

FWN SPEAKS TO SFAWU SECRETARY

Interview with Sister Maggie Magubane, General Secretary of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union (SFAWU) - a FOSATU affiliate.

FWN: Sister Maggie when did you first become a full time organiser in the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union?

Magubane: It was in 1975.
FWN: Before becoming an organiser what were you doing?

Magubane: I worked at the Western Biscuit Company on the East Rand.

FWN: When did you join the Union?

Magubane: Well we were the first people to form the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union in February 1974.

FWN: Why did you join the Union?

Magubane: After we had struggled to form a Works Committee in the plant we realised that we needed a Trade Union. We were assisted by the Urban Training Project (U.T.P.) in forming the Union.

FWN: Having been in the Union for some years now do you feel that there are any particular problems in our Union structures.

Magubane: As an organiser I feel that there are not enough women in our

Executive structures.

FWN: Why is that?

Magubane: Well I cannot say exactly but in my own feeling some women are

restricted by their families. For instance their husbands don't want them to attend evening meetings or to participate in trade union activities. So it's not because women are not active enough but it's because of the difficulties of having families.

FWN: Do you think FOSATU is aware of this problem - does it do enough about it?

Magubane: Well FOSATU hasn't yet discussed that problem.

FWN: Thank you.



M. Magubane, SFAWU secretary.

UNION RECOGNITION SETTLES LEGAL BATTLE

The company Precision Tools Ltd in Johannesburg has agreed to recognize the Metal and Allied Workers Union provided the union dropped its case against the company. MAWU had laid a complaint with the Industrial Court that the company had refused to renew the contract of employment of union shop steward, Steven Maponya for his union activities. The union said this was an unfair labour practice.

Under the pass laws, migrant workers from homelands have to go back to their homeland each year to get their contracts renewed before they can come back to the city to work. Precision Tools refused to renew Maponya's contract when he applied to renew it. But in August this year the Industrial Court decided that an unregistered union can bring a complaint of "unfair labour practice" to it. The Court then laid down a date at which verbal evidence was to be taken. But the company decided to settle the matter out of Court and reached an agreement with the union. Under this agreement, the company agreed to recognise the union, to pay all the legal expenses for the case and to pay R1 000 to Maponya who is now employed elsewhere.

UNEMPLOYMENT - TRADE UNIONS CAN FIGHT IT! says FOSATU



At a recent conference on Unemployment FOSATU's General Secretary argued strongly that the Trade Union Movement could and should fight against unemployment.

It is not the workers or their unions that create unemployment. In South Africa we have low wages, rising prices, more and more mechanization and high unemployment. Workers suffer in all ways because unemployment is part of economic system and it won't just go away by itself.

Can Trade Unions do anything? The answer is YES.

Firstly they must protect workers in their jobs by negotiating dismissal and grievance procedures. They must negotiate to protect workers against retrenchment. When times are bad profit must also take the burden and not push everything onto workers.

Secondly unions must negotiate to protect workers against new machinery which throws workers out of their jobs. Machines must be used to benefit all people and not just to improve profits.

Thirdly unions must bargain

for higher wages. Higher wages will reduce poverty and unemployment because workers will have more to spend so that more things will have to be made. Higher wages will be one step to correcting the terrible conditions in our country side since people will be able to buy the things they need to use the land.

Fourthly and most important we must build a powerful workers movement to truly protect workers. The State must be persuaded to act seriously against the problems causing unemployment. This is a great challenge to the Trade Union movement and they must begin the struggle now.

Chemical Union Strengthens

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) was formed in 1974. When the organizing started in Natal there had been a long term goal of this union to move to other provinces so as to fulfil its quest for the national organisation of chemical workers.

July 1980 saw this happen with the Transvaal forming a Branch. This was the dawn of the National Executive Committee which had been a dream over the years.

Arrangements were made there-after and on the 21st September 1980 twelve delegates and alternates from both branches met as the National Executive Committee. Elected to be the first President of the CWIU was Abbey Cwele Chairman of the Henkel shop steward committee in Durban; J. Ngwane Chairman of the Transvaal Branch was elected Vice-President; E. Shabalala of Reef Chemicals in the Transvaal was elected to be Treasurer and C. Ngema as General Secretary.

We owe many thanks to our FOSATU brother unions who have contributed a great deal towards us achieving this.

CHARLES NGEMA.



Look, my son, when I said you got to work harder if you want more pay



.... I didn't mean if you worked harder ...



.... I wouldn't retrench you!