

"Stop-orders a Privilege" says Company

Hullets Aluminium in Pietermaritzburg has decided to reject the recommendation of SEIFSA (the Employers association) that certain unregistered trade unions including Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) be given stop-order facilities. The company says it is not bound to follow SEIFSA regulations and states that it sees stop-orders "as a privilege which should be extended to a union only in the later stages of recognition". The Company also claims it cannot deal with MAWU until it is registered and further more until it is satisfied that the union is representative and that its members participate in the company "negotiating machinery".

Workers see this action as a clear attempt to block the union inside the plant. MAWU agrees that representivity should be the crucial thing for recognition, but says that now that they have an opportunity of demonstrating their representivity through stop-orders the Company is refusing them this facility.

One angry worker said "It is even more ridiculous for the Company to believe that it can deceive workers about its impartiality towards trade unions".

The Company which is a subsidiary of Anglo American seems determined to fight trade unionism on every front.

The members say "we are being denied basic trade union rights to be represented by bodies of our own choice. However our struggle in the factory will be intensified by management's uncooperative attitude."

CUSA - A HOME FOR BLACKS ONLY?

Eighteen months after the formation of FOSATU nine Unions have formed CUSA - the Council of Unions of South Africa - the first federation of industrial unions promoting "Blacks only unions".

At least this is the way that it appears. CUSA's President Albert Mosenthal put it this way "Our Constitution is very clear, we are not racialistic. But we believe that in order to overcome some of our problems we have to develop Black Leadership".

What this means in practice is hard to tell since CUSA affiliates have applied for registration on a Blacks only ticket.

WORKER REPORT

TEXTILE TRAINING SEMINAR

by A. Joyisa

Andrew Joyisa, is the Chairman of the Shop Steward Committee at S.A. Fabrics in Durban.

In the middle of September, I attended a three day seminar for the shop stewards from my factory.

We were not given lectures by organizers, instead we had many discussions, and by the organizers asking us questions we realized how much knowledge we already had.

The seminar was divided into four different sessions. These were "know your factory", "know your union", "the duties of the

shop stewards" and "know your rights in the factory".

In the session on "Know your factory" we discussed why it was important to have information about the factory if we wanted to negotiate. I had taken it for granted that I knew every thing about the factory, but after that session I realized that there were many important things I didn't know.

In the session on "Know your Union", I properly understood for the first time that to build a strong and effective organization it must be controlled by workers themselves.

In the session on the "Duties of the Shop Steward", we discussed how important the shop steward was since he was the link between the

workers and organizers, and workers and management.

We played a negotiating game which was filmed on a T.V. Afterwards we were able to watch the film and discuss our mistakes.

The session I found most interesting was on "Know your Rights". If workers do not know what their rights are what can they struggle for?

The most important lesson we learnt was that only by being properly organized and strong is it possible to use the law, and that through hard struggle it is possible for workers to change laws and provide new rights for themselves.

In discussing FOSATU we discussed why it was important for workers from industries to get together in a federation to build a strong worker movement.

SFAWU BRANCH OPENING

by M. Sineke

Mfezeko Sineke, is Chairman of the Natal Region and President of the National Union of Textile Workers

The organisation of Sweet Food, and Allied factories in Natal was largely due to the fact that the workers themselves felt that they urgently need a trade union for their industry.

Late in 1979 and early in 1980 several attempts had been made for organising in some factories but not very much was achieved. However, workers in other factories were showing incredible interest to form a union and the Executive Committee of Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union in the Transvaal gave the Natal Region a green light for establishing a branch. A Caretaker Committee set

a target of at least two factories per local to form a branch and that a date be set for an inauguration of the branch of the Union.

It was a pleasure to note that in all these factories within a very short time workers were organised speedily and this proved beyond doubt that they really needed a trade union.

An interim Branch Executive Committee was formed and on the 21st September a Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union Branch in Natal was inaugurated. This event marked a victory for workers. The success of this was shown by high attendance of workers to the meeting and was ultimately endorsed by the fraternal greetings which were sent by other workers through their unions in FOSATU.

The Natal Region did a lot in the formation of SFAWU and intends to do that with the formation of other unions in FOSATU with the purpose of national expansion as outlined within the aims of FOSATU.

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SFAWU executive at branch opening.