

## SACCAWU JOHANNESBURG BRANCH

### DISCUSSION PAPER - THE WAY FORWARD

The working class today stands at the crossroads. Powerful forces want us to lose our way. Warlords rule by terror. Over seven million people who want to work cannot find jobs. Six million live in shacks and thousands are homeless and hungry. Those who do have homes have their electricity and water cut off regularly. Millions of children barely get an education. Those who work earn starvation wages under bad working conditions without job security. Our townships have become the hunting grounds of murderers and death catches a free ride on our trains.

Yet, they tell us this is the new South Africa! The rich and powerful are attempting to reform apartheid-capitalism - to throw away the laws but not the chains. Some of us might even get golden chains but we will still be wage slaves!

Is this not the time to be vigilant? Is this not the time for maximum unity? Is this not the time for action on a scale never before seen in our country? Why then are our structures weak? Why is attendance poor? Where is our energy and commitment?

This discussion paper by the office-bearers - the result of an ongoing process of observations, proposals and discussions with workers, shop stewards, staff (officials and administrators) and head office - seeks to assist in revitalising the union and thus contributing to strengthening the labour movement. It is not only SACCAWU that faces problems - the whole labour movement is in crisis! This was clearly demonstrated by the Cosatu Regional Congress which barely quorated. It is demonstrated by the lack of attendance at Cosatu structures and the failure of campaigns.

There are undoubtedly various reasons for this state of affairs. The four causes that have been spoken of are:

1. the violence;
2. the incorrect perception that, with the unbanning of organisations, release of prisoners, repeal of apartheid laws and negotiations between the ruling class and a section of the liberation movement, workers' problems are being addressed and will shortly be solved;
3. staff of the union not doing their jobs and Cosatu structures making decisions without mandates or accountability;
4. petty politicking and lack of revolutionary maturity.

Whatever the reasons, we seem to be sliding into a situation where workers are disillusioned, demoralised and demobilised. We seem to be losing that sense of solidarity and unity which originally built our unions. This period is dangerous. We see the bosses taking advantage. Like wolves hunting their prey, the bosses will pounce at any sign of weakness. Retrenchments, which continue at a rate of 1400 per day, are a clear sign of the bosses intentions. There is increasing casualisation, jobs are

being contracted out, management is more daring when it comes to dismissals, they even resort to physical violence against our members.

Comrades, Woolworths now employs five thousand casuals out of a workforce of ten thousand. The situation in Checkers is similar. OK and Southern Suns are bashing us. Gold Reef City and Metro have threatened to retrench hundreds. Unless management is stopped, they will hack a path of destruction across our shopfloors. The bosses sense our weakness and are moving in for the kill. They can kill our militancy slowly by forcing us to compromise like NUM did with ERGO mines. By saddling us with a social contract.

If we do not close ranks now, and mount an effective fight-back, it will take many years to recoup our lost strength. Let's look at each problem area.

#### A: PETTY POLITICKING, IRRESPONSIBLE DEBATE AND DISRUPTION OF STRUCTURES

The history of CCAWUSA/SACCAWU, FAWU and other unions, has shown the damage political differences can cause, if not handled correctly. The fact that workers in our union support PAC, ANC, WOSA, AZAPO, SACP should be a strength, not a weakness. Some comrades still bear grudges and put 'their' political organisations before the democratically elected union structures. They attempt to undermine, score petty points, and generally seek to disrupt structures at every opportunity. Trivial issues are made into major points of difference. The atmosphere at meetings becomes tense and ugly; emotion, rather than reason, prevails.

Then we wonder why attendance is poor. Put yourself in the shoes of a worker who has just joined our union. After being to the JHB local, can we point fingers at the comrade for not attending again?

Comrades, where are our priorities? By behaving irresponsibly and turning structures into a circus we are undermining ourselves. This union does not belong to any one political organisation. The bosses must be laughing at us! As the working class, we want to control the country but yet we behave disruptively in our own organisation, and do not display class unity. Let us be more mature in the face of attack. We have to build a revolutionary movement of all the organisations of the oppressed. Criticism is vital - but not disruption.

To allow for orderly, disciplined responsible debate we are forced to propose the following procedures:

#### 1. Comradely debate

Comrades shall be disciplined by the chair if they make personal attacks, swear or heckle from the floor. The chair disciplines

by asking the guilty party to refrain from talking for the duration of the meeting and/or to leave the meeting. Repeated violations will be looked at by the disciplinary structures of the union.

## 2. Powers of the Chair

The ruling of the chair is final. The only way to overturn it is to move a formal motion challenging the decision of the chair. If such a motion is seconded it will be voted on by the house and the house's decision will be final.

## 3. Points of Order

Only genuine Points of Order will be recognised by the chair. We will not recognise "points of information", "points of interruption", "points of explanation", "points of clarification" or any of the other weird and wonderful things that comrades invent when they want to speak.

## 4. Speaking Time

Comrades speaking from the floor will be given no more than five minutes. Once a comrade has spoken she will have no right to speak again until all those who have not spoken have been given a chance to do so. The only exception will be where the chair asks a comrade to give clarity on something she has said. The chair will take speakers in the order in which they indicate their desire to speak, subject to the limitations above.

## 5. Limit to Debating Time

Debate on any one issue cannot last for longer than an hour. After which, a vote will have to be taken to resolve the issue.

## B: STRUCTURES AT A LOCAL LEVEL - SACCAWU/COSATU

Besides the problems mentioned under A, the following have been noted:

1. Poor attendance
2. Complaints of too many meetings/not enough time for campaigns, Cosatu, etc
3. Agendas not completed/no thorough discussion
4. Lack of education
5. Resignations, and lack of attendance, of those elected
6. More emphasis on company councils than on locals
7. No clear understanding of the role, function and powers of structures eg locals, LEC, BEC etc.

Clear thinking and systematic planning must take root, otherwise we might flounder on the rocks of impatience and create further disillusionment.

To overcome these problems we propose the following; that:

1. the office-bearers of the branch discuss with company councils participation in structures and the frequency of company councils;

2. the following monthly calendar be implemented:

- a) first week of the month: all company council meetings
- b) second week of the month: Local to discuss Cosatu and Saccawu campaigns as well as reports of Saccawu structures (BEC, NEC etc)
- c) third week of the month: Local for education
- d) fourth week of the month: Local for solidarity: company reports, shopfloor reports, strike support, fight against retrenchment

3. as a start, this calendar must be fleshed out giving precise dates and topics (eg. education) in advance. It must be advertised in all companies using the notice boards and our media.

4. attendance must be monitored and general meetings held. We need to identify through the attendance register those companies and stores not attending. This should be done with the administration, organising and education units;

5. we must be wary of not throwing the baby out with the bathwater. For example, there are comrades who have been diligently and consistently attending. The local will be the poorer if these committed comrades who were elected previously are rejected before their term of office is over;

6. where we have identified comrades who have been elected but have not attended the structures and have not sent apologies, re-elections must occur. Those comrades who have resigned through frustration must be spoken to and asked to reconsider. Obviously if the comrades are adamant, then elections for these vacant positions must take place.

7. Comrades must become familiar with the constitution. See appendix 1 for function, role and powers of locals, LEC and BEC.

### C: STAFF (OFFICIALS AND ADMINISTRATORS)

A paper has been circulated by a staff member for discussion in staff meetings. In addition, a workshop has been conducted with all administrators. A meeting with unit coordinators is imminent.

These inputs, together with observations and comments/grievances of workers, has enabled us to appreciate the extent of the

problem and to make some tentative suggestions.

In a workers' organisation, the relations between staff and members is not the same as those between bosses and employees. A trade union is a collective, fighting workers' organisation with a serious task in society. Enormous trust is placed in us as office-bearers elected to oversee the running of the union, and we would be betraying this trust if we did not demand a high level of discipline, honesty and efficiency from our officials.

Many officials work hard and display the integrity and commitment demanded of revolutionaries who are truly involved in the working class struggle. Many have sacrificed 'careers' and more lucrative offers from employers, in order to build the workers' movement. Yet there are those who are irresponsible. At the National Congress, a resolution on officials was passed. We also have a code of conduct. These are in Appendix 2. The two documents must be studied and obeyed by officials.

In general, we have noticed the following in connection with staff members:

1. Weekly reports are not submitted;
2. Many units do not hold regular meetings;
3. Unit coordinators do not meet regularly;
4. Many staff members do not have adequate skills and training;
5. There is little cooperation between staff;
6. Some officials are not in those units where they can be most useful to the organisation;
7. Equipment such as desks, partitions, typewriters, computers etc need to be bought;
8. Either because of the structuring of the branch, resignation of some officials, incompetence, laziness, lack of allocation of companies, or all five, many workers' problems and concerns are not speedily dealt with by officials.

The leadership must pursue the suggestions of the staff paper on restructuring. We must consult widely, re-interview officials, provide training and equipment, and discipline laziness and corruption if it exists.

This must be done with the cooperation and understanding of staff and members. We have a tremendous responsibility and burden. An enormous organisation of workers like Saccawu cannot be allowed to slide into inefficiency and disintegration. Let us not allow our individual whims and fancies stand in the way of the class struggle.

A trade union must be a school for socialist revolution, not a playground for sheltered employment. We must demand the highest level of revolutionary discipline and commitment from the officials whose task it is to serve workers and their interests. The union's task must be to empower the working class.

We have to challenge the conglomerates and their banks. We must fight the state when it privatises and passes laws like VAT which make the working class poorer. We must fight for a new society where children, the old, the weak, the handicapped and ill, those without jobs, money and skills will be cared for. Let us not forget that one of the oldest and most powerful human dreams is for an end to the hunger and misery of class society - an end to the war between those who have wealth and power and those who have nothing.

We are sitting on the sidelines and quarrelling, while the bosses are retrenching and dismissing, while they are introducing new forms of control - "joint shrinkage committees", "quality control", "participatory management", "social contract", and casualisation.

SACCAWU has a proud and militant history. We have been in the vanguard of the workers' movement. Our aims are UNITY, DEMOCRACY and SOCIALISM.

In the process of fighting for these aims we must unify workers across the differences of political loyalty. Surely SACP, PAC, WOSA, AZAPO and ANC members can find their common ground as members of the working class, dispossessed and exploited under this system. We must bring this runaway capitalist train to an immediate halt before it causes more damage.

Let us think carefully and clearly as to how SACCAWU can truly be a fighting organisation in this life and death struggle against the rich and powerful minority. We need greater discipline, maturity and thinking to succeed. Let this branch steer the way forward for the whole working class movement.

Johannesburg Branch Office Bearers

14/7/91

# SACCAWU

## JOHANNESBURG BRANCH

P.O. Box 10952  
Johannesburg  
2000  
Telephone: (011) 402-1840/9

142 Kerk Street  
Johannesburg  
2001

YOUR REF     B.E.C.  
OUR REF     NORMAN MOKOENA  
DATE         22 AUGUST 1991

BRANCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
JOHANNESBURG BRANCH  
JOHANNESBURG  
2001

Comrades

RE:     REPORT ON FADAL AND RASELESO'S ENQUIRIES

COMRADE MAHMOOD FADAL

All constitutional provisions were complied with relating to the calling of the enquiry. Dates were set up and he was represented by comrade TSHIDISO NTAOPANE ( KLERKSDORP BRANCH SECRETARY) .

On record are the following correspondences exchanged between parties :-

- |    |              |  |  |
|----|--------------|--|--|
| 1. | 13 June 1991 | TO: FADAL & METRO<br>Shop -steward Council | Informing him and the Council<br>of his suspension.                          |
| 2. | 13 June 1991 | TO: JHB Local & Office<br>Bearers          | Informing the local of the BEC<br>decision to suspend Fadal.                 |
| 3. | 8 July 1991  | TO: Fadal                                  | Notification of a disciplinary<br>enquiry for the 20/7/91 at 14H00           |
| 4. | 19 July 1991 | TO : W. Dichaba                            | T. Ntaopane asking for a post-<br>ponement of the enquiry to the<br>22/7/91. |

2/.....

**ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE BRANCH SECRETARY**  
**South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union**

5. 20 July 1991 TO: T Ntaopane The branch indicating our non availability on the 22/7/91
6. 22 July 1991 TO: W Dichaba T Ntaopane noting with regret that we are not available on the 22/7/91 and indicating that he awaits the branch with further dates.
7. 29 July 1991 TO: W Dichaba T Ntaopane advising Willie Dichaba to convene the enquiry within (4)four days failing which they will refer matter to the NEC.
8. 1 August 1991 TO: T Ntaopane The branch reminding T Ntaopane that he asked for postponement after a date was agreed. The branch further inform them that they will communicate a date in due course.
9. 13 August 1991 TO: Fadal and T Ntaopane Branch convening an enquiry for the 17 August 1991 at 14H00 H B Centre
10. 14 August 1991 TO: JHB Branch Tshidiso advising us that in their opinion, time has lapsed and that the NEC is well placed to hear the matter and as such his client MAHMOOD FADAL will not come or attend ,the re-scheduled enquiry.
11. 15 August 1991 TO: T Ntaopane The branch reminded him of our fax dated 1 August 1991 . Also that it is the BEC's constitutional right to run the branch including disciplinary matters. The branch warned them that if they will not be present in the enquiry - we will proceed.



12. 15 August 1991 TO: JHB Branch T Ntaopane confirming that they have already reffered the matter to the NEC and further requesting the JHB Branch to hold the enquiry in abeyance until the NEC rules .

CONCLUSION

On the 17 August 1991 the branch was well represented and present only to find that comrade Mahomood Fadal and his representative did not pitch up.

Given the above background , I can recommend to the BEC that comrade Fadal was afforded ample opportunity to give side of the story and to be represented, of which he did not make use of.

I recommend that he be found guilty as charged and that the BEC should determine an appropriate penalty.

F. RASELESO

All provision of the constitution were followed relating to calling the enquiry.

Comrade Raseleso ( shop -stewards at Gallo - A.R.M. Steeldale ) the enquiry was scheduled for the 17 August 1991 at 15H30 H B Centre . The notice was sent to him on the 13 August 1991.

Comrade ( Raseleso ) telephoned the office to inform us that he has found the notice of the enquiry and he phoned to say two things :-

1. He is tearing that piece of paper ( notice )
2. We should not expect him at that meeting.

CONCLUSION

On the date of the enquiry , the branch was fully represented at the time and

comrade Francis Raseleso did not pitch up.

I can only recommend that he also be found guilty and the BEC decide an appropriate penalty.

# SACCAWU

## JOHANNESBURG BRANCH

P.O. Box 10952  
Johannesburg  
2000  
Telephone: (011) 402-1840/9

142 Kerk Street  
Johannesburg  
2001

-1-

**TO: B.E.C**  
**C/O O. BEARERS**  
**GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE**

**FM: N. MOKOENA**  
**DD: 91/08/23**

### REPORT ON COMPLAINT BY GENUINE PARTS MEMBERS

The matter/ complaint was brought to the attention of the O/B on the 4/6/91 by comrade Elias and Eddie Mosia ex-employees of Genuine parts.

I am not going to deal with the history of the dispute ,but save to say that they raised this complaint because they were not happy the way the union handled their case.

They were dismissed together with three others in 1989 and the matter was referred by the comrades to Park Chambers.

According to them it was handled by Comrade Ntsiki, Vusi Shabangu and Thabo Mashiloane, at some point Mr Legodi (Lawyer) was involved. All attempts by the comrades mentioned were in vain . In 1991 J. Pimpi also became involved , leading <sup>to</sup> a point where Thabo was arrested. Finally the matter was out of time with members out in the street.

I obtained some advices including legal opinion regarding re-opening the matter again. I requested Sue to write to the company to support condonation and further wrote to the Industrial Council to grant condonation and that the matter be re-opened.

Both the employer and the Industrial Council responded negatively . I must mention that there will be no legal redress on this issue. I telephone the

-2-

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE BRANCH SECRETARY  
South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union

company to demand a meeting, which was agreed to after lengthy persuasions and diplomatic talks with the company' consultants (Mr Bunce)

The only alternative opened to us was to refer the matter to an Independent third party . it is also important to mention that this route is only possible if we are really strong on the shopfloor at Genuine parts, the difficulty is that we don't have members any longer.

The meeting took place between the union and the company consultant - wherein we proposed a number of alternatives ranging from re-instatement/ re-employment, arbitration etc. all were rejected.

As a last resort we entered into discussion with them on the financial settlement. The union, mandated by the dismissed employees have made proposals, and we are awaiting response from the company.

I hereby submit that this was the best we could do under these adverse conditions.

**REGARDS**



**N. MOKOENA**

# THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. COMPLAINANT : FREDDY MATSHABA

He complains about the Education Department . The beginners classes are not attended to. Officials are getting paid but are not doing their duties. He complained for the past 3 months. He was there one holding the classes. In the absence of the educators officials are calling meetings and do not attend and Freddy had to be a transformer.

RECOMMENDATION :

The Branch Secretary to send a memorandum to all officials and education department to correct this inefficiency and improvement must be monitored with reports. Should there be no improvement the official concern must be called to a disciplinary investigating committee for them to decide on action.

2. COMPLAINANT : SAFARI INTERNATIONAL S/S - 22/06/91

They are complaining about Bethuel Mdakane and 2 other shopstewards who conives with management. This is dividing the workers and causes a lot of dismissals. The official does not honour appointments with shopstewards and management.

RECOMMENDATION :

A follow-up be made by the committee with the shopstewards and official Bethuel. Provement be checked and this be treated as the recommendation in Freddy's case.

3. COMPLAINANT : JACKY MASUKU

He is complaining about Sidwell Magam who is incooperative and non commital attitude when approached about the progress of cases e.g. MARISTAN HOTEL.

RECOMMENDATION :

The committee to made a follow-up with the Office-bearers and Jacky on this matter and to check progress or if there was a solution to the matter.

1. COMPLAINANT : O.K. BAZAARS S/S COMMITTEE  
ROSEBANK - M. MSIMANGO S/S

They are complaining about Mpho Mjeza who refused to attend a Disciplinary Hearing and pretended not to know anything about the case at O.K. Bazaars Rosebank allocated to her.

RECOMMENDATION :

This to be referred to Disciplinary Investigating Committee for their consideration or is there violation of the Code of Conduct. A letter be sent to O.K. Shopsteward Committee telling them that the matter is getting attention.

5. COMPLAINANT : NORMAN MOKOENA - CHAIRPERSON

He is complaining about the late coming of officials (Jhb) at the branch. Letters were sent out to officials who were late on the 18/03/91 to state the reasons for their late coming. Some responded and some not.

RECOMMENDATION :

The disciplinary Investigating Committee to check the validity of the response and also those who did not respond.

6. COMPLAINANT : AMREL INTERIM COMMITTEE

They are complaining about Stanley Mngomezulu who does not honour the meeting dates with management and shopstewards e.g. 10/05/91 and 14/05/91.

RECOMMENDATION :

This be referred to disciplinary Investigating Committee. Letter be sent to the workers telling them that the matter is being attended to.

7. COMPLAINANTS : BRUMA LAKE HYPERSPAR S/S : CONTACT PERSON  
LINDI - 622-4762

They are complaining about Ntsiki and Stanley for not attending to appointments. Stanley goes to the company to meet with management in the absence of the shopsteward Does not attend to disciplinary hearings after he agreed with the shopstewards and management that he will attend.

RECOMMENDATION :

The matter be referred to the disciplinary investigating committee and a letter be send to the workers informming them that the grievance is receiving attention.

7. COMPLAINANTS : G.W. FOODS - MANAGEMENT/DIRECTORS 20/5/91

They are complaining about wage negotiations with Elaine who is not attending to negotiation sessions 3 meetings. Cancellation is done 20 minutes before scheduled time or at some occassions well after the meeting time.

RECOMMENDATION :

To refer the matter to the committee and a letter be send to Elaine instincing her to rectify this. Should there not be an improvement disciplinary action should be taken. A letter be sent to the company telling them that the matter is receiving attention.

8. COMPLAINANT : MISSIE S/S - GILL & RAMSDEN

Complaining about Elaine who did not attend negotiations not for the first time because one shopsteward Missie was late and she apologised and said she will come back but never did so. She failed to attend another meeting where there was a dispute.

RECOMMENDATION :

The committee to investigate with the parties and inform the workers that the matter is attended to by the structures.

9. COMPLAINANT : DUNCAN T. DANISA - LITTLE SWIZELAND HOTEL

He is complaining about his dismissal on the 16/02/91.

RECOMMENDATION :

Matter was referred to Joseph Pimpi by Pat Appolis on the 13/03/91. Joseph Pimpi to respond.

10.

COMPLAINANT : LEGAL UNIT

Comrade W. Hlabisa of Refrigeration Agencies file and progress on his case handled by Stanley is not known. This matter was referred to Negotiations Co-ordinator.

RECOMMENDATION

The unit co-ordinator to respond on the letter to the B.E.C.



# SACCAWU

## JOHANNESBURG BRANCH

P.O. Box 10952  
Johannesburg  
2000  
Telephone: (011) 402-1840/9

142 Kerk Street  
Johannesburg  
2001

FAX 402 1840

YOUR REF : B.E.C.  
OUR REF : N. MOKOENA  
DATE : 30 AUGUST 1991

B.E.C.  
JOHANNESBURG BRANCH  
JOHANNESBURG  
2001

Comrades

RE: REPORT ON SPECIAL STAFF MEETING

Urgent special meeting to deal with systematizing the official work/job in order to improve the quality of service we rendering to our members , secondly to discuss ways and means of avoiding retrenchment in the Branch.

The meeting was well attend by officials . I suppose officials are taking this issue very seriously , I say so because of the input from officials in the meeting which addressed the following points :\_

1. DISCIPLINARY

- (a) Officials must honour appointments with management and members.
- (b) Officials must work as hard as they can.
- (c) Unit meetings are extremely important.
- (d) Closer co-operation between units must take place; particularly organising ; negotiation ; administration and legal unit.
- (e) There must be a cohesive programme , store visit in the morning by ALL Officials.

2/.....

ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE BRANCH SECRETARY  
South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union

- (f) The must be a regular and constant visit by our administration staff to Head Office to check and update our membership.

Regards