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CO-OP EVALUATION^{3 JUNI 1987}

- OCCZIM - POWER TO THE BASE
- CO-OPS IN MOZAMBIQUE
- READERS' LETTERS



EDITORIAL

Our focus in this issue of WORKTEAM is Co-op Evaluation. The process of self-evaluation by a co-operative is vitally important, but it can sometimes be difficult to do. We hope that this article will help different co-operatives to organise evaluation meetings. Every co-op needs to look critically at its own progress and aims from time to time.

In some ways each issue of WORKTEAM has this task of evaluation as a connecting thread. In our first issues we looked at problems and directions of the workers co-operatives movement and promised to keep questioning the direction and methods of organisation in the light of experience.

Writings from groups reflect this theme. Readers have written about their problems and requested help from others in finding solutions. We are pleased that WORKTEAM can act as a meeting place in this way, and we will work to make sure that questions and problems do receive answers.

We salute the OCCZIM membership for the changes made in that organisation. As we caution in our article this should not be spoken of as a great triumph. It must be seen as the logical and necessary extension of the organisation's democratic base. The new executive is bound to find problems that it did not anticipate that will make its work even harder. We wish them strength and the clarity born of democratic structures.

Little is known outside Mozambique about that country's dynamic co-operative movement. The article in these pages tells a little about its history and the problems it faces.

WORKTEAM is also published in Setswana. We are unable to publish it in all the languages of this region, but will continue to write in an English that will allow easy translation in groups. We urge readers to discuss these articles with co-op members who are not able to read them.



WORKTEAM is a magazine for production co-operatives throughout Southern Africa. Some articles are written by co-operative members. All deal in some way with the daily work and learning of the worker co-operative movement.

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WOODWORKERS CO-OP

PROBLEMS AND LESSONS (Part 2)

In the first issue of Workteam we published the first part of an interview about the Woodworkers Co-op which operated in Johannesburg between 1979 and 1985. We publish the second part below, but for readers who did not get Workteam I, we first summarise some of the problems that the co-op faced, which were discussed in part one.

These included:

1. No division of labour. It was Woodworkers' policy that each member should learn how to do every job.

Results: Much time was wasted. Everyone had to discuss every point before a decision was reached. The training process was very slow. Unskilled members had to learn a lot of different skills at once. If a skilled worker left it was a big blow to the co-op because it took a long time to retrain someone to replace him. The work process was inefficient. The main problem areas were bookkeeping and giving quotes to customers. Costing new furniture designs was also difficult.

2. Each item was individually designed for the customer. There was no production line or batch production.

Results: The work went slowly. Each order meant a new design. However the price had to compete with mass produced furniture from other factories. As a result very little money was earned.

3. Shortage of money. Craft type work doesn't bring in enough money. The Woodworkers needed to increase production through division of

labour and standardising design.

Results: Members became discouraged and they left the co-op.

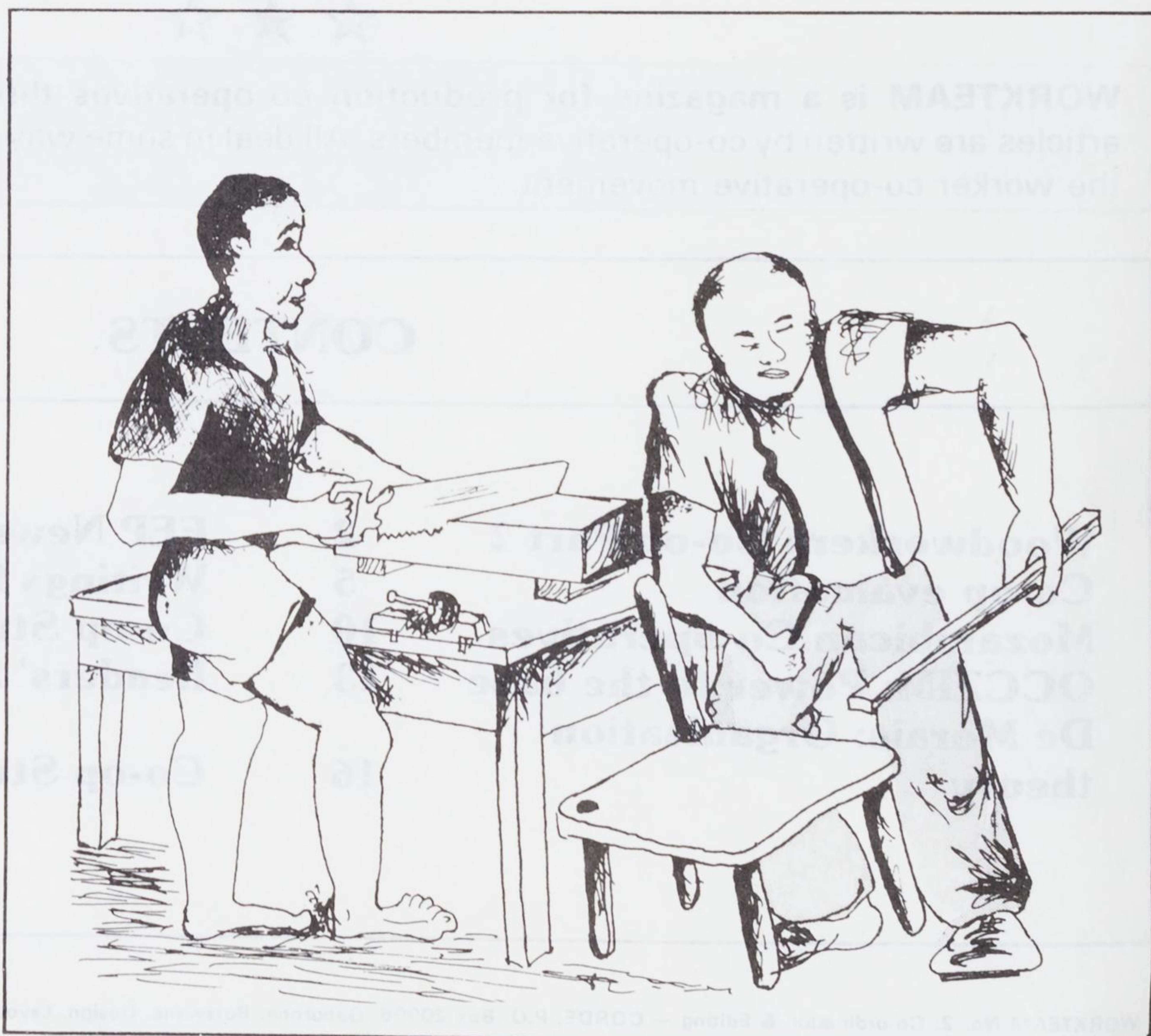
4. Very little discipline at work. The Woodworkers relied on encouragement and discussion to get the work done.

Results: Decisions were often not followed through. Work hours were lost from people coming late. Some workers did not work as hard as others.

5. Some skilled workers became frustrated. They felt that they were carrying the co-op, yet they earned very little money.

Results: Skilled workers became impatient and criticised unskilled workers in an unconstructive way. This caused tension which resulted in some people leaving the co-op.

6. Some skilled workers left the co-op to join the Trade



Union movement or other organisations. The members who were left did not have enough training and found it difficult to continue.

The Woodworkers now take up the story once again. Workteam asked them about costing:

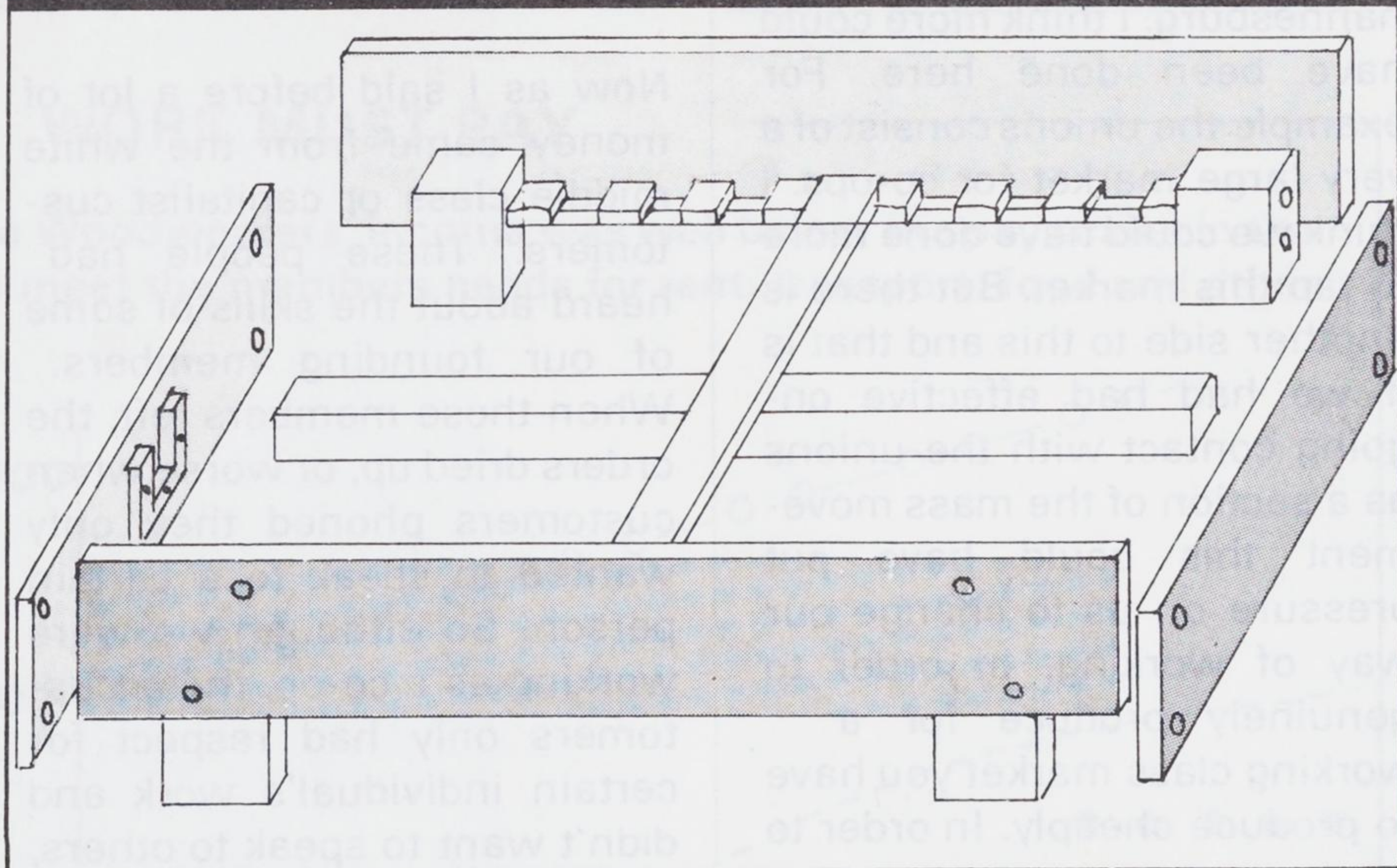
Workteam: Can we get back to money, how did you cost your items — how did you decide what price they should be?

Woodworkers: Each thing that we made, we first did a quote. We worked out how much the materials cost. We then worked out how many hours we take to make it. We charged different rates for different people. For example in 1981, workers organizations were charged R3,50 per hour and capitalists up to R10 per hour. Now I think that we could have charged the richer customers much more. We would have still been competitive and had extra money for the co-op.

Workteam: What about money for machinery and expansion?

Woodworkers: That is a good question. This money was meant to be in the hourly rate. In fact we fell very short here and did not add enough extra money (a surplus) for future expansion. So what would happen is that if, let us say, a planer broke we would pop out money to pay for it. Then some of us went short at the end of the month in our wages. It is essential that co-operatives always add an amount on to the materials and labour time — this money is used to maintain

DIVISION OF LABOUR/PRODUCTION LINE WORK To compete with other factories the Woodworkers Co-op needed to introduce a division of labour and make furniture in large batches



machinery and a fund for future expansion.

Workteam: What about other co-operatives and struggles, did you support these financially?

Woodworkers: Yes we did. We took the job of helping other co-operatives very seriously. Sometimes we took days and days off work to sit in meetings with other co-operative workers. Once we sent two members for two weeks to another carpentry co-op in the Transkei. In the case of the Wilson Rowntree boycott and the red meat boycott, we sent those workers small sums of money. We also sent representatives from the co-op to sit on the boycott committees. This was very good and it was what we aimed to do. But I think in the case of money we should have done this in a more disciplined way.

I think that it would have been

better if we had put aside a sum of money each month for helping other co-ops and workers' struggles. It could have been a percentage of our surplus. In this way we would have avoided long discussions about how much money we could spare.

Workteam: Did you find that you got help in return, for example from the unions or other co-ops?

Woodworkers: No, we got very little help from other organizations. This was a big problem. In the case of other co-ops, they were often very weak and not well established so there was little chance of this.

Although I think we could have made attempts to have more regular contact — for example a 6 monthly meeting. I think because of the cost of such meetings we should have raised outside funding for such meetings. In this way we could have helped to set up more

permanent co-ordinating structures for co-operatives.

With the trade unions — well many of the unions are in Johannesburg. I think more could have been done here. For example the unions consist of a very large market for co-ops. I think we could have done more to tap this market. But there is another side to this and that is if we had had effective ongoing contact with the unions as a section of the mass movement this could have put pressure on us to change our way of working. In order to genuinely produce for a working class market you have to produce cheaply. In order to produce cheaply you have to mass produce. With more contact we might also have got support for the times when we were having very serious problems.

Workteam: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Woodworkers: Well just to conclude there are a few things. Firstly as we have seen our principles were not all correct. The most serious mistake was not to have mass production and a division of labour.

Secondly we had a principle that the co-op should not take any outside funding without paying it back. Now, I think this is correct, as it puts an important pressure on you to produce effectively. But I think it is wrong as regards training. I think that co-ops should be able to take grants and gifts of money in order to get training for their members — without correct training you will never be able to produce effectively. If you as the co-op have to pay for

this, it takes a lot of money away from other things.

Thirdly, we never advertised our products. All our orders came through word of mouth.

Now as I said before a lot of money came from the white middle class or capitalist customers. These people had heard about the skills of some of our founding members. When those members left, the orders dried up, or worse when customers phoned they only wanted to speak to a certain person. So although we were working as a co-op, those customers only had respect for certain individual's work and didn't want to speak to others, especially black members.

I think the lesson of this is to advertise, whether through pamphlets or through the mass organisations. In this way you overcome the problem of a member leaving and taking away not only skills but a section of the market. Customers also start to identify with the co-op's name — the Woodworkers, rather than an individual member.

Lastly, we have to understand that co-ops are often weak in terms of money when you compare them to other firms. I think that when we build co-ops we have to give a lot of attention to linking co-ops to each other. I spoke of this above. But I also mean production links. For example we made wooden furniture, but we could have used wood and metal. A lot of furniture today has metal frames. We could have also done some upholstery. Here there is space for an upholstery co-op and a metal co-op to link up with the

woodworking co-ops. By doing this we can provide each other with cheap, reliable inputs.

I think I have also spoken about the importance of linking up with the mass movement, both in terms of the market and in terms of being in touch with the day to day problems and needs of workers.

Post script:

The Woodworkers co-operative was finally closed in 1985 after 2 years of both bad production and worsening personal relations. In 1984 an attempt was made to revive the co-op and 15 fired union workers joined it. They were from a carpentry factory and so had a lot of skills amongst them. But a co-op needs more than skills.

The old wood workers who remained started to act like bosses, money was stolen and a general state of bad relations developed. The reasons for this behaviour and the decline of the co-op lie in its past. We can not simply blame the people who remained. They had to cope with the problems that came from before.

Incorrect principles can trap us!

Reading the history of the Woodworkers one can see that they tried hard to stick to democratic methods. They also tried to avoid a division of labour and paid members according to their needs rather than their skills.

Their lack of understanding of how to apply democracy to production organisation led directly to the co-op's collapse. They stuck to impressive sounding

principles but failed to pay enough attention to how these policies affected their members.

We should learn from this

experience. There are no principles so important that they cannot be discussed and re-evaluated. The Woodworkers principles did not lead to an

efficient and effective co-op and should have been changed by the members to give the co-op more chance of success. ■

WORK MUST PAY

The table below shows how the Woodworkers' income was well below the pay scales in the industry. It was also too low to meet the members needs for rent, transport, food and other expenses in the city.

KEY

Minimum pay to an apprentice in the industry

○ ○ — ○ ○ — ○ ○

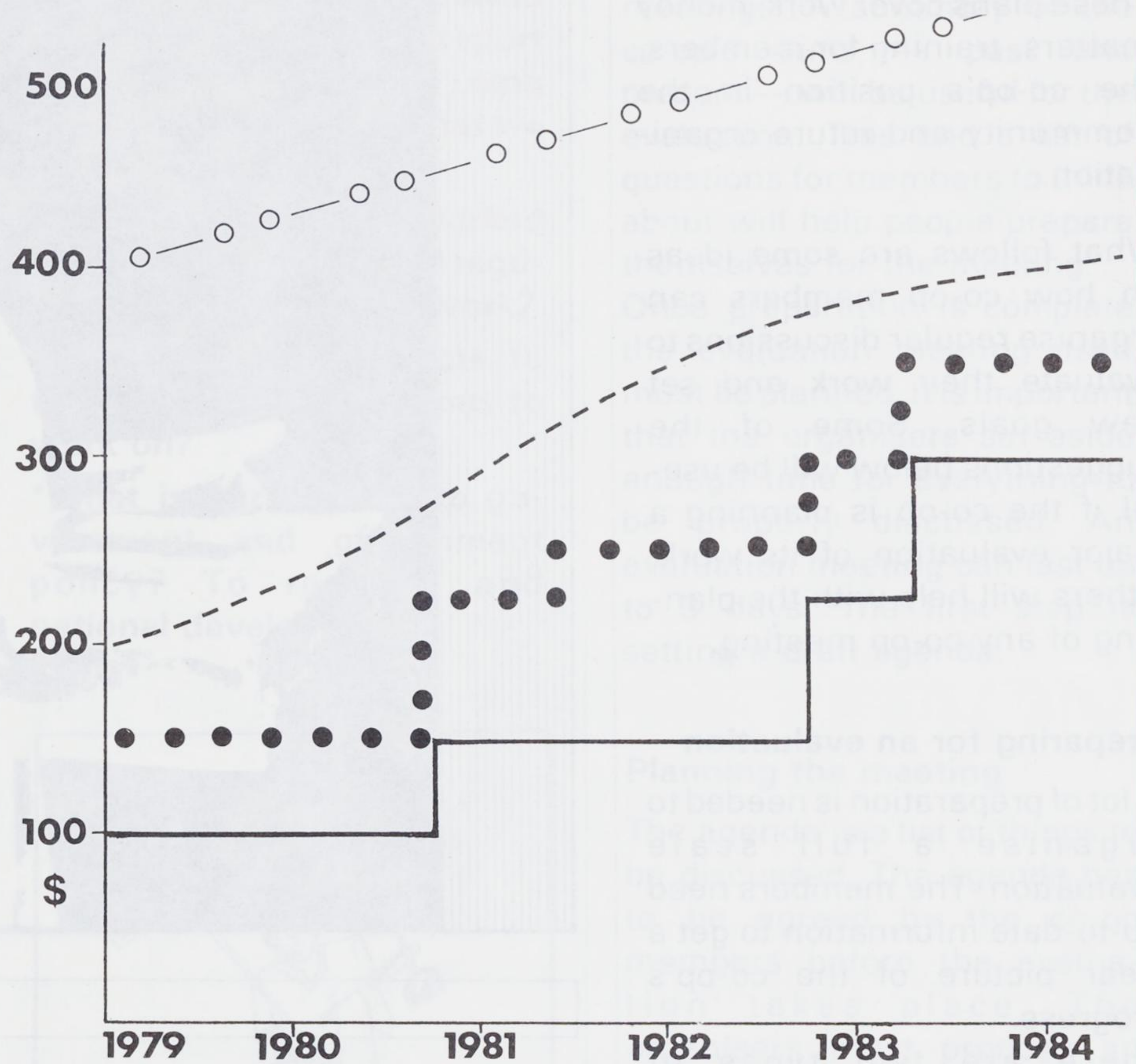
Shows HEL (Household effective level in Johannesburg).

Shows Woodworkers pay to a member with three dependents.

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Shows Woodworkers pay to a single member with no dependents

—————



FOCUS

CO-OP EVALUATION

Lessons from the past — plans for the future

How often do your members meet to discuss work of the co-op? Do these discussions evaluate the way members work together and analyse the productivity of the co-op? Have you sat down to discuss the direction of the co-op?

An evaluation is when members meet to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the co-op. They talk about progress in organisation and production and the attitudes of group members. Once members have learnt the lessons of the past they can make stronger and more accurate plans for the future. These plans cover work, money matters, training for members, the co-op's position in the community and future organisation.

What follows are some ideas on how co-op members can organise regular discussions to evaluate their work and set new goals. Some of the suggestions below will be useful if the co-op is planning a major evaluation of its work. Others will help with the planning of any co-op meeting.

Preparing for an evaluation

A lot of preparation is needed to organise a full scale evaluation. The members need up-to-date information to get a clear picture of the co-op's progress.

There are two types of information that the co-op needs:

1. Facts and figures

***What production targets did the co-op set for the year?**

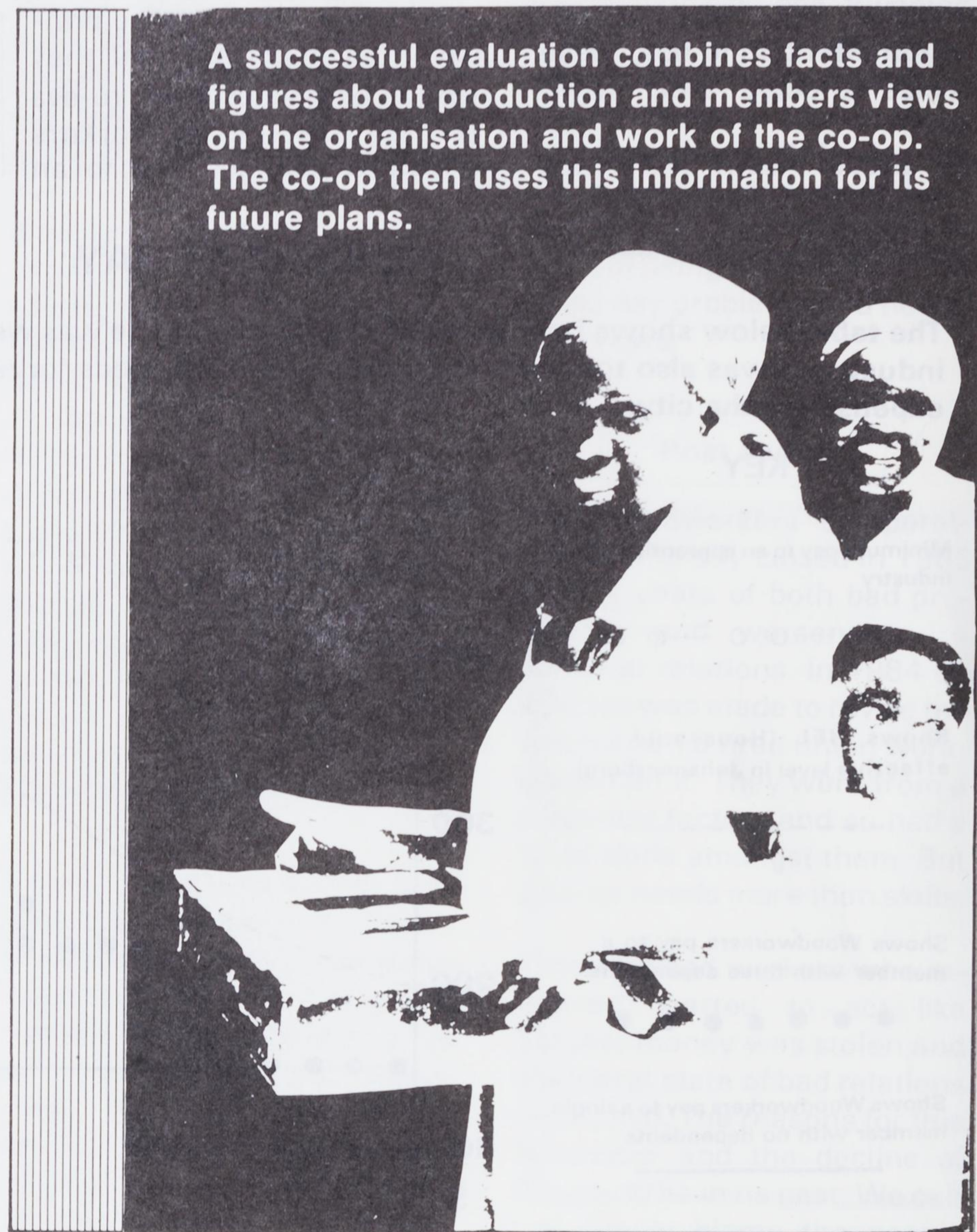
***Did the co-op meet these targets? What problems were there?**

***Did the co-op make a profit or a loss?**

***What did the members earn?**

***What aid did the co-op receive? Was this a grant or a loan?**

***What tools, equipment, land**



A successful evaluation combines facts and figures about production and members views on the organisation and work of the co-op. The co-op then uses this information for its future plans.

and buildings does the co-op own?

***What tools, equipment, are needed to improve production or make the work more efficient and easier?**

The treasurer, the secretary and the leaders of production departments should have most of this information in their records.

The aim of the evaluation is to put all this factual information together so that all the members can discuss it and see

what the co-op's production strengths and weaknesses are.

2. Members' views on the organisation and work of the co-op

In a co-op members are concerned about many things. They are concerned firstly about prosperity and productivity, but things like the way members work together, how decisions are made and the education and development of the membership are also important.

Every single member has ideas about these issues so the simplest way to get this information is to bring the members together so they can speak out. To encourage the full participation of each member the committee should ask people to think about the issues before the meeting.

Each co-op will have its own priorities, but some issues which could be discussed include:

***What does working in a co-op mean to me?**

***What can be changed in our co-op?**

***Are we working well together? Is there unity among the members?**

***Have training courses helped us? Is our training programme well planned?**

***Am I learning new skills? Do I participate in decision making?**

***Do all the other members participate in co-op meetings? Do they contribute to decisions?**

***Is the work fairly divided among the members? Does everyone understand the work they do?**

***Do members work equally? Is there good discipline at work?**

***What do I think about the ways we have disciplined members recently? What changes can there be?**

***How is the co-op seen in our community?**

***Have we done anything to help the community, or tell them about our way of working? What can we do to improve our links with the**

community outside the co-op?

***Is there place for new members? How will we choose them?**

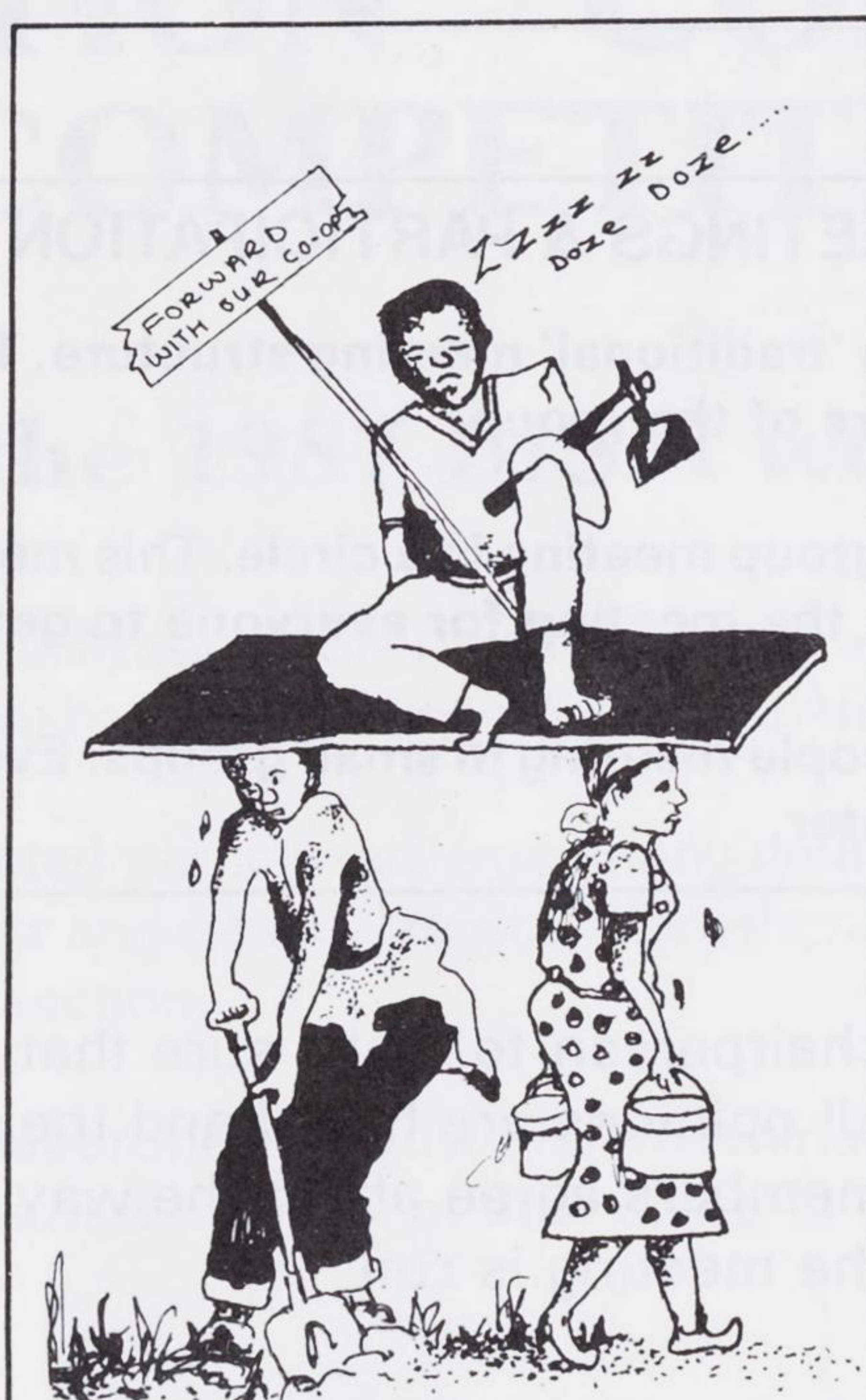
***Have we built links with other co-ops and groups? Are we strengthening the organisation of all production co-operatives?**

***If funding has been received what have we done to report to the donor? Are we using the money in the way that we have planned?**

***Has the committee worked efficiently? Do they give regular reports about their work?**

***Are there new projects to take up, or new directions to work on?**

***What is our attitude to government and government policy? To regional and national development?**



Is the work fairly divided among the members? Or do hard working members 'carry' the others.

To complete the preparation for the evaluation it may be necessary to go back and look at the early aims of the co-op which were agreed when it was formed. These aims will be set out in the co-op's constitution. It is possible that the co-op's aims have changed since it was formed. New aims should be found in the minutes of co-op meetings. A summary of the co-op's aims — past and present — will be useful for the evaluation. This and a list of questions for members to think about will help people prepare themselves for the meeting.

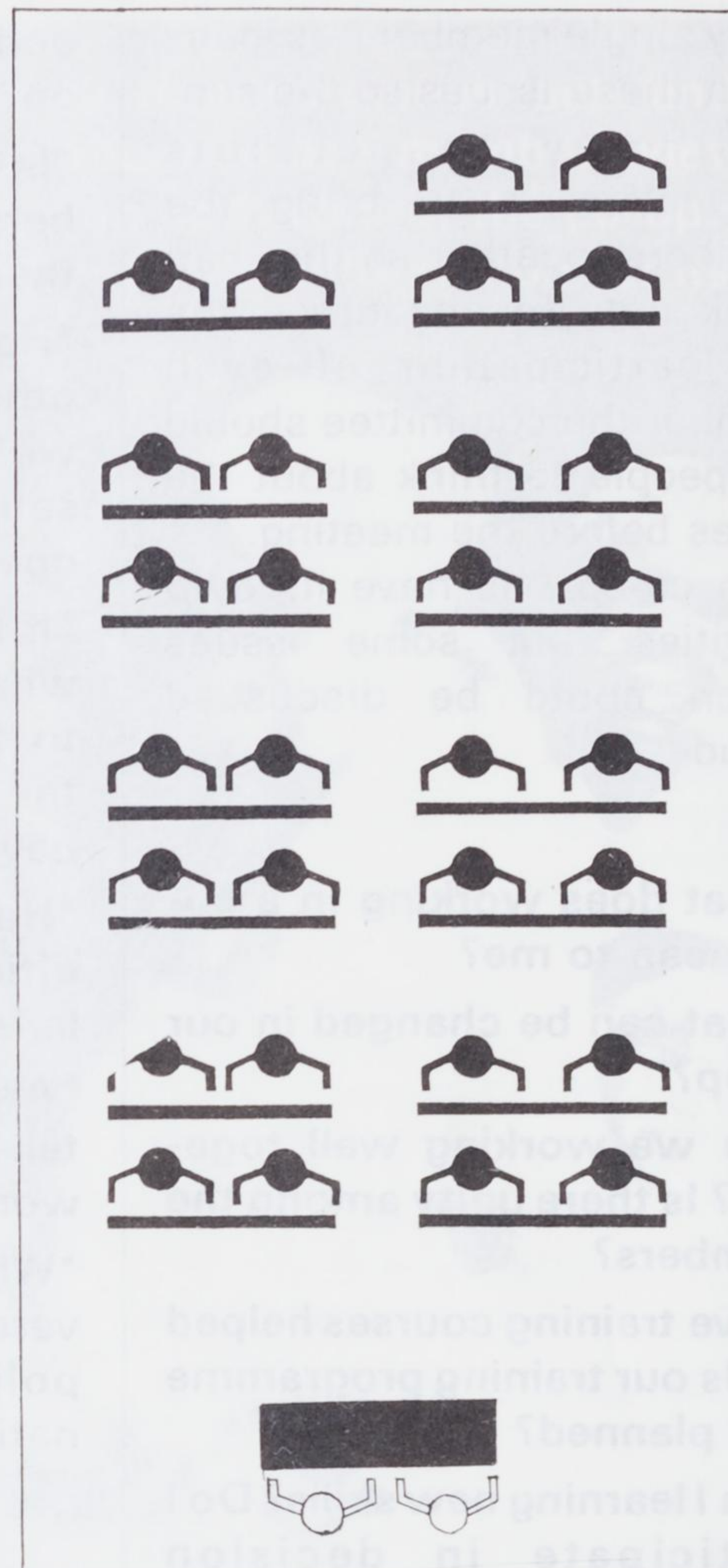
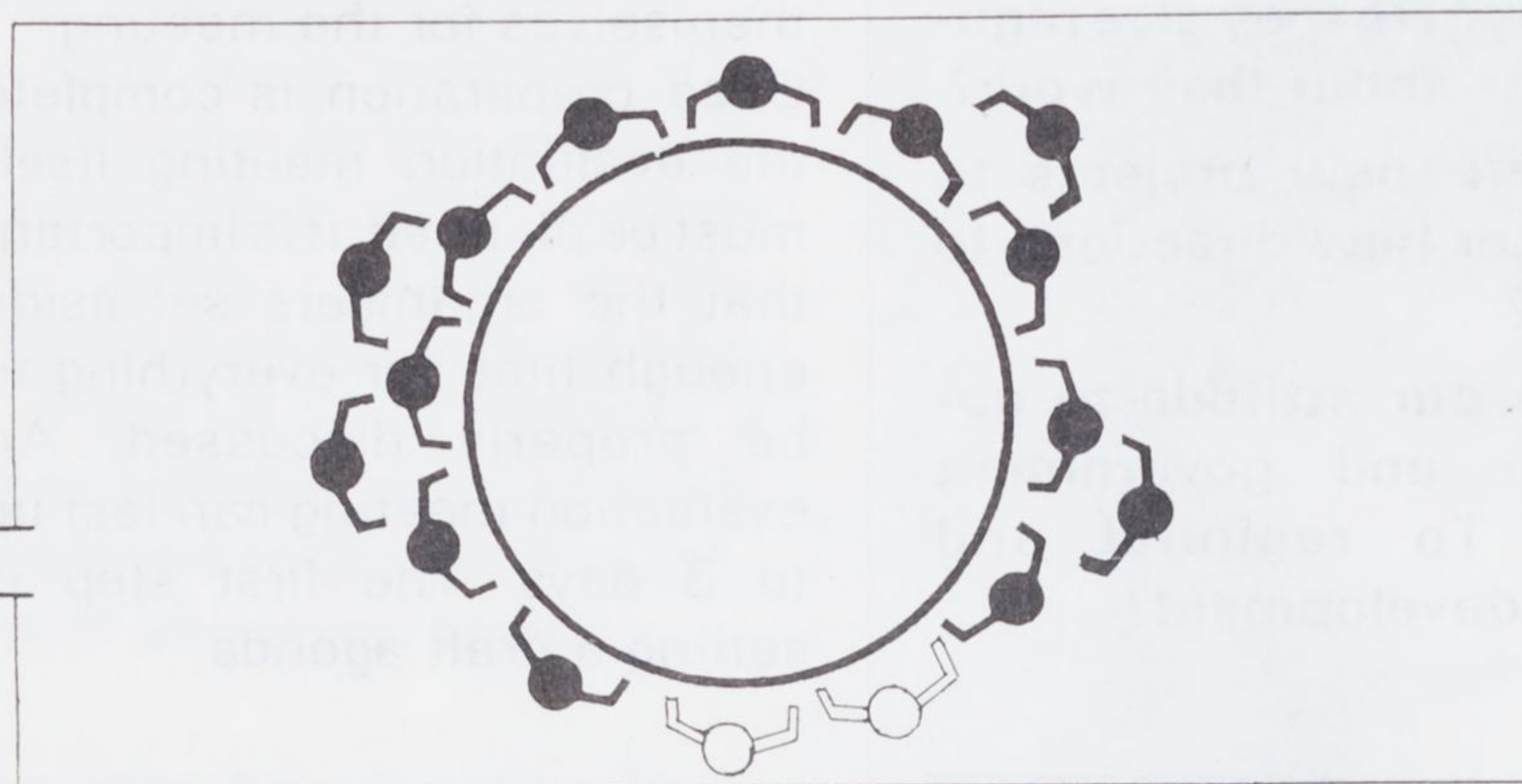
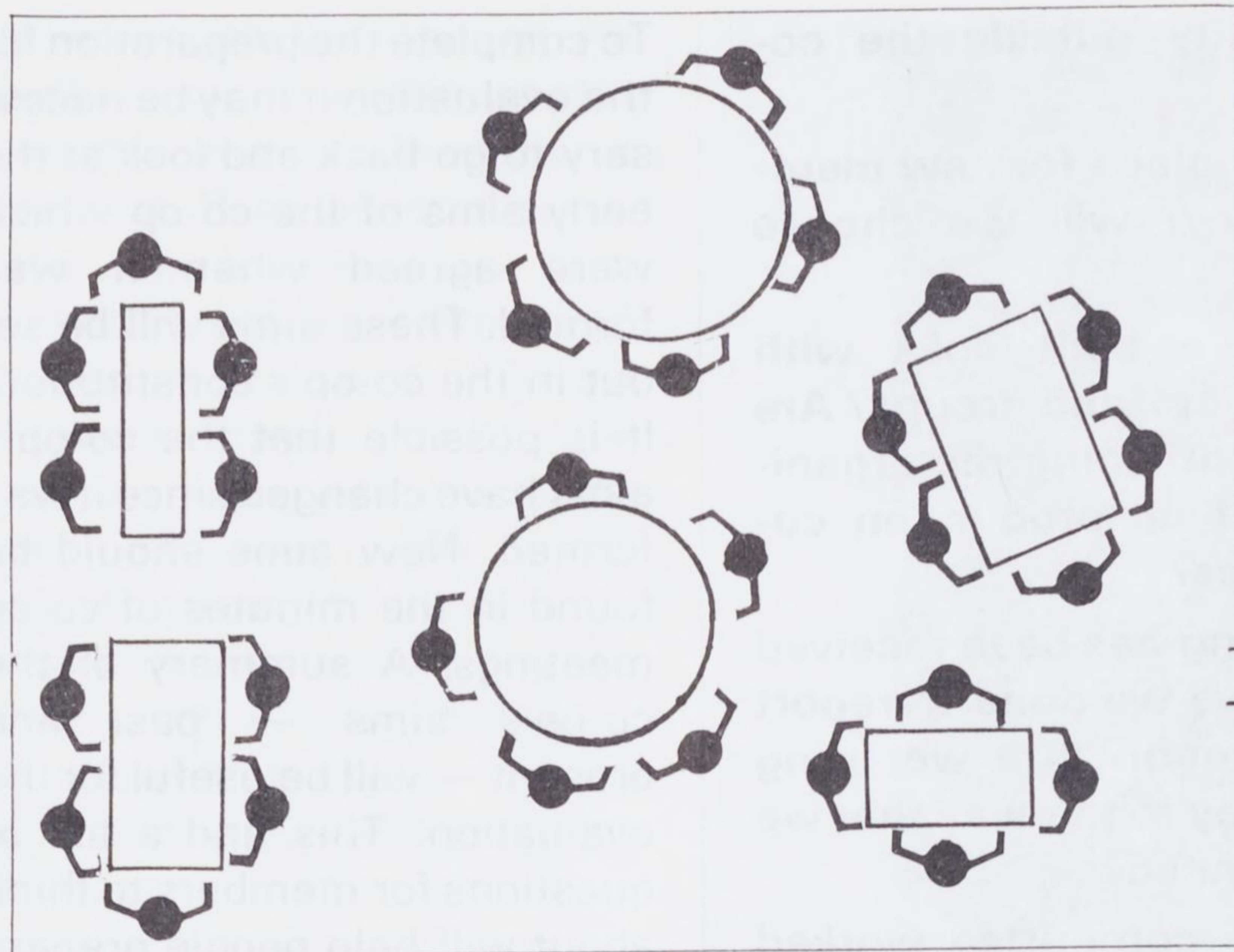
Once preparation is complete the evaluation meeting itself must be planned. It is important that the organisers set aside enough time for everything to be properly discussed. An evaluation meeting can last up to 3 days. The first step is setting a draft agenda.

Planning the meeting

The agenda is a list of things to be discussed. The agenda has to be agreed by the co-op members before the evaluation takes place. The organisers must propose an order in which things should be discussed and get agreement about a time limit for each item. They should also think of ways to bring everyone into the discussion.

The Structure of the Meeting

All meetings must have a chairperson and a secretary. If the co-op is planning a two or three day evaluation meeting it is a good idea that different members of the co-op chair different sections of the meeting.



MEETINGS & PARTICIPATION

The right hand box above shows a 'traditional' meeting structure. This type of meeting does not allow for participation from all members of the group.

The left hand box below shows a group meeting in a circle. This method allows for more participation, but there are too many people at the meeting for everyone to get a chance to speak.

The left hand box above shows people meeting in small groups. Everyone's opinions can be heard and reported back to the big group later.

The Chairperson: The job of the chairperson is to introduce the topic for discussion. S/he must try and make sure that everyone participates in the discussion and that the meeting reaches clear conclusions on each item. The chairperson may ask a member to act as a timekeeper to keep the meeting to its time schedule. It can help to have someone assisting the

chairperson to make sure that all opinions are heard and the members agree about the way the meeting is run.

The Secretary: records the main points of the discussion as well as the proposals made and decisions reached by the meeting.

There are different ways of

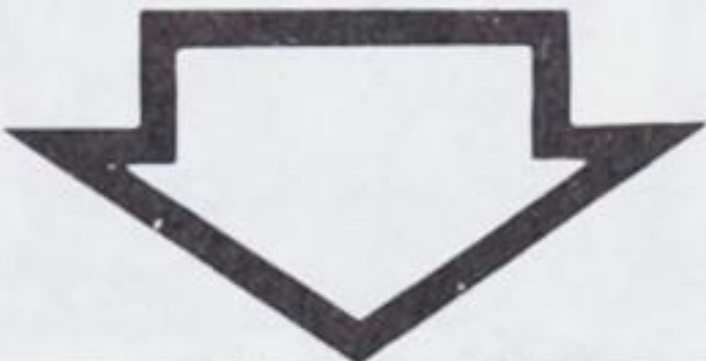
running meetings. Often everyone sits together and discusses every item on the agenda. This is not always the best way, particularly if there are a lot of people at the meeting. In this situation only a few people get a chance to speak — and the voice of the quieter members is not heard. It is often better to discuss things in small groups. This

gives everyone the chance to speak. A good sized small group could be 5 people. The small group selects one person to record the main points of the discussion. The person who records the points makes a summary and reports back the conclusions of the small group to the general meeting. The general meeting then decides

on resolutions which become the new policy of the co-op.

The aim of the evaluation is to help the co-op plan for the future. The evaluation is the foundation for those plans. This means that the minutes of the meeting must be written up to make an evaluation report. The report must be given to the

members and used by the committee and the production departments as a guide for their future work plans. If co-ops plan a major evaluation once a year they will build a detailed history of their development and in so doing they can strengthen themselves and the workers' co-operative movement.■

	Yesterday	This poem comes from ANOTHER BATTLE BEGUN — a photo essay on Zimbabwe's Collective Co-ops produced by Zimbabwe Project, Box 4111 Harare, in association with OCCZIM. WORKTEAM wants to promote co-op writers. For details see below.		Today
It was the AK	I carried		It is the Hoe	I carry
The Bazooka	I fired		The Axe	to cut, to shape
The Land-Mine	I laid		The Hammer	to hit, to build
The Mortar	I shelled		The Pick	to dig, to mould
It was war!			It is War!	The other War. Another Battle Begun.
One Battle Won.				

COMPETITION * COMPETITION
* COMPETITION

Three places at the 1987 BISM workshop to be won.

The Botswana International School of Music (BISM) was founded by a group of musicians including trumpeter Hugh Masekela. In only a few years it has become one of Southern Africa's most popular and vital institutions.

The annual workshops have attracted participants from many countries. BISM pays attention to different musical styles: traditional music, jazz and classical music. Workshops include courses in drama, dance, choir conducting as well as a children's section.

The 1987 workshop will be held in Gaborone in August 1987 and will last one week. Winners of the competition will get sponsorship for themselves or a member of their co-op to participate in the workshop.

How to enter:

Its easy. We want poems, pictures or short stories. These should tell something of co-op life and struggle. We will also accept short articles. The entries will be published in WORKTEAM

WORKTEAM has received several articles but no poems or short stories. Send your writing to WORKTEAM before the 30th April 1987 and win a place at the workshop for yourself or a fellow worker.

The Green Zones - Development in Wartime

MOZAMBICAN CO-OPERATIVES



Rural life in Mozambique has been torn apart by war as the MNR bandits attack development projects wherever possible. Severe drought followed by floods have made food production even more difficult. The agricultural potential of the country is therefore sadly lessened. But in the suburbs of the cities the people of Mozambique show with dramatic clarity what they are capable of in agricultural production.

In these areas which have been safer from attack than the countryside, there is an intensive agriculture in which every square inch of land is used. From the air one can see these cultivated areas, the 'Zonas verdas' or Green Zones ringing the grey cement cities built before Independence. The co-operative movement is best organised in these lush Green Zones — More than 10 000 co-op members have taken only seven years to make this miracle of transformation.

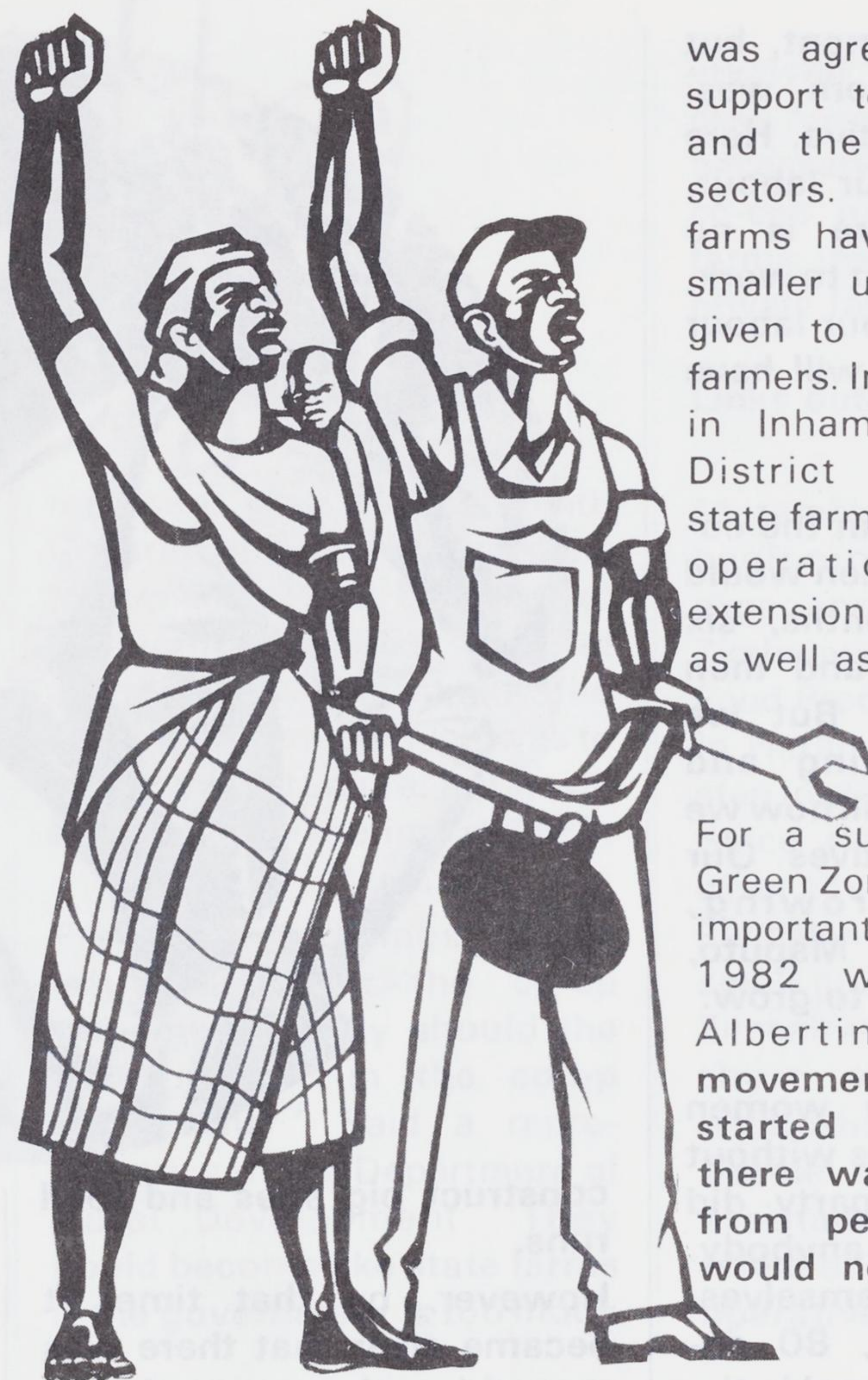
Walking through the fields is to be part of a buzz of activity. Women wearing wrap-around skirts weed and hoe, water and plant. Fields of tomatoes and onions, lettuce, carrots, broccoli, cabbage and other vegetables are lined with fruit trees.

It is no wonder that the South African backed bandits now try to sabotage this example of what can be done by an organised people. Many co-operators have to sleep in the city centre at night and return to their co-op site in the suburbs at daytime. **"These bandits never come during the day — always during the night because they dare not confront us. We women in co-operatives are very strong"**.

Defending the Green Zones co-operatives is part of Mozambique's struggle for survival. **"Why are we co-ops in Thokwe safer and freer from bandit attack than elsewhere?"** asked a co-op leader during an interview in Harare. **"Because we have armed our people to defend themselves"**. He talked of how people's militias patrolled areas at night. Still the war against the peoples initiatives goes on. Says Albertina Damao **"They distributed leaflets warning us in the co-operative movement what we will get. But we say O.K. But you will see as well what we can do with our hoes. We will carry on, cultivating and building up!"**

People make policy

In the early years after Independence people were encouraged to organise themselves into co-ops, and in urban areas some dynamizing groups tried to start communal gardens as part of a campaign of **'campo na cidade'** — bring the countryside to the city. But in truth these small encouragements are only partly responsible for the growth of the co-op movement. In fact in the years after 1979 the government



emphasized state farms over other agricultural production sectors including co-ops. Only 2% of agricultural investment went to co-operatives yet between 1977 and 1982 the number of members of producer co-operatives rose to 37 000 throughout the country. So it was really through popular initiatives that the co-op movement came to life. It was this remarkable growth and the poor results from the state farms that led Frelimo to re-assess its policies. The party's support for an independent co-op movement reflects a new flexibility and a broader change in farm policies. At the 4th Congress of Frelimo in 1983 the failure of the state farms was acknowledged and it

was agreed to give more support to the co-operatives and the family (peasant) sectors. Now many state farms have been broken into smaller units and their land given to co-ops and peasant farmers. In places like Homoine in Inhambane Province the District Co-operatives and state farms enjoy a friendly co-operation. Government extension services assist both, as well as the family sector.

Green Zone growth

For a summary of how the Green Zone developed in those important years from 1978 to 1982 we turn again to Albertina Damao: **'This movement in the Green Zones started in 1978/9. First, there was great reluctance from people because they would not get any salaries.**

They did not want to work because they were not paid. In 1979, we had only six co-operatives. By 1980, we had 24, and it was then we started to realise that the organisation under the co-operative movement was really giving some fruit to people. In 1980, we had big problems with shortages and queues in the city of Maputo, but still our men did not want to see us, the women, going to work in the co-operatives.

But when the harvest time came, the women started bringing home the tomatoes, the cabbages, onions — the men started seeing that, after all, the co-operatives were working to their benefit as well. Then they were pleased. Some of the men even came

to ask for employment, but the answer to them was: "This is a co-operative. Here we have to give our labour, our strength. There is no salary, so if you want to work, you have to give your labour and from that you will have your salary."

There is no boss in the co-operatives! Some men would work for five months, six months, one year and then they would leave. But we carried on, working and working very hard, till now we have 180 co-operatives. Our movement is growing, increasing around Maputo, and it will continue to grow.

By 1981, many women started coming to us without mobilisation. The party did not have to mobilise anybody. They came by themselves, willingly. In 1981, 80 co-operatives were formed in the months of January to March. *It was then that the party, Frelimo, saw that the movement was increasing very much and started giving all the support that they could give to the co-operative movement.*

They would give seeds, pumps, agricultural tools to help to increase production.

Apart from this direct assistance and financial support, Frelimo, also put us in contact with other voluntary aid organisations from which we have received some help. They gave us water pumps, cement and other building materials. Being in the city, we cannot just go and chop wood from the forest, but we need to



construct pig sties and fowl runs.

However, by that time, it became clear that there was something that was missing in our production mix. It was meat. We have very many butcheries in Maputo but without any meat. So there were meetings, party meetings, we would cry a bit and we would say: 'Yes, we take part in agriculture but we have no meat. There is no meat. We have fish, we have prawns, but no meat at all'.

Through the Bank for Development of Mozambique, we started getting some funds that got us in a position to start with some poultry or small animals; things that you can have around you like pigs and ducks. At the beginning the bank and the directors of the bank were very reluctant to give a loan. But the strength of our party was

behind us and they would go to the bank and they would say: "Why are you so worried? We trust our peasants. They are going to pay back what they owe to you."

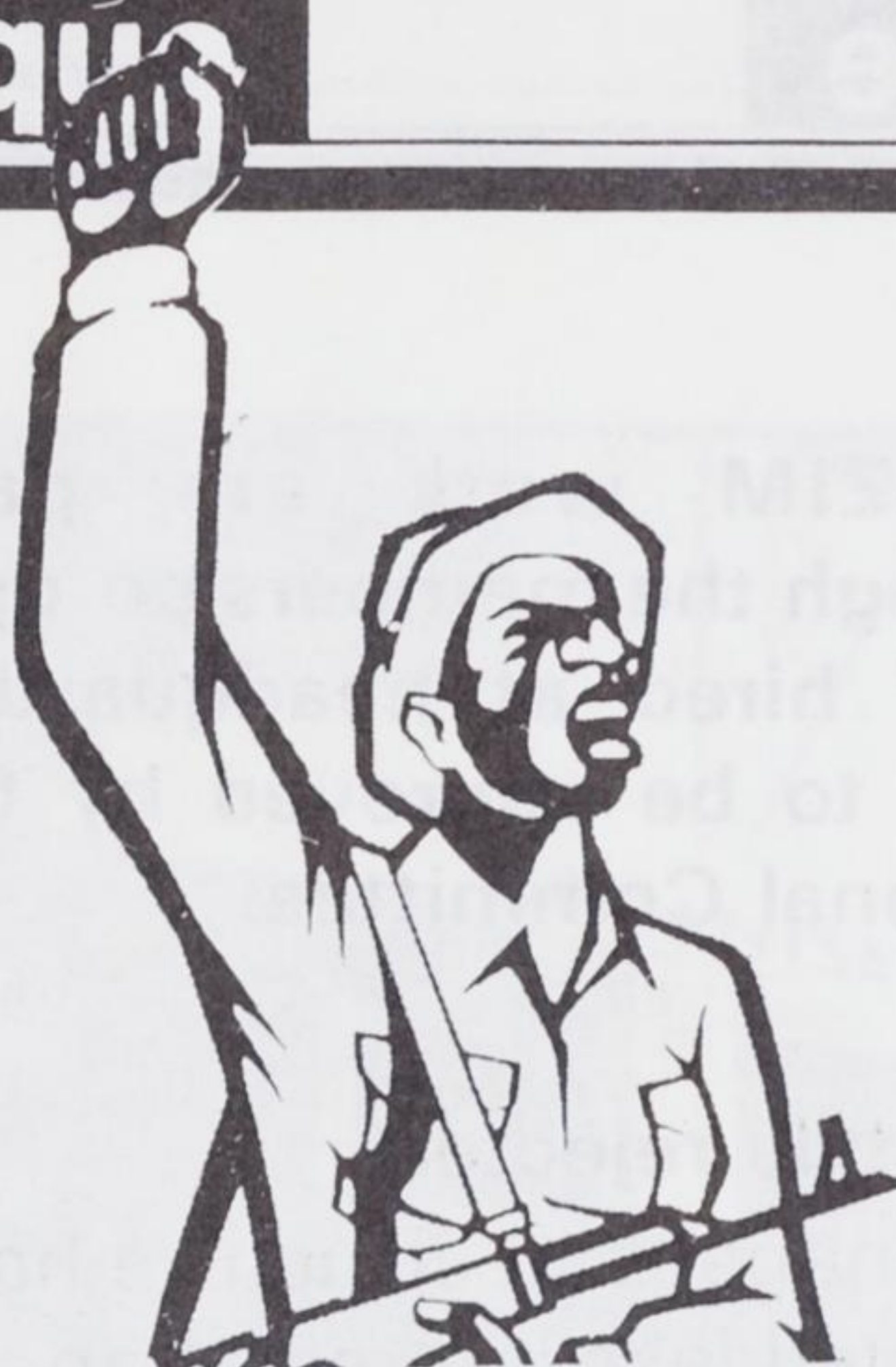
When we started to raise the pigs, people around us started coming to ask for employment and then even more men came to ask for employment. We still have problems with our men, they seem not to be interested, but when the end of the month comes, they always ask: "So what has happened? Haven't you got your distribution yet?"

Albertina's remarks about men's attitudes are backed up by the membership figures. A striking aspect of Maputo's Green Zones is the leadership and presence of women. 95%

of the Maputo Green Zones membership is women and they speak for the co-op movement there, unlike in other areas where men are co-op spokespeople.

Links between the Co-operatives

In August, 1982 the Co-operatives around Maputo formed the General Union of the Maputo City Co-operatives. This had several departments: Commerce, Animal Husbandry, Production, Accountancy, Transport, Social Services. The Union established creches and a training centre. In January 1983 the General Union created regional unions in order to decentralize, and so pay attention to solving the different local problems. At the moment the Mozambican co-op movement is trying to set up a national structure to



represent their interests with Government and enable co-ops to help each other. The death of President Samora Machel caused them to postpone the national meeting which was to set up this structure, but it will still be held sometime in 1987.

Frelimo welcomes these initiatives from the co-op movement. **"Why should the government run the co-op movement?"** Said a representative of the Department of Rural Development **"They could become like state farms if the government is too much**

involved". The government does however try to provide the necessary support services, for co-ops just as for the state farms, the family sector and the private farms.

Links outside Mozambique

Mozambican co-operators are beginning to share their experiences with co-ops from Zimbabwe. The meeting of Food Production Co-operatives in Harare in 1985 was a first step in starting exchange visits. Since then Mozambican Co-operators have visited Zimbabwe several times in small groups. They learn from Zimbabwe Co-ops and share their own training and organising skills. (Thanks to Carole Collins of AFSC for assistance. Also to conference of Food Production Co-operatives).

OCCZIM POWER TO THE BASE

(Information in this article comes from Vanguard, Zimbabwe's Co-operative Newspaper)

At the end of 1986 the Organisation of Collective Co-operatives in Zimbabwe (OCCZIM) held its second Annual General Meeting. (The first AGM was held early in 1985 following the founding conference of September, 1983).

The second AGM brought huge changes to OCCZIM. The previous Executive was dismissed in a massive show of no-confidence. Not one member was re-elected to the new executive. But the most important feature of the AGM was the acceptance of new structures for OCCZIM. This should enable the organisation to work efficiently and make sure that the executive committee is controlled by the

membership.

The new structures

The new OCCZIM structures have made the controlling bodies of the organisation fully representative for the first time. The National Committee is made up of representatives chosen by each of the movement's 29 District Unions. This National Committee is to meet three or four times a year and its

decisions will be binding on the Executive Committee. This changes the previous practice which saw National Committee Meetings happening once a year at the most, and where the National Committee had advisory powers only. The manner of choosing the Executive Committee has also changed. The new Executive has one delegate sent by each of the eight Provincial Committee (which represent the District Unions in their areas) and one delegate from each of OCCZIM's four sectors: Agriculture, Education, Commercial and Industrial. Only three members are chosen by the AGM. These are the chairperson, the general secretary and the treasurer. Each province nominates candidates for these posts. The Executive Committee will meet monthly.

This is completely different from the way the previous Executives were chosen. Before, all members of the executive were elected at the AGM. Although this might seem to be a good way of electing an executive, in practice it has weaknesses. Firstly those elected may not represent all sections of the co-op movement, and therefore can easily lose touch with some sections. Secondly it is difficult for the executive to be controlled fully, because the people who have appointed it only meet once a year at the AGM.

Several other changes were made. For instance members of societies can now call general meetings. Subsistence allowances when on

OCCZIM work are paid through the members co-ops. Staff hired at headquarters have to be approved by the National Committee.

Old style rejected

The changes in structure have attracted less interest than the rejection of the previous Executive Committee. Complaints against it range from inefficiency and maladministration to outright corruption.

Some Executive members did not belong to functioning co-operatives. One had been dismissed from his co-op for corruption and abuse of powers, yet clung to his post in OCCZIM. There was dissatisfaction at overseas trips undertaken to build links with other co-operative movements. These "could best be described as shopping sprees". Meetings could only be held after strong pressure from other co-operators. There was organisational chaos at the headquarters as well as poor financial management and bureaucracy from an unnecessarily big staff. Very little information went from headquarters to the co-operatives.

There were charges of favouritism and misuse of property like cars. In one instance the exec sent people on courses who were not even members of a co-operative.

In this situation it is not surprising that the AGM rejected the old executive, and it is easy to understand the anger of an ordinary co-op member. But any triumphalism about the changes is misplaced.

All OCCZIM members need to understand fully how its organisation reached the low state that made corruption possible. As the editor of *Vanguard* warns "there is always the danger of new leaders committing the same old errors". And rather than a block rejection of the old executive, a process needs to be started which will give certain of them the confidence to work hard again in their primary societies.

What went rotten?

At the founding conference of OCCZIM in September, 1983 the 142 delegates passed resolutions congratulating the interim executive. This interim executive worked without pay for sixteen months to bring the co-ops together. Leading members of that interim exec are some of the same people denounced so angrily today for almost wrecking the organisation. The first executive of OCCZIM elected at the founding conference had some of those same faces in it, and interviews in *Vanguard* spoke their views and commitment to building the collective co-operative movement. At the first AGM their hard work was again praised and several were re-elected. Just over a year later these people are charged with corruption. What went wrong? What were the weaknesses?

Obviously there are no straight and simple answers. It is obviously possible that certain individuals were 'crooks', by nature, and looked for chances of personal gain. But this can

not be the with case all members. An individual admired at the founding conference as "a veteran of our struggle" who has inspired others, does not after three years consciously choose to act against the movement's interests.

In the earlier part of this article we looked briefly at some of the structural changes in OCCZIM. It can be seen that the early structures were not adequate. There was not enough control or check on the executive, the way of electing it allowed for a democracy which was half — alive while appearing to be healthy. For the executive to be fully democratic in this situation would have needed one of two conditions: either several of its members should have a long experience of working in complex organisations, or else the membership of OCCZIM should be strongly organised and alert for executive weaknesses. The second condition is only now becoming a reality. In the last years most co-operators were more concerned at building their own co-ops, and left the executive to do its job.

Perhaps under a different situation the executive may not have made as many mistakes as it did. But they must have been unprepared for the incredible growth of OCCZIM. In just over three years the organisation has grown from 76 to 800 co-operatives. The District Union Structures have been set up, and more recently the Provincial Unions.

The Collective Co-operative movement has moved into the spotlight in a way that was



difficult to predict. The interest of many donor agencies and NGO's has resulted in a flood of support, for OCCZIM and for its member co-operatives.

International Co-operative movements have extended invitations to the exec for visits to their countries. Courses have been made available. Linkages with movements in neighbouring countries have brought co-operators in the region together for discussions. Press and media representatives from different countries have converged on the headquarters office. A Ministry of Co-ops has been established, new laws have been made. Co-operatives are seen as cures for unemployment, and are spoken of as the forerunners of socialism.

It is easy to imagine an unprepared executive losing track of its priorities in this unexpected boom, as well as losing touch with the real needs of the membership. Easy too to imagine someone who does not have to answer to membership becoming side tracked by a visiting press-man, or seduced by the chance

of a trip overseas, or getting into the habit of a few drinks with a donor over lunch. Easy to imagine an executive which is not coping with an ever — increasing work load trying to handle it by hiring new staff members and so making things worse without realising it. And as their work place becomes more and more the OCCZIM office, is it any wonder that contact is lost with their co-ops?

None of this seeks to make excuses for the old OCCZIM exec. At best it showed itself to be not adequate for the job it was given.

The collective co-operative movement has taken firm hold of its apex organisation and will require resolve and support to correct past errors. But a new page will not be turned unless all co-operators can leave behind them the interpretation of executive failure which sees it as coming from those individual leaders. Personal strength or weakness plays a part, but only fully democratic structures and method can keep an organisation healthy and strong. ■

DE MORAIS: PART 2.



The cartoon which follows is the second in the series on De Morais theory of organisation. In this issue we examine the historical development of the division of labour.



TELL ME.....HOW DOES THIS
DIVISION OF LABOUR COME ABOUT?
IS IT JUST A CLEVER
INVENTION OF THE BOSSES?



ALL RIGHT.
LET US
LOOK AT
HISTORY:

AT FIRST PEOPLE
LIVED BY HUNTING
ANIMALS AND PICKING
WILD FRUIT. THEY ONLY
TOOK WHAT THEY
NEEDED THEMSELVES.

HEY BABY,
LET'S GO
CATCH SOME
SUPPER!

CAN'T
YOU SEE
I'M
BUSY?

COME ALONG.
...WE CAN
PICK SOME OF
THESE.

WE CALL THIS A
"NATURAL ECONOMY"
JOBS WERE DIVIDED
UP "NATURALLY"
TOO: MEN WENT
OUT HUNTING,
WOMEN STAYED
HOME WITH
THE KIDS.

LAZY WOMAN!

STAYING AT HOME, WOMEN
LEARNED HOW TO GROW
CROPS, NOT JUST PICK WILD
FRUITS.

GROWING PLANTS IS WOMEN'S
WORK! I BRING
THE MEAT!

HUH--
WITH THE
AMOUNT OF
MEAT YOU
CATCH, WE
WOULD STARVE
WITHOUT MY
CROPS.

AS PEOPLE
BEGAN TO
PRODUCE DIFFERENT
KINDS OF GOODS,
THEY FOUND THEY
COULD TRADE
OR EXCHANGE
THEM WITH
OTHER PEOPLE.

HOW AM I GOING TO
EAT THIS WHOLE
ELEPHANT?

I'LL TRADE
SOME SALT I
FOUND FOR SOME
ELEPHANT
MEAT.



BUT HOW DID
PEOPLE DECIDE HOW
MUCH EACH THING
IS WORTH?



I'LL TRADE
MY POT FOR
YOUR CHAIR.

YOU ARE
JOKING! IT
TOOK ME 6 DAYS
TO MAKE THIS
CHAIR.

YOU CAN HAVE
MY CHAIR FOR
SIX POTS.

FORGET IT.

I'LL
GO
MAKE
my
OWN
CHAIR.

VALUE DEPENDS
UPON THE AMOUNT
OF LABOUR NEEDED
TO MAKE A
COMMODITY!



MOST PEOPLE
CAN MAKE ONE
CHAIR IN
THREE DAYS.

IF I CAN
MAKE ONE
CHAIR IN ONE
DAY, I WILL
GET MORE
MONEY.

THE MORE
CHAIRS I CAN
MAKE IN A DAY,
THE RICHER I
WILL BE!

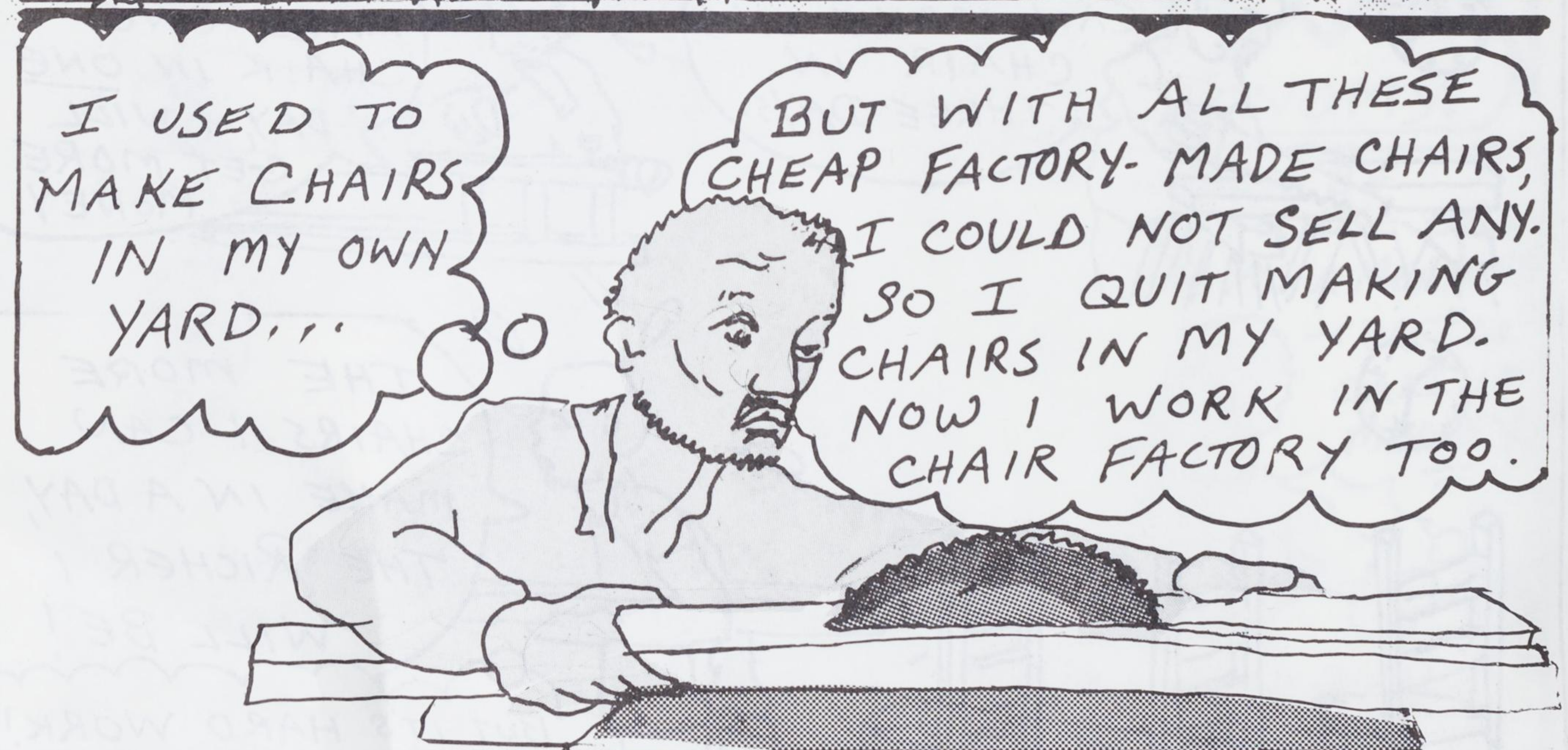
BUT IT'S HARD WORK!

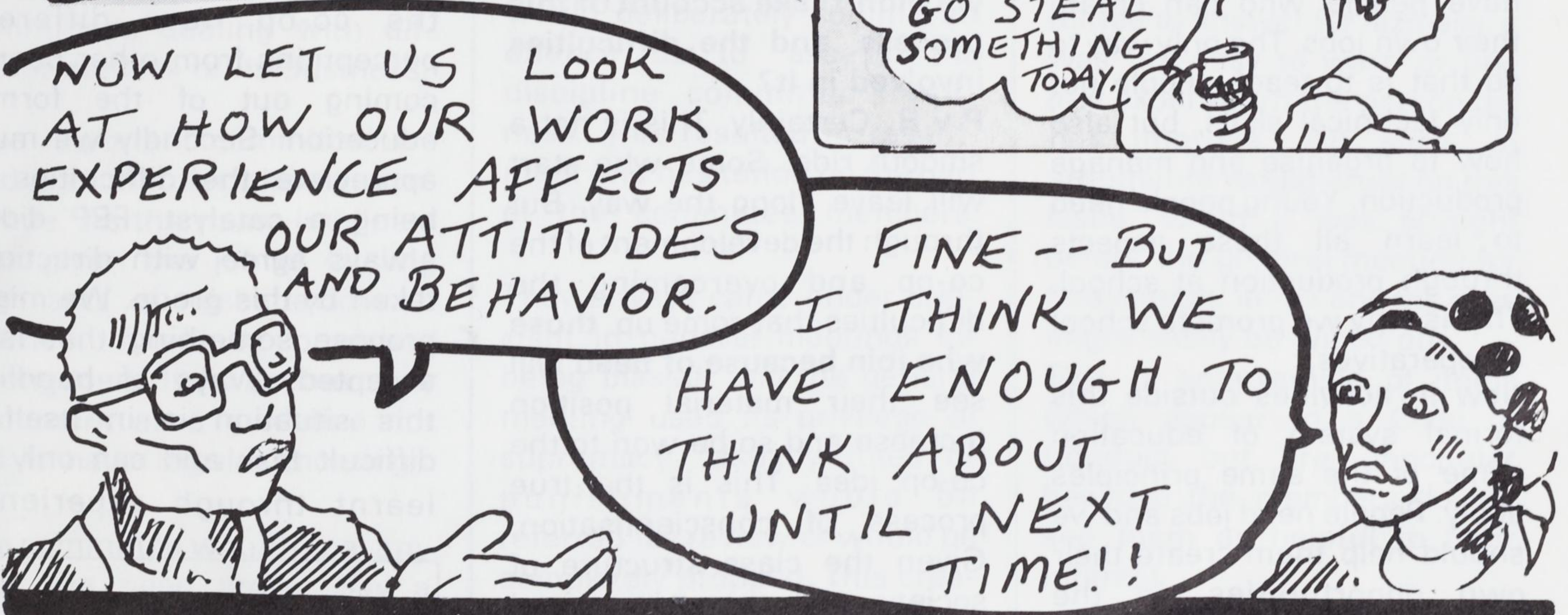
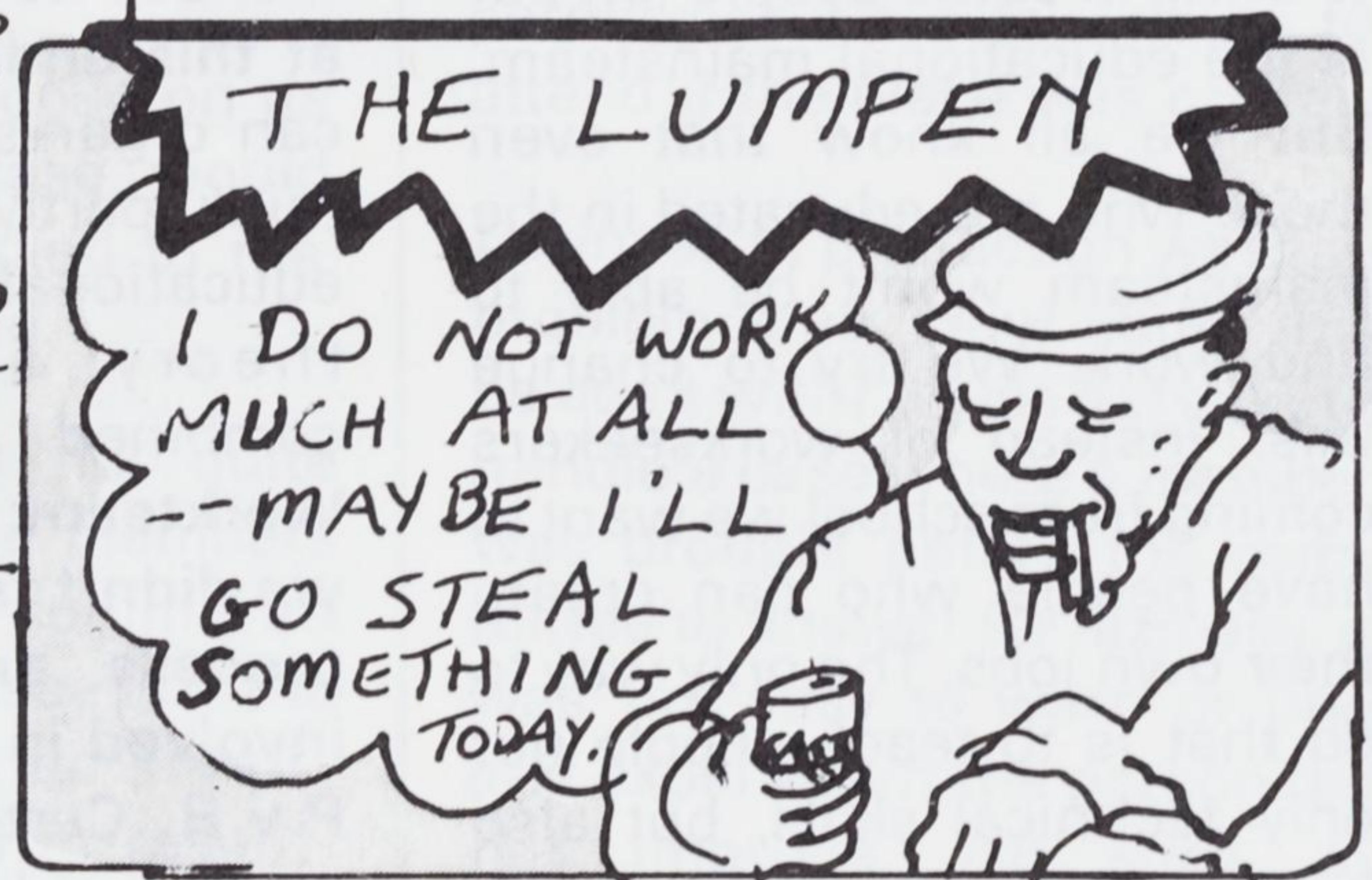
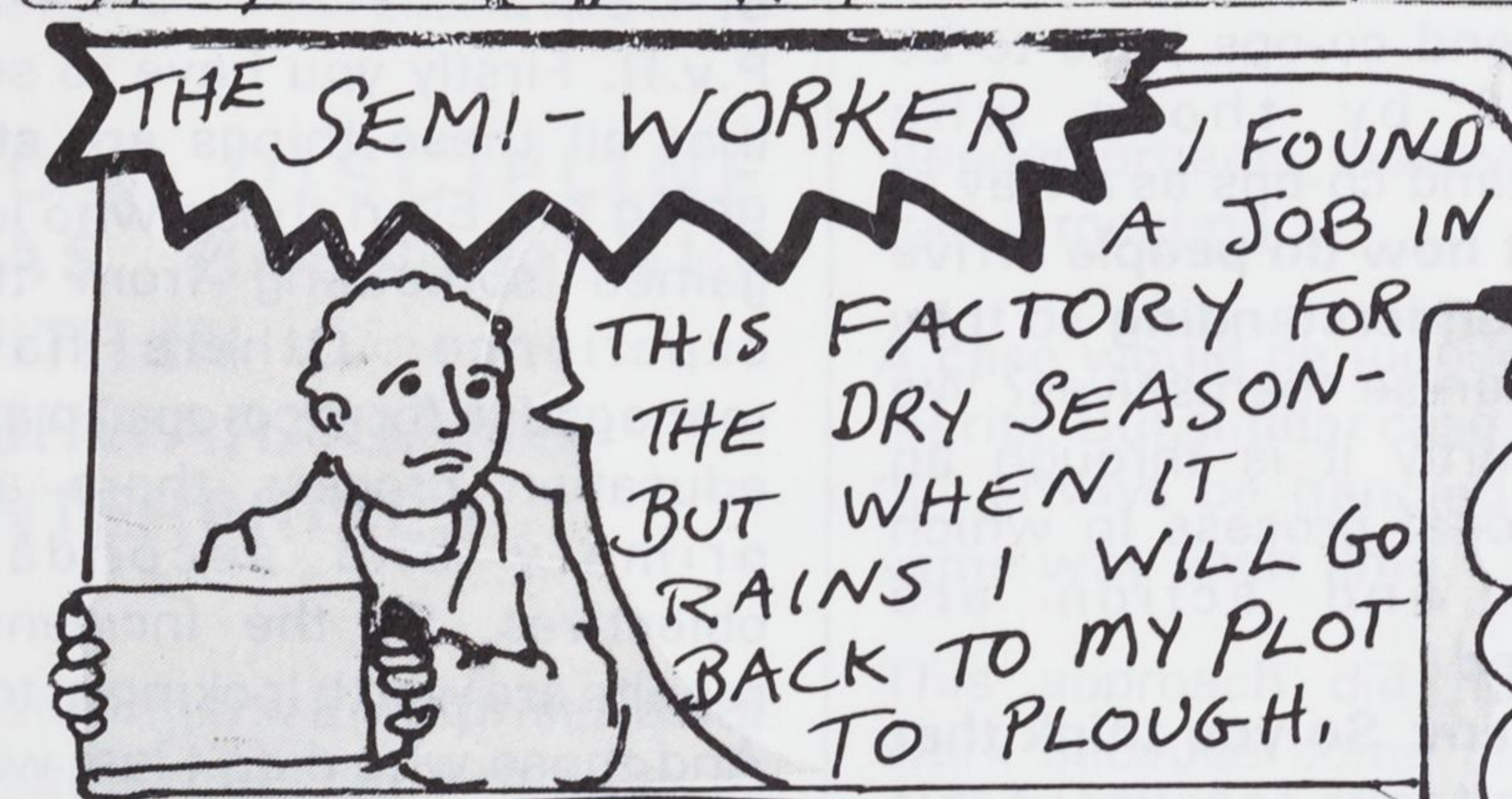
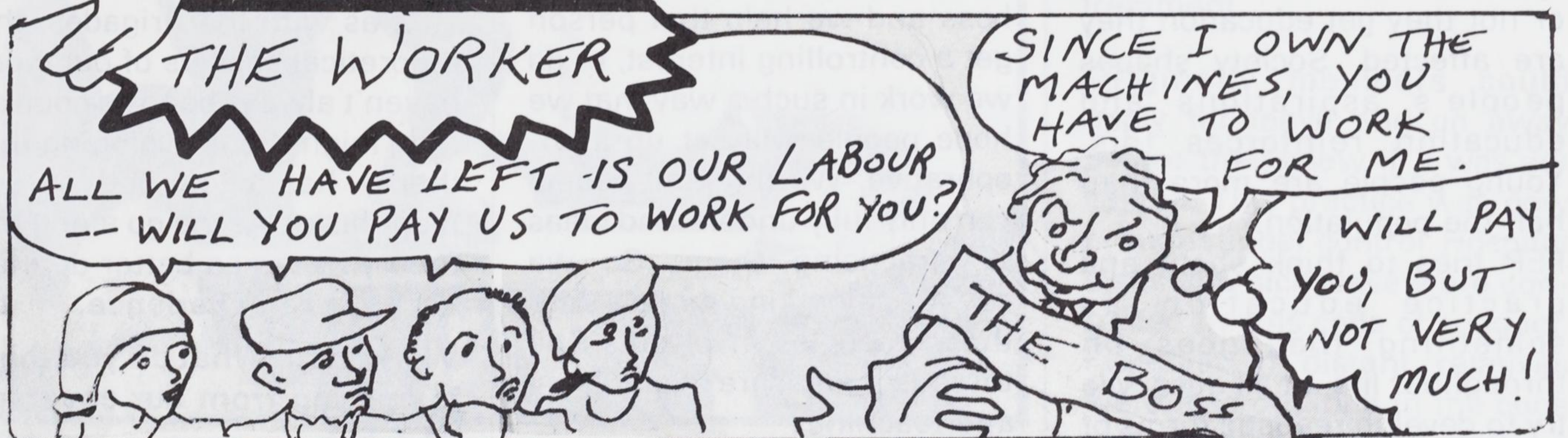
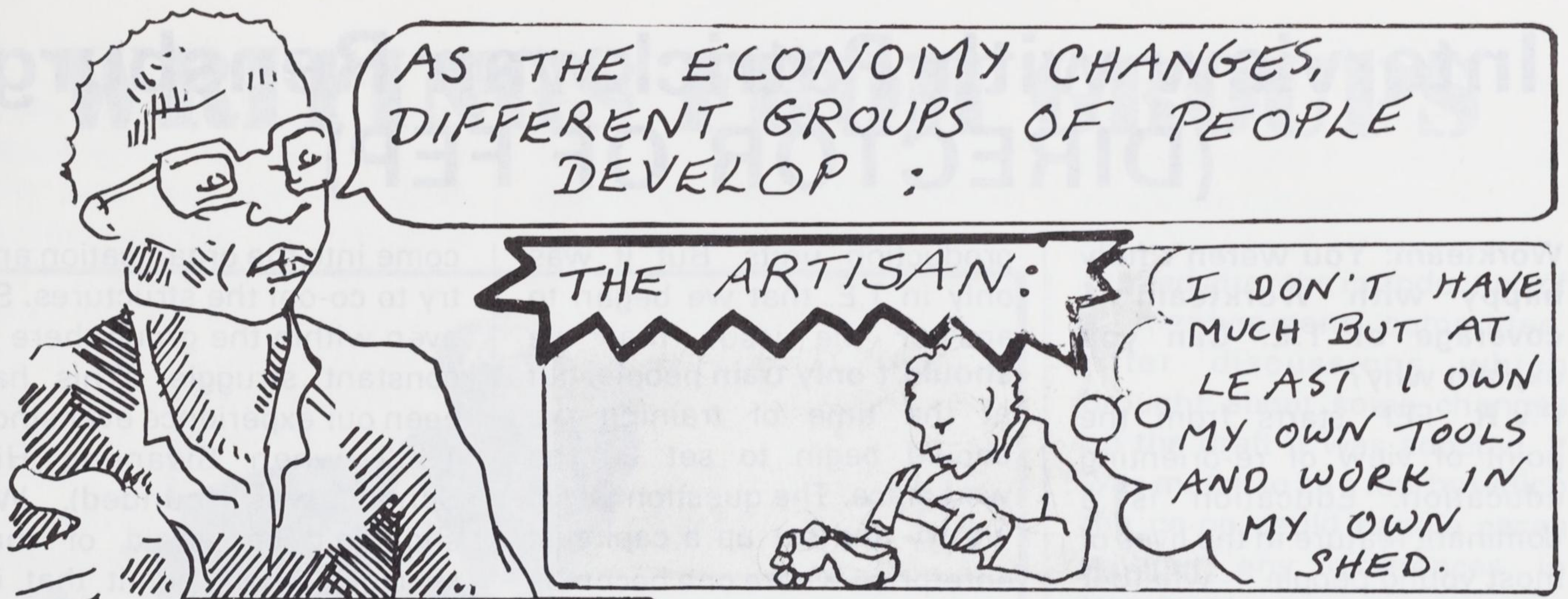


NOW FIVE OF US USING THESE MACHINES CAN MAKE TWENTY CHAIRS A DAY....



MACHINES GET THE WORK DONE MUCH FASTER-- SO THE PRODUCT CAN BE MUCH CHEAPER





Interview with Patrick van Rensburg (DIRECTOR OF FEP)

Workteam: You weren't fully happy with Workteam 1 coverage of T.E. Can you explain why?

P.v.R. FEP starts from the point of view of re-orienting education. Education is a dominant feature in the lives of most young people — whether or not they get education they are affected. Society shapes people's aspirations and education reinforces this. Young people are more than half the population.

FEP tries to think about and practice education as something that goes on throughout life, at all ages. We try to develop realistic forms of education, relevant to those in schools and those outside them. The Brigades enabled us to bring in **some** people left out of the educational mainstream. But we all know that even those who are educated in the mainstream won't be able to find work. We try to change this: instead of workseekers coming from school we want to have people who can create their own jobs. The only way to do that is to teach people not only technical skills, but also how to organise and manage production. Young people need to learn all these aspects through production at school. This is why we promote school co-operatives.

Now in activities outside this formal system of education some of the same principles apply. People need jobs and we should help them create their own opportunities. In the brigades we were always thinking about how to set up

production units. But it was only in T.E. that we began to answer the issue that we **shouldn't only train** people, but at the time of training we should begin to set up the workplace. The question is: Do we try and set up a capitalist enterprise where one becomes boss and we help that person get a controlling interest, or do we work in such a way that we hope people will set up a co-operative. We think all people can only fully understand ideas by practising them. So we construct working models with those people involved. Still there is a measure of guidance and teaching.

In the end co-ops have to be formed by those who understand co-ops as a way of life. But **how do people arrive at this understanding** so they can organise themselves? We think partly it is through an educational process in which theory and action are combined.

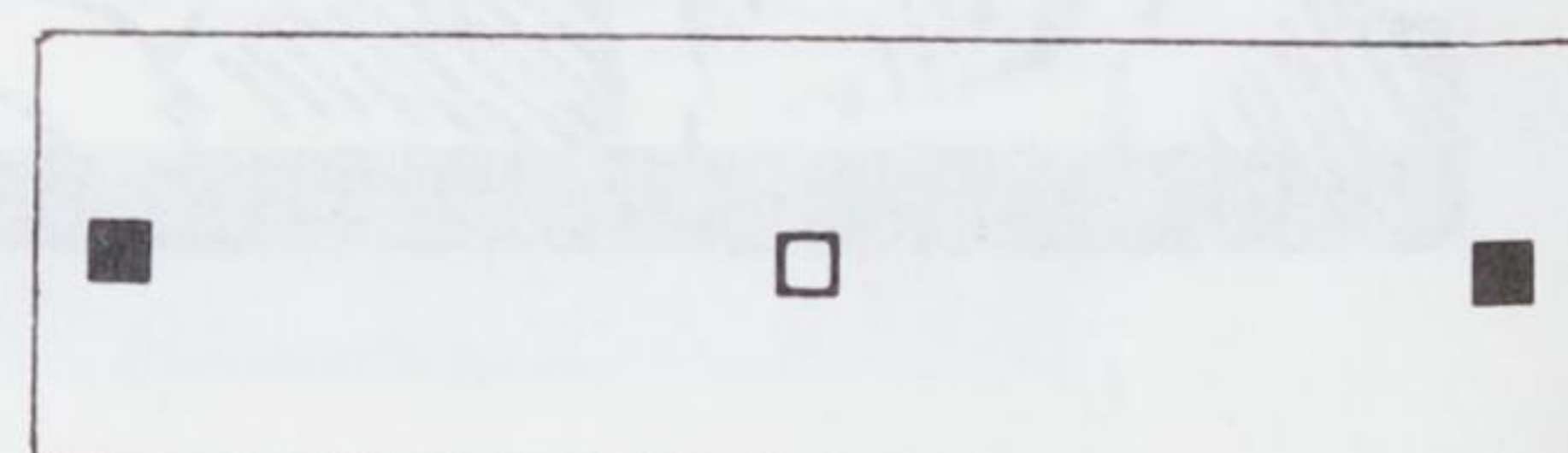
Workteam: So you think that we didn't take account of this process, and the difficulties involved in it?

P.v.R. Certainly. This is not a smooth ride. Some who start will leave along the way. But through the development of the co-op and overcoming the difficulties that come up, **those who join because of need** will see their material position increase and so be won to the co-op idea. This is the true process of conscientisation. Given the class structure of society and the educational system, it happens that people from different backgrounds

come into the organisation and try to co-opt the structures. So even within the group there is constant struggle. (This has been our experience ever since 1962 when Swaneng Hill School was founded). We shouldn't be afraid of that struggle. I will admit that in T.E., as with the Brigades, the theoretical aspects of our work haven't always been as good as they might be. Developing this theory has been one of our main tasks. As we go along the theory becomes better defined **because of experience**.

Workteam: What do you think is missing from our coverage of T.E.?

P.v.R. Firstly you have to see that all these things **are still going on**. Even those who left gained something from the experience. Others have managed to form co-ops. In any education process there are primary and secondary objectives. So the incidental results are worth looking at too. And those who didn't last with the co-op have different perceptions from other people coming out of the formal education. Secondly we must appreciate the difficulties of being a catalyst. FEP didn't always agree with directions taken by this group. We might propose something that isn't accepted. Ways of handling this situation is in itself a difficult task and can only be learnt through experience



WRITINGS FROM GROUPS

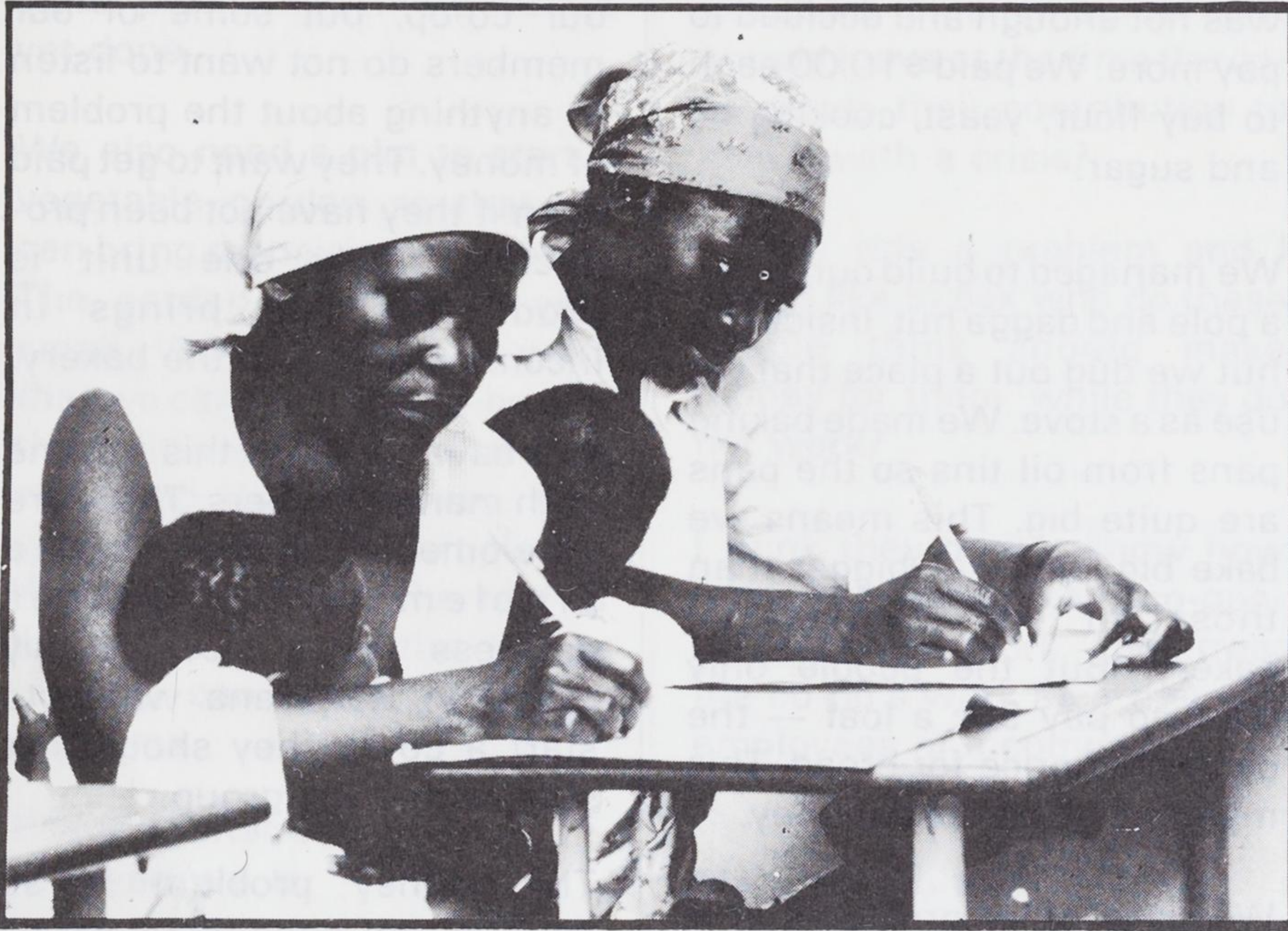


Photo credit: Wien de Smet/Zimbabwe Womens Bureau.

HOW DISCIPLINE HAS BEEN DEALT WITH IN TSHWARAGANO ENTERPRISES

Tshwaragano Enterprises at its initial stages had a number of committees dealing with different matters of its business.

One important committee we had was the disciplinary committee. As the name implies it was given the job of dealing with acts of misbehaviour. It warned, fined or punished wrongdoers. It did not have any document as a guideline nor did it have regular meetings.

The committee would meet any time the need arose. Say a group leader takes a case to be investigated and the chairperson felt it was a case that

needed urgency then we would call a meeting.

A case would be judged on its merits. But similar cases would not always be handled in the same way each time.

This approach did not quite work because some members would deliberately commit an offence just to "assess" the discipline committee's fairness. This resulted in resentment and hesitation on the part of the committee members.

They always came under criticism in general meetings for being biased, and the general meeting used its privilege of supremacy. Usually fines or punishments would be referred for review or would be completely dropped. This created a lot of confusion.

In 1983 a code of conduct was

drafted after the introduction of a management committee. After discussions which brought about some changes on the draft it was adopted. It was meant to be a tool by which the co-op could handle cases without any differences in treatment.

Originally members could apply for leave and go away before they knew if it was accepted. This practice was now brought under control. Hospital visits and sick leave were controlled by this code of conduct. Funerals of distant relatives were also outlined in the code and members knew without any problem which funerals they could attend and which they were only likely to get permission for a few hours to attend if the place was not far.

Laziness in production was the problem area. How could this be dealt with? It was not easy to handle a case where a member was brought before the committee to answer for laziness. It was not easy to warn or fine and expel when the person did not improve. All sorts of arguments would erupt on this issue, when it was brought before the general meeting for finalisation. In the end the case might easily be wiped off. This is an example of items which appear in a Code of Conduct but are unpopular because the members do not see them as helpful to their interest.

My view is that it is not that the Code was a complete disaster

but rather that to a large extent the members abused the principle of democracy. It is very important to maintain democracy in a co-op, but at the same time it is important for the general members to separate democracy from the execution of business of their co-op. If this principle is allowed to be abused you end up being hesitant to take disciplinary measures against wrongdoers. It also depends on the age group that makes the co-op. A co-op which is made of youth always fears to lose friendship, instead of trying to restore order.

That is my view. Any other readers of WORKTEAM please advise us about this problem?

Tshwaragano Member ■

TSUNGIRIRAI CO-OPERATIVE Masvingo — Zimbabwe

"We started our co-operative in June 1986. We were 26 women altogether. We started this cooperative because money is very difficult to come by in the communal areas. We started a bakery. We decided that each member should contribute \$2.00. We would then use this money for buying flour to bake bread. We hoped that the profits would help in the maintenance of our families. The commercial bakeries are far so people can only buy bread one day a week on Fridays. We are very fortunate that our bakery is near a primary and a secondary school. School children buy bread at lunch time. Elders

from the surrounding areas also buy our bread.

We paid our \$2.00 contributions but later we saw that this was not enough and decided to pay more. We paid \$10.00 each to buy flour, yeast, cooking oil and sugar.

We managed to build ourselves a pole and dagga hut. Inside the hut we dug out a place that we use as a stove. We made baking pans from oil tins so the pans are quite big. This means we bake big loaves — bigger than those of the commercial bakery. But the people only want to pay 50c a loaf — the controlled price for bread. This means that we lose money.

We have other problems. It is very hot to work in our kitchen. We also face problems when we try to remove coals from the stove. We use a shovel for doing this. We don't always find our pans in good order.

Some members have left the co-op since we started. We have not yet refunded them. Last month we made 14000 bricks. These bricks are for building a house. We will use the house for sewing in. We hope that this will help us." ■

PROBLEMS AT BARATANI

I want to try and talk about the problems we have in Baratani Co-op. I would like to appeal to our readers to help us. We have a lot of problems.

1. Lack of money

We do not have money and this is affecting our co-op badly. How can we deal with this situation? We are all workers in our co-op, but some of our members do not want to listen to anything about the problem of money. They want to get paid even if they have not been productive. Only one unit is productive and brings in income and that is the bakery.

We have to share this income with many members. There are 23 women and 5 men. This is a problem which causes progress to be slow. If any group in Botswana wants to start a co-op they should not start with a big group.

The money problem is so serious that sometimes we go without wages. We are looking for piece jobs in the village so that we can get our salaries at the end of the month.



2. Water and land

One other thing we have a problem with is water. We have long waited for the South East District Council to install a water pipe which they have not yet done.

We also need a plot to start a vegetable garden so that we can bring money into the co-op. The garden we have is very small. We have a lot of work that we can do at the co-op, but the main problem is that it does not bring in any money. Can you publish this article in Workteam so that the rest of the people that the paper reaches can know about our problems.

Peace Maitshoko
Monyadiwa ■

UNPAID LEAVE.

I am a member of Baratani Enterprises and I would like to ask this question. Is it fair for members of a co-op to take unpaid leave at the time the co-op needs their contribution to help it with a crisis?

I think this a problem and I would like to ask who do these people think should make money for them, while they do not work?

I think they do not know how members of a worker's co-operative should work. They treat the co-op's work as if they are employees of a company.

Mary Motsumi ■

WE ARE CONFUSED

We work in a co-op with numerous members. At present our co-op is facing some business problems. Sales of our products have gone down and this has affected our salaries. We are getting very low salaries.

Some of our members want to take unpaid leave to either go to the land or seek other jobs while the position is bad. All these members who want to go on unpaid leave want to go for four months. Other members wanted to continue working in the co-op to stand by their promises on the principle of work without pay where necessary. If business goes down they will work hard to restore a sound

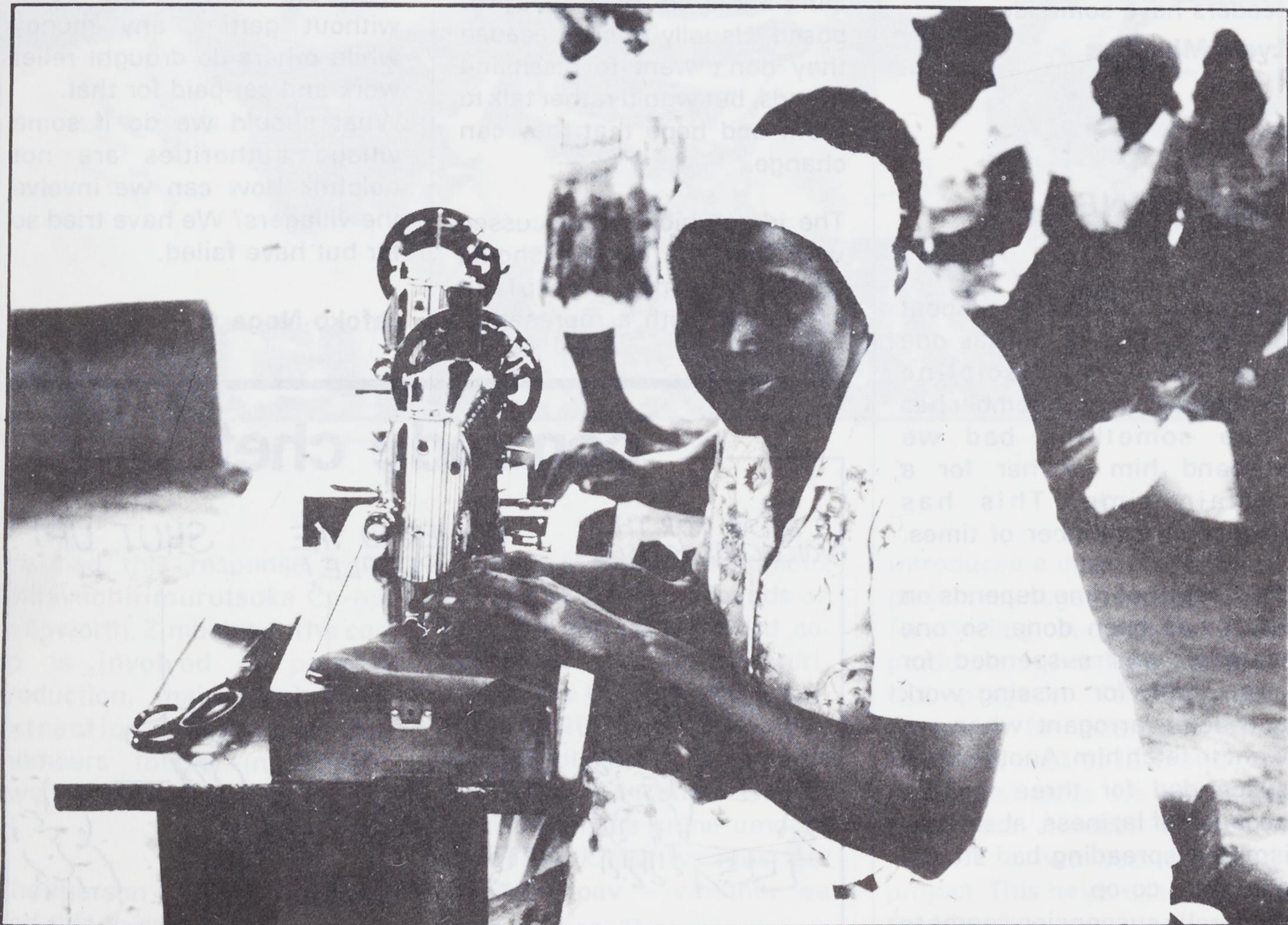


Photo credit: Wien de Smet/Zimbabwe Womens Bureau

business to the co-operative. This point caused a lot of arguments amongst members when those who intended to go on unpaid leave justified their request. They say that they want to enable the few members who are remaining in the co-op to get a bigger share of the income they will be earning.

The remaining group feels it is not going to be easy, while others go to wait for the better times. The general feeling amongst the remaining group was that the others should leave the co-op for good. Otherwise those members who are skilled at other jobs should find jobs outside the co-op and then share what they earn with the co-op to help the bad situation. What can we do? Do other readers have some ideas?

Lydia Mhaphi ■

DISCIPLINE

You asked in Workteam about discipline. Our co-op has one main way to discipline members. When a member has done something bad we suspend him or her for a certain time. This has happened a number of times.

The length of time depends on what has been done, so one member was suspended for one month for missing work and being arrogant when we went to fetch him. Another was suspended for three months because of laziness, absenteeism and spreading bad stories about the co-op.

Generally suspension seems to

help us sort out problems. Other discipline just involves calling a member and speaking strongly in front of the committee. We have also thought of setting up a discipline committee. ■

COOPS DISCUSS DISCIPLINE

In December 1986 representatives from 5 producer groups met in Otse, Botswana for discussions and joint production activities. One of the ideas to come out of the discussions was about a discipline committee. Everyone felt that we tend to ignore the need for discipline. Sometimes the committee can't be strict on members, or else the General Meeting can't agree on the action proposed. Usually this is because they don't want to discipline friends, but would rather talk to them and hope that they can change.

The idea which we discussed was that the co-ops should form a joint discipline committee with a representa-

tive from each co-op to listen to important problems of discipline and propose action. ■

RELATIONS WITH THE REST OF THE VILLAGE

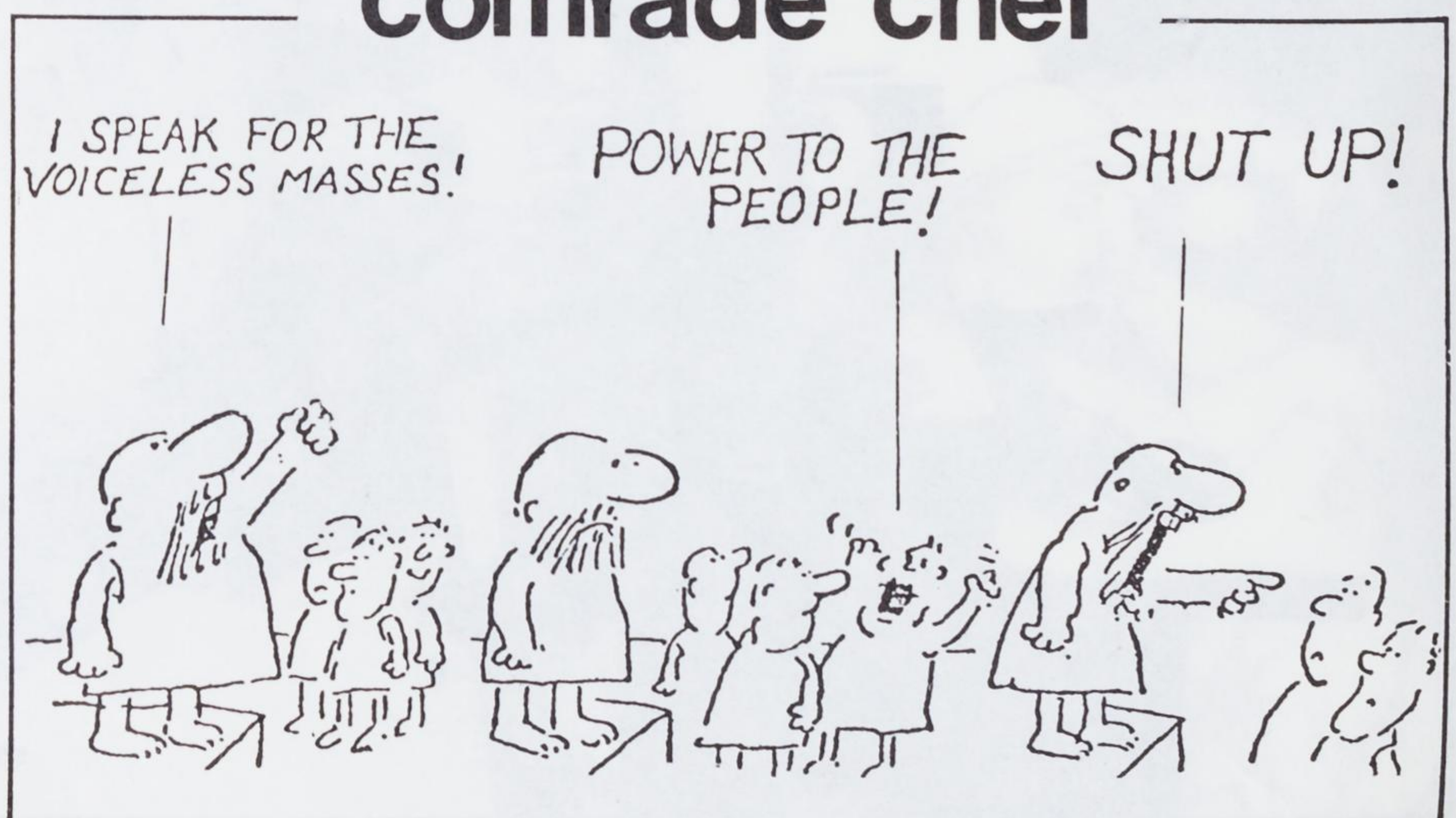
We have a problem in the community in which our co-op is located. Long ago we asked for water at our co-op but nothing has happened so we have to carry water a long way to support our bakey.

Another thing we cannot understand is why our co-op cannot be registered as a drought relief project. At least we could be paid for work that we do to develop the co-op. We are Batswana and should be able to get assistance. As it is we work building the co-op without getting any money while others do drought relief work and get paid for that.

What should we do if some village authorities are not helpful? How can we involve the villagers? We have tried so far but have failed.

Lefoko Noga ■

comrade chef



CO-OP STUDY GROUP REPLIES

In the last issue of WORKTEAM the co-op study Group question was about work and pay. Below we print readers responses on this subject. Many of the replies are about problems co-operators have in earning a living wage.



Photo credit: Wien de Smet/Zimbabwe Womens Bureau.

We had this response from Chitsvachirimurutsoka Co-op in Epworth, Zimbabwe. The co-op is involved in poultry production, maize and sand extraction. Many of its members fought in Zimbabwe's liberation war.

Chairperson **Albert Vingwe** had this to say.

Costing of labour is a problem. Of course it really depends on how one defines the word 'co-operative'. At Chitsvachirimurutsoka Co-op we all contributed \$2 400 from our demobilisation allowance to buy this farm. Now because we all contributed the same amount we all think that we must get the same pay — whether we work or not. That is why we

introduced a duty roster. Every project manager is responsible for finding out the cost of production and the income of his project. The poultry manager for example must know the cost of feed and the number of sales. He must also know the number of hours members worked on the project. This helps us to control the situation. ■

WORK AND PAY:

What happens when there is no money?

When members form a co-op they do so to try and solve the problem of unemployment. When others apply to join they are usually asked this question: Are you prepared to sacrifice for the co-operative? The answer is a straight yes. I think this answer is made just to give a good impression.

The person becomes a member and business booms. The members work with the knowledge that they will get paid, and this happens at the end of the month. Suddenly bang comes the bad times. The co-op's products are not popular, and the competition is tough. The members have to be paid less than they were used to getting. A member watches the situation and change does not come quickly. Outside the co-op a friend who works in an ordinary factory continues to get a full salary. The member in question decides to leave the co-op and look for a job with regular pay.

A co-op is an organisation which is democratically managed. Members have a say in running their business. If you start a co-op on 1st January 1987, how long are you prepared to work for a small salary? Do you expect the co-op to pay each time there is money, or do you allow the co-op to use that money to develop it further? If the co-op has a fixed salary structure surely it will quickly fail in the objective of building jobs?

I ask readers to help me with

suggestions about this problem. Look at it further: Members of a co-op are equally responsible so many think they should be paid equally. And that usually means getting a lot, rather than everyone a small amount. In this situation give a good project say five years and see whether it still has adequate capital.

I strongly believe that a struggling co-op should give its members just enough to buy basics. Then every quarter it can give a bonus if there is money.

Some co-ops give loans to members even if sales did not bring in enough income, and even if a salary has been paid. The loans take a long time to be repaid and as a result the growth of the co-op is harmed. Here in Botswana the extended family system is given as an excuse for loans.

Now it may be true that we give parents money, or buy clothes for our family or take our brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews to school. But the loans also are used for other things. The problem is the environment we were brought up in! I like to show that I'm a production co-op worker by the clothes I wear, the food I eat, the social places I go to. My immediate interest is in the material things that make me seem to be part of a 'smart' group of people.

My concluding question is this: if today your co-op closes because it has paid its members salaries it can't afford, and it can't buy the items it needs for production, how have we met our goal?

Who have you impressed in the end?

I aim these remarks to a number of co-ops here, and I ask readers to give their views. I think that paying salaries is a serious threat to a producer co-op, if it is just starting and has very little money.

S.G.S. ■

THE BEST WAY

There are several principles which must be obeyed although each primary society has its own bylaws which suit them. If the principles are followed and group discussions are held under the member education campaign and the adult literacy campaign this will enable co-ops to achieve their goals and objectives.

The member education campaign

The campaign helps start group discussions where people will find the solution to their problems. It helps make the co-ops more effective and strong. Members will know how to draft their bylaws and amend them from time to time in the format issued by the Ministry. These group discussions will also enable the co-operators find better projects by using ideas and resolutions passed by small groups and finalised by the co-op as a whole.

Adult literacy

This helps people in the co-ops understand things about their past, present and future lives. It helps them in knowing how to lead discussion sessions and to seek information necessary for co-op programmes. It will also

help them in asking for aid from NGOs and assistance from the Ministry.

Assistance to co-ops

The government employees who work as co-op officers are not dedicated to their jobs. This is because they are paid monthly while those who they work with wait for the sharing of the surplus at the end of the financial year. If the co-op officers were members of the co-ops they could easily tackle the problems in the co-ops and strengthen the movement.

Leadership of the movement

The co-op movement must be led by co-operators and backed by the government and NGOs.

Work and pay

Co-operators doing the same job for the same number of hours should get the same treatment and equal shares. Those who do more skilled jobs than others should get paid for

what they do. This should be agreed upon before operations.

This will help solve the problem of those who split from co-ops after being educated with the assistance of the NGOs and Government.

Education

Compulsory member education is the key to achieve the co-op movements objectives. In the committees the number of illiterates must not be more than half of the membership. The co-op constitution is the boss of every primary society. Committee members must be interviewed by the Ministry after they have been elected to see if they are capable of doing what they have been chosen for.

Yours in arms
Cde Israel Tigere
Secretary General — CALTA
 (Co-op Adult Literacy Tutors Association)
 Kuwadzana Co-op ■

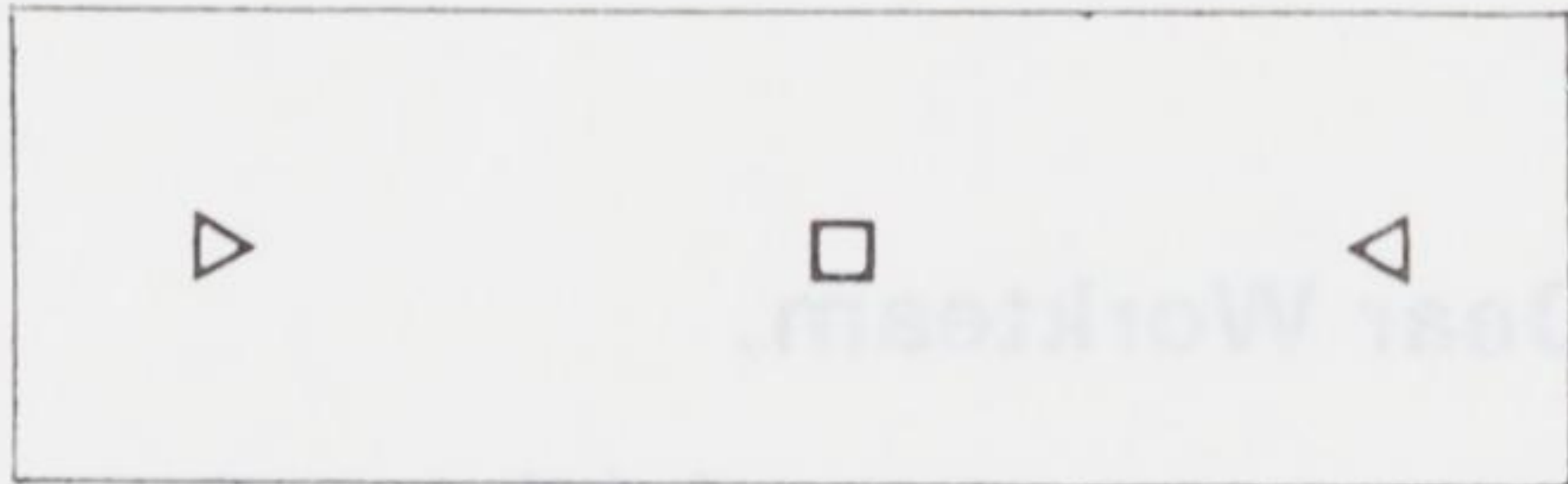
REDUCED NUMBERS

In our co-op we have a small business but there are more members than the business can afford to support.

So a co-ordinator from another group has seen this as very dangerous which could lead to the closedown of our project.

He had suggested that we should reduce the number of members working in the business. It was not easy for us to tell other members to go back home. We decided instead to take very low wages until our business improves. This was accepted but we shall pay according to what work is done.

K. Ramonna ■



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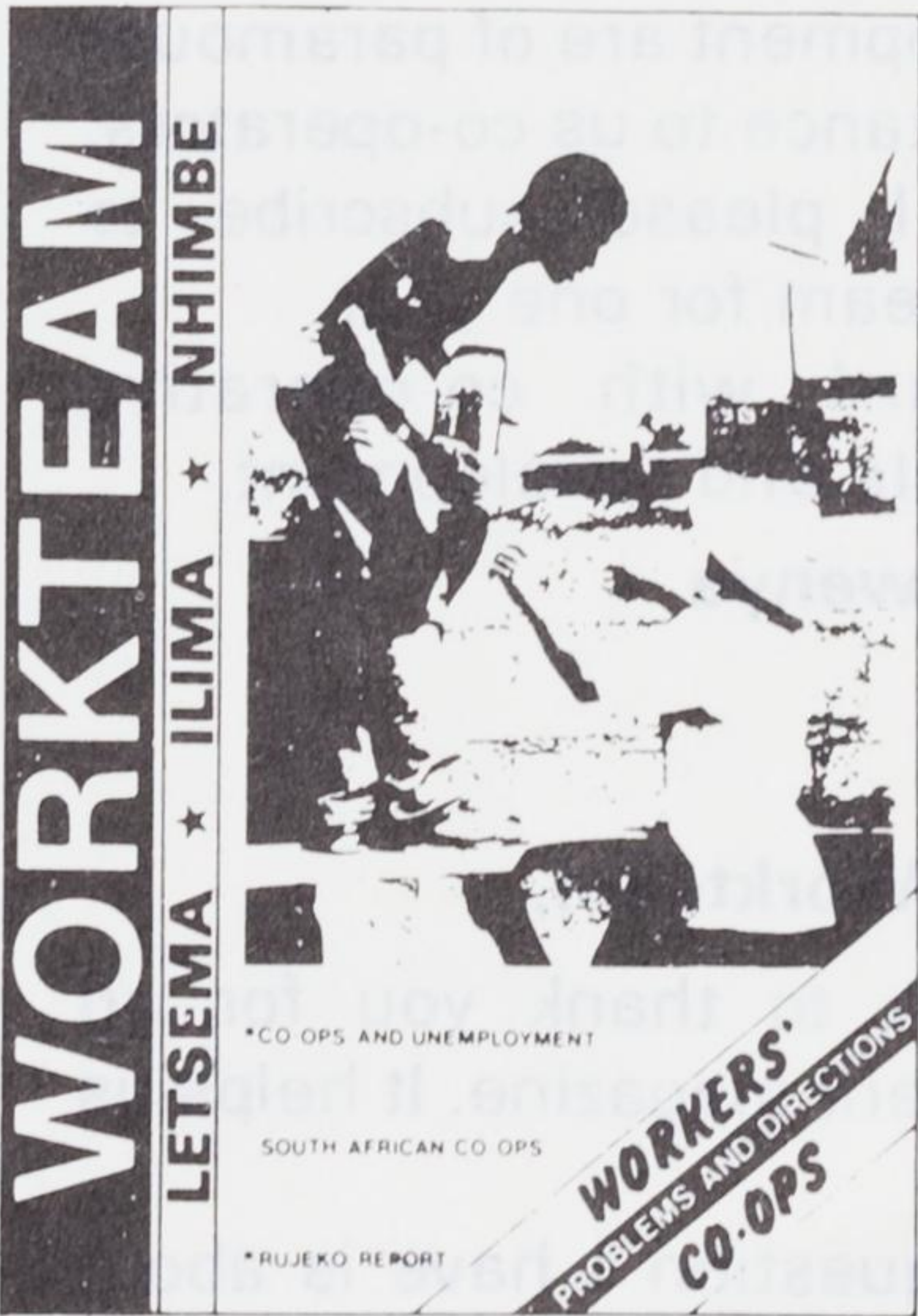
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Readers letters



WORKTEAM, P.O. Box 20906, Gaborone Botswana

Dear Workteam,

We're four small co-ops here, linked with two other small producers with a joint marketing division. We'd like to subscribe to WORKTEAM so enclose a cheque.

Workteam has attracted a lot of interest here — we need encouragement on the long term importance of co-ops, especially when it's tough going just to survive!

Co-op Development & Marketing, Grahamstown, South Africa.

now that the workshop is over? Isn't it confusing for a co-op to have others coming to organise for three weeks and then going away? Perhaps this can just make a bad situation worse.

I look forward to your next issue.

Co-operative greetings,

A. Ndlovu

EDITOR'S REPLY

Dear A. Ndlovu,

Your letter came too late for us

to find out the answers to your question. The point you make is a good one, and we will try to follow up on it before WORKTEAM number 3. It seems to us that no workshop can be really worthwhile unless there is follow-up work done by the organisers. No doubt something is planned following on the Rujeko workshop. It would also be interesting to hear how the participants from outside Rujeko Co-operative had benefited.■

Dear Workteam,

I am a member of All Are One Co-op Society Ltd in Zimbabwe. I have read some interesting and helpful articles in your magazine. Surely these articles on co-operative theory and development are of paramount importance to us co-operators. May I please subscribe to Workteam for one year.

Forward with co-operative struggle and development.

E. Ngwenya

Dear Workteam,

I wish to thank you for an excellent magazine. It helps us a lot.

One question I have is about the Rujeko Workshop which you reported. When thinking about it I become worried. How is Rujeko Co-operative doing



Photo Credit: ZIMFEP

Use your lunch break to write to WORKTEAM! Give us your views. Tell us what stories you would like to read, and what you think of the magazine so far.

QUESTIONS FOR CO-OPS MANAGEMENT AND DEMOCRACY

1. I think that the Committee is elected to manage the co-op. The members must trust their committee and follow their instructions. The committee should propose how much the members get paid and plan the work. The policy of the committee can be changed by the GM if necessary.



2. I disagree. Often elected members do not have proper management skills. To make our co-op succeed we need skilled bookkeepers and production managers. These people must be chosen because of their skills and work full time. The job of the elected committee is to check on the work of the skilled management workers and report back to the members.



3. No this method is not democratic. Co-ops are owned and controlled by the members. How can we control our co-op if we depend on full time management staff?



4. I agree. We need direct democracy where all the members participate. Only the GM should make management decisions. The committee must just carry out the decisions of the GM.



5. Your idea of the GM managing the co-op cannot work. The committee should be responsible for management but they should be supported by one or two skilled co-ordinators, or outside advisors to help with planning and work organisation.



6. So what do you think? Who do you support? Or do you have different ideas? Write in and tell us what happens in your co-op and we will print your views in the next issue of Workteam. If you have other suggestions for co-op study topics send them as well.

**CO-OP
STUDY
GROUP**

GM = General Meeting

Send your views to WORKTEAM, P.O. Box 20906, Gaborone, Botswana.