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NEIL HUDSON AGGETT

Born on 6th October at Nanyuki, Kenya.
Youngest son of J.A.E. AGGETT residing at:
P.O.Box 136,
Somerset West.

I

My father was a farmer in Nanyuki, and I had one elder brother, Michael and one older sister, Jill. I went to school when I was six at the Nanyuki primary school, where I was a weekly boarder. After that I went to the Nyeri primary school, where I was a boarder until the age of ten. In January 1964, my family and I left Kenya by ship and arrived in Durban. My father sold his farm and invested his money in South Africa. My brother had already been sent in 1963 to Kingswood College in Grahamstown. When we arrived in South Africa, my parents settled in Port Alfred for about 6 months, and I was sent to Kingswood College as a boarder in Standard 4. At the end of 1964, my parents moved to Somerset West, where they finally settled, and where they are staying now

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1.

I support the Marxist ideology and therefore I am a communist.

2.

My father was a farmer in Nanyuki, and I had one elder brother Michael, and one elder sister Jill. I went to school when I was six at the Nanyuki Primary school, where I was a boarder until the age of ten. In January 1964, my family and I left Kenya by ship and arrived in Durban. My father sold his farm and invested his money in South Africa. My brother had already been sent to Kingswood College in Grahamstown. When we arrived in South Africa my parents settled in Port Alfred for about 6 months, and I was sent to Kingswood College as a boarder in Standard 4. At the end of 1964 my parents moved to Somerset West where they finally settled, and where they are staying now.

2.

I continued at school in Grahamstown, travelling by train to Cape Town when we had our holidays. My friends at this time were Neil Collett, Andrew Rein and Dave Pitman. I played sport, particularly tennis, cricket and shooting and finally got a first class Matric in 1970. I applied to study medicine at the University of Cape Town, and gained entrance in 1971. I stayed at Driekoppen Residence in Rondebosch in 1971 and 1972, and passed my exams with no problems. Then in 1973, I was friendly with Neil Andersson who was in my class at medical school, and he offered me a room that he had been staying in in Mowbray, at Vredenburg Circus. I went to stay there and my academic results immediately improved. I was playing cricket and hockey for the University at this time. At this time I was friendly with Mike Brown, Mike Damp, Ray Dawson and Neil Anderson, who were all medical students. In addition I was friendly with Clive and Graham Gie, with whom I played cricket. At the end of 1973, I flew up to Joburg for an interview with Anglo American, who gave me a bursary that I had applied for to pay for my studies books and lodgings. At that time I had a disagreement with my father over my refusal to shave my beard, and from that time received no further assistance from him.

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I continued at school in Grahamstown, travelling by train to Cape Town when we had our holidays. My friends at this time were Neil COLLETT, Andrew REIN and Dave PITMAN. I played sport, particularly tennis and cricket and shooting and finally got a first class matric in 1970. I applied to study medicine at the University of Cape Town and gained entrance in 1971. Before I started medicine in December 1970, after I had finished my matric. I went to work at a Mission hospital at Bathlaros, Kuruman, where I worked for two months with Dr. NURSE, working in the Medical laboratory.

4.

At the University, I stayed at Driekoppen Residence in Rondebosch in 1971 and 1972, and passed my exams with no problems. Then in 1973 I was friendly with Neil ANDERSON who was in my class at medical school, and he offered me a room that he had been staying in in Mowbray, at Vredenburg Circus. He was also the first person that I met that had any political influence on me. He was involved in some campus politics at this time, but although I was friendly with him at the time, I did not take any active part in student politics. In 1972, I did attend one protest at the University but I cannot remember the issue involved. I was playing cricket and hockey for the University at this time. At this time I was friendly with Mike BROWN, Mike DAMP, Ray DAWSON who were all medical students. In addition I was friendly with Clive and Graham GIE, with whom I played cricket. At the end of 1973, I flew up to Johannesburg for an interview with Anglo American, who gave me a

bursary that I had applied for to pay for my studies books and lodgings. At that time I had a disagreement with my father over my refusal to shave my beard, and from that time received no further assistance from him.

3.

In 1974, I rented a cottage in Constantia where I stayed on my own, still attending medical school. I also met LIZ FLOYD while I was working as a male nurse at the hospital. In the vacations I used to work as an ambulance driver, or a male orderly at the hospital, and while the term was in progress I spent some working for a Night Watch firm as a controller, or as a male nurse.

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5.

LIZ FLOYD came to stay with me in Constantia in 1974, and we spent the next two years together, studying and staying on the farm. We did not go out much, but spent our time at the beach or in the forest, or sitting around a fire at the cottage. In December 1974, Liz went to America for a couple of months, and in December 1975, I went over to Europe, where I spent time in London, Amsterdam and Paris. I was on my own and did not know people overseas, so I just travelled around. Then in December 1976

I passed my final medical exams. During this time I had met Athalie Crawford, through Liz, and her boyfriend JAN THERON, though I did not know them well. I was also friendly with Dennis Rubel, who was in my class, and Mike Kenmuir, who lived in Constantia.

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In 1974, I rented a cottage in Constantia where I stayed on my own, still attending medical school. I also met Liz FLOYD while I was working as a male nurse at the hospital. In the vacations I used to work as an ambulance driver, or a male orderly at the hospital, and while the term was in progress, I spent some time working for a Night Watch firm as a controller, or as a male nurse.

6.

Liz FLOYD came to stay with me in Constantia in 1974, and we spent the next two years together, studying, and staying on the farm. We did not go out much, but spent our time at the beach or in the forest, or sitting around a fire at the cottage. When I met Liz I knew that she was on the S.R.C. of the University but I was not really interested in politics or labour at that time. She resigned from the S.R.C. when she came to live with me. We sometimes used to discuss the situation in the country, the fact that so many people were living in the squatter camps and the terrible poverty that most people lived in. At that time I was considering doing community medicine, and felt that I should try to contribute to alleviation of suffering of the people who had no houses or jobs. In December 1974, Liz went to America for a couple of months, and while she was there, I hitch-hiked through Botswana and Rhodesia for about a week. In December 1975 I also spent time in London, Amsterdam and Paris I was on my own and did not know people overseas, so I just travelled around. Then in December 1976 I passed my final exams. During this time I had met Athalie CRAWFORD, through Liz, and her boyfriend Jan THERON, although I did not know them well. I remember having one political discussion with Athalie and Liz, about how we as whites fitted in the South African picture. I was also friendly with Dennis RUBEL, who was in my class, and Mike KENMUIR, who lived in Constantia.

6.

During this time I was not involved in any labour matters or politics. After I qualified, I applied to do my internship at George Hospital, Worcester Hospital and Umtata Hospital, in order that I should get some practical medical experience at a small hospital. The only acceptance that I got was from Umtata Hospital, and I went up there to start a job in the medicine department. I spent six months there in the medicine department, under a British Physician, Dr. Strang, and living in the hospital doctors quarters. The other interns, Dr. Nhantsi, Dr. Nhlapo, Dr. Mtoung, Dr. Mafungo and DR. MTSHEMBLA stayed in the quarters and we became friends. I occasionally would go down on a weekend to see Dr. Rob Higgo, who was working at the Frere Hospital in East London. After six months I found that I was becoming quite lonely, and wanted to spend time with some of my friends in Cape Town. However on returning to Cape Town, I found that there were no posts available, so I had to apply to the Tembisa Hospital, where there was a post available in the Surgery Department.

7.

I started working at Tembisa Hospital in about September 1977, and worked there for about six months, while I stayed at a house in Halfway House. It was during this time that I met JENNY CUNNINGHAM, ANNIE SMYTHE, TAFFY ADLER and GAVIN ANDERSON.

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During this time I was not involved in any labour matters or politics. After I qualified, I applied to do my internship at George hospital, Worcester and Umtata Hospital, in order That I should get some practical experience at a small hospital. The only acceptance that I got was from Umtata Hospital, and I went up there to start a job in the medicine department, under a British Phycican called DR. STRUNG, and living in the hospital quarters. The other interns, DR. NHANTSI, DR. NHLAPO, Dr. MTOUNG, Dr. MAFUNGA and Dr. MTSHEMBLA stayed in the quarters and we became friends. While I was at the Umtata, I used to have discussions with the doctors with whom I lived. The general feeling was that the independence of the Transkei Had not really helped the average person, because there was

still a lot of poverty and malnutrition. We felt that the granting of Independence was an attempt to confuse the people and make them direct their political aspirations towards the homela governments. At this time I also became aware that the government of the Transkei was developing some community health schemes, with fish dams and agricultural self-support schemes. This is what I had been interested in, but I slowly began to realize that even these schemes did not really solve the basic problems of poverty and unemployment, and were being used to promote further the image of the government.

8.

While I ws at Umtata Hospital, I went down to East London a few times. I also went to Grahamston to visit a friend who I had met and stayed with in Grahamstown on my way up to Umtata, called Bobby. I spent the weekend in Grahamstown with Bobby, and met Guy BERGER at her house, later I came down on another weekend to stay with her, and while I was in Grahamstown went to a meeting at the University on the South African Constitution with Guy BERGER.

8.

While I was working at Tembisa, I became aware that the problems of the patients I was dealing with were not only medical problems, but were basically social problems due to the people not getting enough wages, unemployment, and the poor conditions in the townships. This meant that sometimes I would stitch up a patient, only to have him return the following week due to alcoholism, unemployment, or extreme poverty, with another assault wound. Also, I was working in a neurosurgery ward where I saw many people, particularly paraplegics, who had been injured at work. Often these patients did not get their compensation, or if they did, they got very little, because the compensation is based on what the workers' earnings are, and not on an absolute figure related to the extent of the injury. Even if they did get their compensation, they often lost their jobs, which meant that they could not get another job due to the disability, and them and their families were without means of support.

9.

I started working at Tembisa Hospital in about September 1977, and worked there for about six months, while I stayed at a house in Half-Way House. At this time I met Gavin ANDERSON. He was Neil ANDERSON'S brother, and I had seen him once at Neil's house in Cape Town. I did not know anyone when I first came to Johannesburg, but I then bumped into Gavin at the Exclusive Books Bookshop in Hillbrow and began talking to him. Later he invited me to his house, and he came to my house.

10.

Gavin ANDERSON introduced me to some of the other people living in Johannesburg at the time, including Jenny CUNNINGHAM and Annie SMYTHE. As he had been involved in trade unions before he used to discuss his experiences in the Metal and Allied Workers Union (M.A.W.U.). He related how they used to organize in M.A.W.U. and taught me the basic principals of organisation, full open discussions of all the issues involved, the importance of getting the members to actively take part in the organization, always to take part in the organization, always to take the decisions back back to the membership and discuss them fully, and before any decision is taken, to discuss it as fully as possible with the membership. He also discussed with me having some discussions with some of his friends. So, Pierre, and Linda CROSS, Gavin, Vicci AIME? Annie SMYTHE and Brian CUTLER, because I had discussed some political things with Gavin and I was interested. At our first meeting, I cannot remember what we discussed, but at our second meeting we discussed Black Consciousness. Liz attended the second meeting because she was up here in Johannesburg to visit me at the time. These meetings were in Half-Way House.

9.

When I came up to Joburg, I tried to hire a box a post box in Bertrams, and in Joburg with no success. Later Liz hired a box in Orange Grove where I received my mail, because getting the mail at the house was unreliable. The Box number was P.O. Box 46376, Orange Grove. We also hired a box for the Union at a later stage in 1981, Box 10261, Johannesburg because some of our letters were not reaching us.

10.

During this time I met Taffy Adler, who was a friend of Jenny Cunningham, and he asked me if I would be interested to work in the Industrial Aid Society, dealing with complaints concerning Workman's Compensation. This I agreed to do, and began working there on a part time basis, while I started working part time (three nights a week) at Baragwanath Casualty Department. While I was working there I discussed with some of the people in the I.A.S. and in the Metal and Allied Workers Union (M.A.W.U.) the possibility of starting a Union Medical Fund, to which the

the members. DR. KITAI took part in these discussions, and it was hoped that he would work in the Medical Scheme. We also discussed an education programme that would run sessions to educate the workers what their rights were with regard to sick pay, Workman's Compensation and Industrial Disease. We went to a M.A.W.U. executive meeting where this plan was discussed, and the members endorsed it. We then drew up a budget and submitted it to M.A.W.U. who sent it overseas to apply for funds from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.)

II.

By this time I realized that just dealing with the workers complaints was not doing much good, as, even if a worker did get his compensation through our work, he usually lost his job. It became clear therefore that what the workers needed was proper job security and this they could only get if they were members of a Union and had Union rights in the factory. However there was no chance of me working as an organizer in M.A.W.U.

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11.

At about this time a group of friends decided to study "CAPITAL" together. It was suggested by Gavin, and together with Pat HORN, Annie SMYTH, Vicci AIME and myself we met every week to discuss the chapter of "CAPITAL" that we had read. The reason we met together was so that we could better understand what we were reading. If we had had the chance like other students to study "CAPITAL" at University, it would not have been necessary to meet and discuss together. We studied "CAPITAL" in order to get a good understanding of the economics of marxism, but we took no resolutions, and when we had finished reading Volume 1, the group dissolved. The meetings took place at my house in Bertrams, and Liz was present at the last one or two discussions, as she had just come up from Cape Town. At this time during 1977, while I was working at Thembisa, I became aware that the problems of the patients I was dealing with were not only medical problems but were basically social problems due to the people not getting enough wages, unemployment, or extreme poverty, and the poor conditions in the township. This meant that sometimes I would stitch up a patient only to have him return the following week due to alcoholism, unemployment or extreme poverty, with another assault wound. Also I was working in a neuro surgery ward where I saw many people, particularly paraplegics, who had been injured at work. Often these people did not get their compensation, or if they did they got very little, because the compensation is based on what the workers earnings are, and not on an absolute figure related to the extent of the injury. Even if they did get their compensation, they often lost their jobs, which meant that they could not get another job due to their disability, and they and their families were without means of support.

In 1978, Jan Theron and a delegation of workers from the African Food And Canning Workers Union (A.F.C.W.U.) came up to Johannesburg to start to start a branch of their Union here. He asked if they could stay at my house in Bertrams, in Fuller Street (where I had moved after leaving Half Way House at the beginning of 1978). I agreed and they began to organize factories that they had already organized branches of in the Cape; ie. Langeberg, H. Jones and South African Dried Fruit. The delegation stayed at my house in Bertrams, while they were busy organizing the factories during the day.

At this time Gavin suggested that I may work in the I.A.S. and in M.A.W.U. as a doctor. He introduced me to Jenny CUNNINGHAM and through her I was introduced to Taffy ADLER, who agreed that I could work in the I.A.S. doing Workmans Compensation, and Industrial Decease. He also introduced met to a group of people that he was meeting already, people who he had worked with while he was in M.A.W.U. These meetings were already taking place, with the following people involved; Lydia KOMPE, Siphon KUBHEKA, Dave DYSON, Mr. MAKAMA, Andrew SHABANGU and myself. At these meetings which were sometimes at Lydia's house, my house, Gavin's house or Dave DYSON'S house, we discussed the problems in M.A.W.U. particularly registration which we were opposed to, and the medical fund which we were trying to get going. Also at this time, it was before F.O.S.A.T.U. had been formed, and T.U.A.C.C. in the Transvaal was keen to start up another trade union. The possibility was between the Transport and General Workers Union and the Chemical Workers Union. As M.A.W.U. was going to take the decision, we discussed at these meetings which was preferable. Gavin expressed the view that we should start a General Workers Union because it could organize all workers and therefor be more powerful and political, because it would not be limited to industrial issues, and industrial negotiations, but rather organize

all the workers around their common chanel.

13.

I continued working at the I.A.S., and at Baragwanath, and in early 1979 it became clear that although we had submitted a budget for money to M.A.W.U. for the Medical Scheme, that this was not going to come through.

13.

At this time when Liz moved up to Johannesburg, she hired a box for me at P.O. Box 46376, Orange Grove, so that I would not get my army call up papers, and my parents sent my mail on to me there. At this time I was working in the I.A.S. dealing with complaints concerning workman's compensation. This I agreed to do, and began working there on a part time basis, while I started working part time (three nights a week) at Baragwanath casualty department. While I was working there I discussed with some of the people in the I.A.S. and in M.A.W.U. the concept of the Union Medical Fund, to which members would contribute and which would provide a free medical service to the members. Dr. KITAI took part in these discussions and it was hoped that he would work in the Medical scheme. We also discussed an education programme that would see sessions to educate the workers what their rights were with regard to sick-pay, Workman's Compensation and Industrial disease. We went to a M.A.W.U. executive meeting where this plan was discussed, and the members endorsed it. We then drew up a budget and submitted it to M.A.W.U. who sent it overseas to apply for funds from the I.C.F.T.U. While I was doing W.C.A. work in the I.A.S., I also used to discuss the problems that the other people in the I.A.S. were dealing with, that is, Labour contracts, dismissals, unemployment insurance. There we discussed with Dave DYSON, Debbie DYSON, Brian CUTLER and other law students who used to come into the I.A.S. on Saturdays. We discussed the problems that migrant workers found, and I learnt who to deal with some of them. However there was agreement that the basic problems could not be solved without organization in the factories.

At this time, early in 1979, OSCAR MPETHA, I think with a delegation of Union people, came up to Johannesburg to continue the work that JAN THERON had started, and to help build up the branch. He stayed at my house in Bertrams, where I was living alone, because Jan had given him the address. While he was staying with me, he was visited by Lisa WILLIAMSON who took him off to a meeting with MIRRIAM SITHOLE. He told me that she had an elaborate plan to get money from overseas from her brother to set up Unions in South Africa, presumably S.A.C.T.U. Unions. It sounded far fetched, and I told Oscar so. He was not interested in her plan, and never took up the offer.

I also met Ian KITAI through Gavin ANDERSON who suggested that Ian may assist in the medical scheme. Dr. KITAI had just qualified, and we discussed the problems of poverty and disease. We discussed the severe limitations of community medicine in actually getting to the root causes of poverty and unemployment, and he wrote an article in which he criticized the ultimate effects of community medicine and its ability to change the basic conditions under which people lived. We also saw the medical fund as being able to strengthen the organization of M.A.W.U. AND to allow an opportunity for the workers to control at least the medical aspects of their lives. We felt that the Union (M.A.W.U.) would also be able to organize around the issue of Industrial Health in the factories. After the medical fund fell through, Ian KITAI (who had done well at University) decided to go to England to study paediatrics, and later he returned to Zimbabwe. We did not discuss the A.N.C. but he said that he felt that he did not want to remain in South Africa and that his talents lay in a medical direction and not in the Unions. I felt that I would rather stay here and work in the Unions. After he left, I sent him a letter in England, and received a letter from him, but I cannot remember their contents. I also saw him very briefly at a party in Crown Mines when he was passing through South Africa to take up a job in

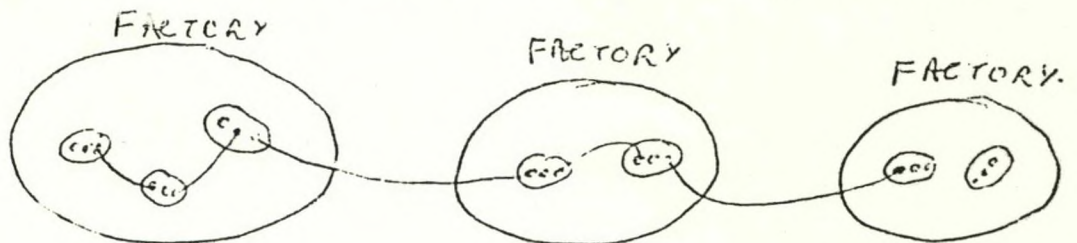
Zimbabwe. He told me that he was going to work co ordinating health services in the Bulawayo area.

While Oscar Mpetha was staying with me, he saw the work that I was doing in the I.A.S..As the Johannesburg Branch of A.F.C.W.U. was not running well, he asked me if I would be prepared to work for the Union on an unpaid basis initially. I had already realized through my work in the I.A.S. that workers problems could not be solved only by making sure that they got adequate compensation or laid down minimum wages. I realized that it was important that workers were organized into trade unions so that they should have adequate protection and job security, as it was my feeling that the laws governing employment in South Africa were inadequate to protect the workers. I felt that if I worked in a trade union I could at least contribute towards seeing these things gradually changed. It is no use giving people things or doing things for them, as this is charity, and it degrades the person. I felt that it was important that people should learn about their rights, learn to have self respect, and therefore get rid of injustices themselves. This latter happened in some of our factories, where the management now treat the workers with respect, not because of myself or other trade union officials, but because the workers have stood together and demanded their rights. In these factories, even the management seems happy now because there is a relationship of mutual respect and not that of master-servant with its mistrust. I felt that if people learnt this in all spheres of life, changes would gradually come about in South Africa for the better. That is also why it is so important that organizations work democratically so that people learn to be masters of their own lives. I felt that treating individual patients was not actually doing much good in the long term, and although I enjoy my medical work, and find satisfaction particularly in emergency work, I saw all around me poverty, T.B., and alcoholism. I considered doing community- . . . medicine, but realized that most of the time it involved doing statistical work and the basic social problems were not tackled.

By this time I realized that just dealing with the workers complaints was not doing much good, as, even if a worker did get his compensation through our work, he usually lost his job. It became clear therefore that what the workers needed was proper job security and this they could only get if they were members of a Union and had Union rights in the factory. However there was no chance of me working as an organizer in M.A.W.U. While I was working in the I.A.S. I also disagreed with the policy that the M.A.W.U. officials were talking with regard to registration. I felt that the registration scheme that the government was putting forward was intended in fact to allow stricter control of Unions, and was not the answer to the problems of Unions, as it was portrayed by the M.A.W.U. officials. I discussed this with some of the I.A.S. people and the organizers, and had an argument with Taffy ADLER on this issue.

So when Mr. MPETHA asked me if I would be prepared to work for A.F.C.W.U., I said that I would. I had discussions with OSCAR MPETHA about the new Wiehahn Legislation, and we agreed that the new laws were very restrictive, and that the disadvantages of registration outweighed the advantages of registration. As there was no chance of me working in M.A.W.U. as an organizer, and as the money for the medical fund had not come through, I agreed to work for A.F.C.W.U. but did not start working immediately, as this had to be confirmed by the Head Office.

During this time I was meeting with the M.A.W.U. people; L. KOMPE, Gavin ANDERSON, Siphon KUBHEKA, Mr. MAKAMA, Andrew SHABANGU and Dave DYSON. These meetings took place from about the middle of 1978 until the end of 1979, and being new to trade unions and inexperienced I did not play a very active part in the meetings. After quite a few months of these meetings, Gavin and Siphon KUBHEKA, myself and Dave DYSON used to meet informally, sometimes with everyone present, but not always. I think we all met together about three or four times. We used to discuss the S.A.C.T.U. pamphlets called "WORKERS UNITY" sometimes, and discuss the types of organization possible. These meetings were not structured to follow on from each other. Gavin felt that we should develop underground unions in line with the S.A.C.T.U. position. As he put the idea forward, there should be workers organized in groups of three in all of the factories, and they should co-ordinate with each other. It would be secret, and it would mean that the State could not ban or crush such an organization. The structure would be something like this:-



We never actually wrote down this structure, but it was brought up at the meetings we had with the M.A.W.U. people, who were asked to bring other people to the meetings, although they never did bring anyone else.

In about mid 1979, LIZ FLOYD came up to stay with me in Joburg. We had personal problems, and I felt it would be good to get away for a while, so I telephoned a friend of mine DR. MTSHEMBLA, who was still working at Umtata Hospital, and asked him if there was any locum job available in the Transkei. A few days later he telephoned or telegraphed me and told me that he had a locum job available that he was doing during his leave and that I could take it over after he had finished

doing it for four weeks. He said that I should come down to Umtata Hospital, where he would meet me and take me up to the other hospital. I got a lift up to Umtata, and then I went up to Mount Fletcher with Dr. MTSHEMBLA, as he still had one or two weeks to do in Mount Fletcher. The job was basically running a private practice in the town, acting as superintendant of the small hospital (about 100 beds) and going out to rural clinics in the afternoons. I was to receive about half the earnings of the practice in cash, but no payment for the hospital work. The hospital was the Taylor Bequest Hospital, and the hospital belonged to an African doctor who had had a lumbar disc operation. After about six weeks at the hospital, I returned to Johannesburg.

Initially I was in favour of such a scheme of underground unions, but later I agreed with Gavin about it. We used to discuss with Sipho, Gavin, Dave and myself the positions taken in Workers Unity.

The / 7.

There reasons for going underground were that they needed organizations that could not be smashed by the State. Their aims are to organize the working class into militant organizations that could challenge the existing structure of society, the present economy and the way the economy works. They wanted to organize workers extensively to put pressure on the government by being a well organized working class. We used to read a few copies of workers unity, see the position that S.A.C.T.U. was taking - criticize and appraise it. We also discussed the breakaway of the group of 5 people from S.A.C.T.U. We understood that they had broken away because of their opposition to the Nationalist direction taken by S.A.C.T.U. and felt that S.A.C.T.U. should have taken a none working-class position. The feeling between us was that the group of five people should have stayed with S.A.C.T.U. and broken down the Nationalist position slowly.

On my return I continued working for a while at the I.A.S. Then Jan Theron and a delegate from Cape Town came up to Johannesburg in connection with the Fattis and Monis boycott. They stayed at our house, and told me that they had discussed my appointment in the Union in Cape Town, and I could start working from that time. While I was resigning from the I.A.S., I had meetings with ~~her~~ Liz Thompson and Jenny Cunningham to prepare them for the W.C.A. work that I had been doing in the I.A.S. We also discussed Industrial Health, I then wrote a letter to the I.A.S. executive telling them that although I was resigning, there were three other doctors who were prepared to continue the W.C.A. work I was doing in the I.A.S., and who were also interested in Industrial Health. They were Dr. LIZ FLOYD, DR. LIZ THOMPSON and DR. JENNY CUNNINGHAM. This was agreed upon, and they started working, all on a part time rotation basis in the I.A.S. I met with them a couple of times to discuss the way to deal with cases. Occasionally LIZ FLOYD would mention the problems they were having in the I.A.S., but generally we agreed not to discuss our work too much with each other, as we each had our own problems and we were very busy. We did however discuss the question of the I.A.S. doing research into the cost of living, which would be of value to our Union and others in negotiating with the management. They did prepare some information on the cost of food, transport and housing, which was useful in negotiations with H. Jones where we won increases of about 30%. We also discussed the Pension issue which was affecting our Union and all workers, and this led later to a meeting called by the I.A.S., where the pension issue was discussed, as mentioned further on.

18.

Later, I agreed with Gavin saying that an underground union was impossible because it would not be a proper trade union, that was democratically controlled by the membership, and open. Furthermore an underground trade union could not survive long in South Africa. I felt that the trade unions should be open, legal and controlled by their membership. The discussions we had about an underground union never materialized and the underground union was never formed.

18.

On my return I continued working for a while at the I.A.S. Then Jan THERON and a delegate from Cape Town, Mr. MABIKWE came up to Johannesburg in connection with the Fattis & Monis boycott. They interviewed me, asked me about the work I had been doing in the I.A.S., how much I knew about trade unions, and then said that I could begin working in the A.F.C.W.U. I know Jan THERON was against my appointment, or worried by it because I had not done my military training.

I started working for the A.F.C.W.U. in about August 1979, at first concentrating on the factories that we had organized, Langeberg, H. Jones and South African Dried Fruit. This was during the time of the Fattis and Monies boycott, and I went to one meeting in the Institute of Race Relations that was addressed by Dr. MOTLANA, with the branch chairman MR. PHALE. At this meeting, pamphlets were given out and we took some and explained the boycott to our members, and also handed the pamphlets out to our members. There were songs sung at this meeting, but I cannot remember what they were.

19.

In 1978, Jan THERON and a delegation of workers from the African Food and Canning Workers Union (A.F.C.W.U.) came up to Johannesburg. I think Oscar MPETHA was part of that delegation. They came up to Johannesburg to start a branch of their Union here. He asked if they could stay at my house in Bertrams, in Fuller street (where I had moved after leaving Half-Way House at the beginning of 1978). I agreed and they began to organize factories that they had already organized branches of in the Cape; i.e. Langeberg, H. Jones and S.A. Dried Fruit. The delegation stayed at my house in Bertrams, while they were busy organizing the factories during the day.

19.

I do not know if Jan THERON had investigated my background. However, while I was in the Transkei he did stay with Gavin ANDERSON, and Gavin may have told him about myself. In addition I know that Gavin ANDERSON and Sipho KUBHEKA did go down to Cape Town once to meet Dave LEWIS and Wilsin SEDIVI, and they may have told Dave LEWIS about myself. I know that Dave LEWIS was friendly with Jan THERON, and he may have told him about myself and the views that I had. I made no promises to Oscar MPETHA about how I would work in the Union in Johannesburg, but he was aware that I agreed with the general direction of S.A.C.T.U., although I disagreed with the concept of underground trade unions. Later while I was already working for A.F.C.W.U. I told Oscar MPETHA about the group of workers in M.A.W.U. that opposed registration, and told him that Gavin was keen to meet him. I then took Oscar MPETHA to meet Gavin. ANDERSON and Sipho KUBHEKA, but did not stay. It is possible that Oscar MPETHA asked Gavin ANDERSON about what sort of work I was doing, because I sometimes used to talk in general to Gavin about our union, and its progress, but never formally. I never wrote reports for anyone about the Unions activities, and never received instructions from anyone to do this or that, apart from the reports that we sent half-yearly to the National Executive Council, and the advice that Jan gave me over the phone. At this time, while I was working in A.F.C.W.U., I am sure that Jan THERON and Oscar MPETHA knew the general direction in which my sympathies lay (the direction of S.A.C.T.U.) and trusted that I would carry out my work in this direction.

At about this time I moved with LIZ FLOYD into a house in Jeppe at 420a, Fox Street. We were also involved at this time in a vegetable

would go there and work in the garden, and we would share the vegetables. It was a good way of getting out in the sun and using our bodies after a week in the office. It was here that I had met Dave Dyson. We also played together in a soccer team, that used to play occasionally on Sundays. I also visited GAVIN ANDERSON a few times a few times while he was living with his wife in Bertrams, in Ascot road, and he was also involved in the vegetable garden and playing soccer.

I continued working at the I.A.S. and at Baragwanath, and in early 1979, it became clear that although we had submitted a budget for money to M.A.W.U. for the medical scheme, that this was not going to come through. I also had an argument with Taffy ADLER about registration where I felt that the Union should not register. He reported this to the M.A.W.U. executive and they felt that I should not be in the medical fund.

After I had known Gavin for some time he mentioned to me that he and Sipho KUBHEKA had gone to Botswana some time before (I think in 1976) to meet some S.A.C.T.U. people, include RAY ALEXANDER. He did not say what they discussed, at least I cannot remember what he said, but he did say that he did not like Ray ALEXANDER, who was very bossy.

At this stage, late in 1979, our Head Office stressed that we should try to organize the Fattis and Monies factory in Isando, as Oscar Mpetha had tried to do this already, but had failed. It was felt that if we organized the Isando factory it would put the Union in a stronger position in relation to the Fattis and Monies management. We met some of the workers outside the factory and explained to them about the Union, and asked them to recruit other workers to the Union and attend our meetings because the Union was powerless unless we had more than 50% membership in the factory. In this way we used to go to the factory at 5.p.m. and pick up a kombi load of workers and then go to one of their houses for a meeting. Other workers used to get there by train or bus. At these meetings we used to explain how our Union worked, what the constitution and subscriptions were, and the fact that we needed at least 50% membership before we could approach the management. We also discussed the problems the workers were having in the factory, and what steps could be taken to solve these problems. We discussed that the Liason Committee had no real power to negotiate and was there only to bring complaints to the attention of the management. At our meetings we sang Union songs such as "Amajoinile" and "Umzima Lomtvalo", and then after the meeting we would take the workers back to their houses in the kombi. When we had a 50% membership, the management dissolved the liason committee, and after negotiations in Cape Town at which I was not present, the management agreed to take back the Bellville workers and negotiate with the Union for a recognition and wages agreement in 1980. The way we organized other factories after this was roughly the same, except that we did not have to go and sit outside the factories to get the first members as our members at other factories told their friends about the Union and the workers from the new factories merely came into our offices and held meetings.

21.

At this time, early 1979, Oscar MPETHA, I think with a delegation of Union people from Cape Town, came up to Johannesburg to continue the work that Jan THERON had started, and to help build up this branch. He stayed at my house in Bertrams, either because Jan THERON had given him the address, or else because he had been in the previous delegation. While he was staying with me, he was visited by Liza WILLIAMSON in the office of the Union to which I had gone with him. They met and talked in the smaller of the two rooms. Later, she came around to the house in her car and took him away to a meeting.

He told me that they had met together with Mirriam SITHOLE in a Hotel in Johannesburg where they discussed the plan that Liza WILLIAMSON had. She had told Oscar MPETHA that her brother overseas had money available for the establishment of S.A.C.T.U. Unions in South Africa. It sounded like an unsound idea because you cannot just establish a Trade Union with money, you actually need to build it up slowly through organization. I had also heard the name WILLIAMSON mentioned in connection with the fact that he was a police spy. This I told Oscar MPETHA, and he went to another meeting with her. When he came back he said that he was not interested in taking the offer up. 21.

When I began working in A.F.C.W.U. I had communistic ideas, but I did not want to have anything to do with the A.F.C. or S.A.C.T.U. partly because it was dangerous, and partly because it was not democratic, and I felt that I should work to organize workers in a militant, progressive, democratic way as a class so that they could themselves bring about changes in society. I was not in favour of infiltration and undemocratic activities. I was sympathetic and supported S.A.C.T.U.'S general political direction, but I disagreed with their

At the end of 1979, a joint meeting was arranged of F.O.S.A.T.U., A.F.C.W.U., F.C.W.U. (Food and Canning Workers Union), and the W.P.G.W.U. (Western Province General Workers Union), at the Anglican Church in Saratoga Avenue, Doornfontein. The reason for the meeting was to discuss the amendments to the Industrial Conciliation Act, that had just been gazetted, and the response of the various Unions to this. The W.P.G.W.U., A.F.C.W.U., F.O.S.A.T.U. and F.C.W.U. all agreed that the new legislation was very restrictive, as it made provisional registration necessary before final registration, it did not allow mixed Union and there were other restrictive measures. Because of this, the Cape Unions argued that they would not register until these aspects of the legislation had been changed. However, the F.O.S.A.T.U. group felt that they would "test the water" by applying for

a non-racial constitution. They feared that if they remained unregistered, then the registered parallel unions would be favoured by the management and given access to the factories and negotiating rights, while they would be excluded. I attended this meeting but did not play an active part in it.

While Oscar MPHETHA was staying with me, he saw the work that I was doing in the I.A.S. As the Johannesburg branch of A.F.C.W.U. was not running well, he asked me if I would be prepared to work for the Union on an unpaid basis initially. The reason I think that Oscar MPHETHA asked me to do work in the Union were that he was aware of the position I had taken on registration within M.A.W.U., and the arguments I had had with Taffy ADLER and being blocked with the medical scheme within M.A.W.U. We discussed together that we both stood for militant progressive unions that would tackle political issues that affected workers. We discussed the Wiehahn legislation and agreed that it was aimed at controlling workers. We agreed that the principles of S.A.C.T.U. were the correct ones. Also at this time, I had some experience with complaints work in the I.A.S. and I was competent at it. I also had a source of income, so it would not be necessary for the branch to pay me much wages initially. In addition, the branch was in a bad state and needed someone competent to build it up. Oscar MPHETHA said that he would try to see if the Union Head office in Cape Town would agree to my appointment. He said that he thought that Jan THERON would not be keen on my appointment, as I was white and not a worker elected from the factories, but he would try to get me appointed. I did not make any promises to Oscar MPHETHA and did not say I would keep in contact and take instructions from him.

When Oscar MPHETHA came up to Johannesburg to organize, we discussed about the old S.A.C.T.U. (before he was banned), and it was obvious to him that I agreed to the general political direction taken by S.A.C.T.U. However he did not talk about any present S.A.C.T.U. activities. Later however, in about early 1980, he showed me briefly a sheet of paper with a list of S.A.C.T.U. names on it. He said that he had either just come from or was going to a meeting in East London where these people would discuss the formation of an unemployed workers union. Along with the list of names was a paper in handwriting dealing about an unemployed workers union. On the list of names were about 20 people, including Jan THERON, Auret VAN HEERDEN and Oscar MPHETHA. I am not sure, but it seemed that Oscar MPHETHA had been to some meeting and it was expected that all these people would be contacted or would meet to get an unemployed workers union off the ground. I did not want to know anything else about S.A.C.T.U.

After this meeting, our annual conference was held in Paarl in September 1979. I travelled down to this meeting with a delegation of three other workers from our branch. At this meeting I was introduced to the delegates and my position as an organizer in the Union was confirmed. At the conference (I think) we discussed the new laws, and it was decided that A.F.C.W.U. would not register under the existing laws, but that F.C.W.U. would remain registered. There were also Branch Reports and the General Secretary went over the developments that had taken place during the year, such as the Fattis and Monis affair, and other negotiations. While we were in Cape Town I stayed at the conference hall with our delegates, and then drove back to Johannesburg. Present at the meeting were the Chairman of F.C.W.U. MR.SPOGTER Vice Chairman MR.WILLIAMS, General Secretary JAN THERON., Chairman of A.F.C.W.U. MR.PENDLANI, Vice Chairman MR.NOKO, and National Organizer MR.MPETHA, as well as the two Cape Town organizers, V.ENGEL and A.CRAWFORD.

Later Jan THERON told me that they had discussed my appointment in Cape Town. The people in Cape Town had to make a choice between three different people, Mike MORRIS, myself and someone else. Jan was also opposed to me being appointed because I had not done my army training. However, apparently they more or less agreed to my appointment, partly because I was already living in Johannesburg, and would not have to come up from Cape Town.

I felt it was important that workers were organized into trade unions so that they should have adequate connections and job security, and fight for their rights. I felt that if I worked in a trade union I could at least contribute towards seeing things changed. It is no use giving people things or doing things for them, as this is charity, and it degrades the person. I felt that it was important that people should learn about their rights, learn to have self respect, and therefore get rid of injustices themselves. This latter happened in some of our factories, where the management now treat the workers with respect, not because of self or other trade union officials, but because the workers have stood together and demanded their rights. In these factories even the management seems happy now because there is a relationship of mutual respect and not that of master servant with its mistress. I felt that if people learnt this in all spheres of life, changes would gradually come about in South Africa for the better. This is also why it is so important that organizations work democratically so that people learn to be masters of their own lives.

On our return from Cape Town, we continued organizing other factories in the Transvaal having meetings with Fattis and Monis, Hinds Brothers, Pan Foods, Renown as well as the other established factories, Langeberg All Gold, and S.A. Dried Fruit.

In about Mid 1979 Liz FLOYD came up to stay with me in Johannesburg. We had personal problems, and I felt that it would be good to get away for a while, so I telephoned a friend of mine S. MTSHEMBLA, who was still working at Umtata Hospital, and asked if there was any locum job available in the Transkei. A few days later he telephoned or telegraphed me and told me that he had a locum job available that he was doing during his leave, and that I should take it over after he had finished doing it for four weeks. He said that I should come down to Umtata Hospital, where he would meet me and take me up to the other hospital.

I got a lift up to Umtata, and then went up to Mount Fletcher with S. MTSHEMBLA, as he still had one or two weeks to do in Mount Fletcher. The job was basically running a private practice in the town, acting as superintendant of the small hospital (about 100 beds) and going out to rural clinics in the afternoon. I was to receive about half the earnings of the practice in cash, but no payment for the hospital work. The hospital was the Taylor Bequest Hospital, and the hospital belonged to an African doctor who had had a lumbar disc operation. After about six weeks at the hospital, I returned to Johannesburg. Also while I was with S. MTSHEMBLA I asked him if he knew Pindile MFETI, because Gavin had mentioned him as being active in the I.A.S., before, and said that he was in Butterworth. He agreed that he knew him.

When I first met Oscar MPETHA I was not aware that he had been a member of the A.N.C., and I knew him only as the National organizer of our Union. Later I became aware that he used to be a member of the

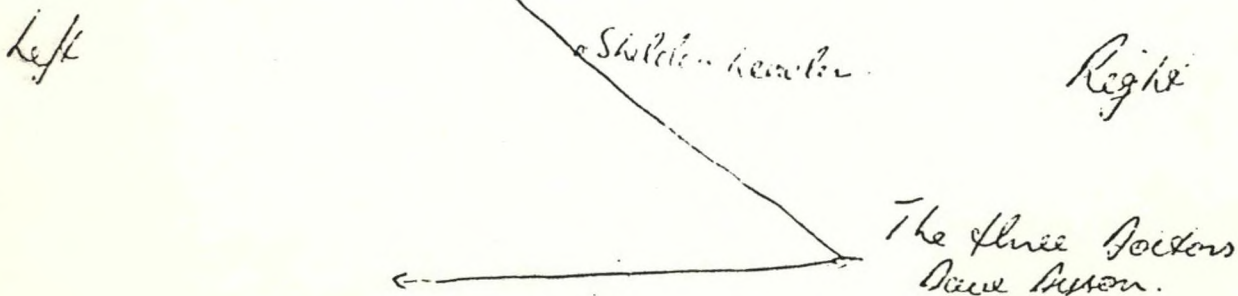
A.N.C. / . . . 11.

A.N.C. and that he had been active in our union (A.F.C.W.U.) He told me some stories about the A.N.C. in the 1950's of which I remember a story about how he had had a battle with someone else (may be DR. XUMA, but I am not sure) for the Cape leadership of the A.N.C. in the 1940's or 1950's, and he drummed up a lot of support in the factories and won the election. He told me how he had risen from being a factory worker militant to being an official in the Union, and how he combined his trade union and political activities. He said that you could not separate the two.

During 1980, the meat strike in Cape Town took place, and our head office requested us to support the unemployed workers, and the boycott. We explained what had happened to our members and asked them to support the boycott, but it was not very successful, and no money was collected. We sent the Union a letter of support from the Branch.

While I was resigning from the I.A.S. I had meetings with Liz FLOYD, Liz THOMPSON and Jenny CUNNINGHAM to prepare them for the W.C.A. work that I had been doing in the I.A.S. In the discussions we agreed that in dealing with the W.C.A. cases, it was important to educate the people on the inadequacy of the laws which covered them, and also to use some of the examples to help organize the workers, and to stress the need for the workers to organize themselves for their own production. We also discussed Industrial Health. I then wrote a letter to the I.A.S. executive telling them that although I was resigning, there were three other doctors who were prepared to continue the W.C.A. work that I had been doing in the I.A.S., and who were interested in Industrial Health. They were:- Dr. Liz FLOYD, Dr. Liz THOMPSON and Dr. Jenny CUNNINGHAM. This was agreed upon, and they started working all on a part-time basis for the I.A.S. I met with them a couple of times to discuss the way to deal with cases. Occasionally, Liz FLOYD would mention the problems they were having in the I.A.S., but generally we agreed not to discuss our work too much each other, as we each had our own problems and we were busy. There was also tension between us about political things, because initially in Cape Town, I had shown Liz away from political activity, but since I had come up to Johannesburg, I was more political active, so she felt that I did not respect her politically. Only towards the end of 1981 did we discuss some things together. We did discuss the question of the I.A.S. doing research into the cost of living which would be of value to our Union and others in regarding with management. They did prepare some information on the cost of food, transport and housing, which was useful in negotiation with H. JONES where we won an increase of about 30%. We also discussed the pension issue which was affecting our union and all workers and this led later to a meeting called by the I.A.S. where the pension issue was discussed, as mentioned further on. We also discussed what F.O.S.A.T.U. was trying to do in closing down the I.A.S., but only very briefly in general terms the following diagram illustrates usually what has happened to the I.A.S.

*Formation of the I.A.S.
Jenny leader, Parallel Dept. Gen. Secs Steve Treckman.*



25 of 1

The whole I.A.S. at this time were against F.O.S.A.T.U. The Ponnors were happy with F.O.S.A.T.U., but they were not on the executive any more Dave DYSON, Zacharia MOHANE and Liz THOMPSON were most against going in to F.O.S.A.T.U., because the F.O.S.A.T.U. wanted to control the I.A.S. and put it under the direction of the office bearers of F.O.S.A.T.U. The people in the I.A.S. said no, they are a service organisation and will not fall under the direct control of one or other union. I was aware that Liz FLOYD disliked the F.O.S.A.T.U. leadership intensely. Her sympathies are in a S.A.C.T.U. direction against registration. But she was not trying to break F.O.S.A.T.U. and she did not get any orders.

In September 1980 I went down to Cape Town as part of a delegation of 7 or 8 workers from our Branch. We successfully negotiated a recognition and wages agreement with the Fattis and Monis management and then attended the annual conference in Paarl. We stayed at the house of Jan THERON while we were in the Cape. The same people were present at the Annual Conference as the previous time, except that Mr. VAN GRAAN replaced MR. SPOGTER as Chairman of the F.C.W.U. The contents of the meeting included a detailed report on the activities of the Union during the year, including the progress of our branch, and the successful result of the Fattis and Monis negotiation

a detailed Financial Report, including our Auditors Report for the Johannesburg Branch, and further discussions on the labour laws. It was felt that even though migrant workers were now allowed to be members of Unions, the other terms of the laws which provided for provisional registration, and did not allow mixed unions, were designed to divide workers and the Unions. The Union was particularly concerned that a breakaway group in Paarl had formed their own Union, the Boland Inmaakwerkers Vakbond, and had gained provisional registration. We felt that we had nothing to hide, but we were not prepared to submit to controls that should come from our members, if we were to be a truly democratic organization. At the conference the General Secretary discussed how the Union had progressed in East London. We heard that the Union had been established in a few factories and that the Union was progressing alongside the South African Allied Workers Union (S.A.A.W.U.) which was operating in East London. The two Unions were sharing offices and cooperating well. It appeared that although the two Unions had a lot in common, there were significant differences. Our Union was an Industrial Union, we relied solely on our subscriptions for money, and we were organized on a National Basis. In addition there were significant differences in the constitution and structures of our Unions.

I started working in A.F.C.W.U. in about August 1979, at first concentrating on the factories that we had organized, Langeberg, H. Jones and S.A. Dried Fruit. This was during the time Fattis & Monis boycott, and I went to one meeting in the Institute of Race Relations that was addressed by Dr. MOTLANA with the branch chairman MR. PHALE. At this meeting, pamphlets were given out and we took some and explained the boycott to our members. There were songs sung at this meeting, but I cannot remember what they were. I felt it was important that people should support the Fattis & Monis boycott, so that the management would reinstate the workers. It would also have an effect on other employers, so that they would consider seriously before they fire workers for no reason.

When we got back to Johannesburg, Mr SAM KIKINI came to see our Johannesburg Officials in our office. HE asked if we would be prepared to assist S.A.A.W.U. in establishing a Branch in Johannesburg. I consulted our Head Office and they had no objection to it, so I put it to our Branch Executive, where it was agreed that we would cooperate with them. Mr. Kikini opened an account in Johannesburg and hired a telephone for S.A.A.W.U.. In the next few months we had intermittent visits from the S.A.A.W.U. officials, MR. QWETA, MR. NJIKELANA, MR. NTONGA, MR. KIKINI, and MR. SIFINGO. They came up here to set up the administration of S.A.A.W.U. in the Transvaal, to buy stationary, and to hold meetings with some of the workers. We went out together once to the Chloride factory in Benoni, where they talked to a few workers, and I transported Mr KIKINI to a meeting with the workers of Hall and Pickles, a foundry in Benoni. At this time I also introduced the officials to Mr. Barnabas, who used to be a member of A.F.C.W.U. in Langeberg, but who at that time was working at Hall and Pickles. He was active in local community affairs and was involved in the publication of a local newspaper "INTERNOS". After he had met the S.A.A.W.U. officials and begun organizing in his factory, MR. KIKINI said that he should leave the factory and work full time in the Johannesburg Office. In the Joburg office I taught him how to deal with the various complaints of the workers, how to calculate pay slips. Although MR. KIKINI tried to get an office in Benoni, he did not succeed, and I later managed to get an office in Kempton Park, that A.F.C.W.U. and S.A.A.W.U. would share but S.A.A.W.U. would pay the rent because A.F.C.W.U. was paying the rent for the Johannesburg office. Mr. Barnabas also opened a bank account in Kempton Park. I sometimes would contact him when an organization wanted a S.A.A.W.U. speaker or representative to be present at a meeting.

(1) *AK* 6/i/82.

27.

At about this time I moved with Liz FLOYD to a house in Jeppe at 420A Fox Street. We were also involved at this time in a vegetable growing scheme on a plot in Crown Mines. On a Sunday, about 15 people would go there and work in the garden, and we would share the vegetables. It was a good way of getting out in the sun and using our bodies after a week in the office. Among the people present were Dave DYSON, Gavin ANDERSON, and myself. We also played together in a soccer team that used to play occasionally on Sundays.

Having the use of an office in Kempton Park was of great help to us as we were busy organizing South African Milling Co., and Epic Oil in Isando, and had meetings with the workers in the Kempton Park Office. At these meetings we joined up new members, discussed their problems in the factory, and also explained what steps we would have to take to gain recognition and negotiate wages, in these companies falling under Premier Milling. That is, we would have to win a referendum in the factory and then prove that we had a majority paid up membership in the factory.

At this stage, late 1979, our Head Office stressed that we should try to organize the Fattis & Monis factory in Isando, as Oscar had tried to do this already, but had failed. It was felt that if we organized the Isando factory, it would put the union in a stronger position in relation to the Fattis & Monis management. We met some of the workers outside the factory and explained to them about the Union, and asked them to recruit other workers to the Union and attend our meetings because the Union was powerless unless we had more than 50% membership inside the factory. In this way we used to go to the factory at 5 p.m. and pick up a Kombi load of workers and then go to one of their houses for a meeting. Other workers used to get together by train or bus. At these meetings we used to explain how our Union worked, what the constitution and our subscriptions were and the fact that we needed at least 50% membership before we could approach the management. At our meetings we sang Union songs such as "Amajomile" and "Umziwa Lomtwalo" and then after that we would take the workers back to their houses in a Kombi. When we had a 50% membership, the management dissolved the liaison committee

Collection Number: AK2216

AGGETT, Dr Neil, Inquest, 1982

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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