF and WASP were given the honour of addressing the Congress.

WASP is firmly committed to working with all those determined to build GIWUSA into a democratic worker-controlled and militant union and to play a full role in assisting the same traditions to be built inside Saftu.



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