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ORGANISING - SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on practical experience as a Trade Union Shaft Steward and organiser over a period of ten (10) years. This experience has been complemented by active involvement in the Civics, Setting and A.N.C. Branch at Vosllorus and setting the S.A.C.P. - P.W.V., region.

As such, it is not a paper, but an attempt to share some practical experience. I will, therefore, expect comrades to discuss the ideas thrown in this presentation.

I must, however, add that I have tried to apply some scientific methods used in management, with particular emphasis on marketing. This is informed by my belief that organising and marketing have many things in common. To quote a few:-

- Competition:
in organising competition is around ideology
- Targets: -
organising should be aimed at meeting certain targets
- Systematic Approach:
no organiser should jump in

WHAT IS ORGANISING ?

Organising means "putting into a working order". When applied to an organisation it means the job of creating organisational strength, discipline and self confidence among disadvantaged and weak communities.

Amongst the tasks of an organiser, must perform the greatest in his/her ability to:-

- * inspire and agitate
- * educate and
- * unite

This can ensure that when an organiser leaves, people can continue with organising work and sustain the organisation.

Please deliver to cde Walter
from Sue.

cde Walter - here is the paper
given by cde Mantashe as I
told you. Amanda! Sue

MISTAKE NO. 2

Organisers are usually left as a loose formation, by letting them depend on their individual initiatives.

Organisers should structure meetings regularly, say every two months. These meetings should have an element of education, both political and functional. This will result common national approach. The best organised region can always learn something from the worst organised region in organisation. The worst organised region can learn a number of things for the best organised region.

MISTAKE NO.3

Competitive spirit is usually killed. Comrades will always see competition as "chauvinism".

If the Border Region can organise 100 000 members why can't northern cape organise 100 000 members? Instead of trying to find reasons to justify why northern cape can't organise 100 000 members, northern cape should see the performance of the Border Region as an encouragement to do more i.e. every region should work hard to be the best region.

MISTAKE NO. 4

Organisers always try to put more emphasis on negative aspects of the organisation. Example:-

How can we organise these rural areas without a car? One car is not enough for this region. These problems are usually raised to justify why the work is not done. This approach is a source of demotivation.

As an organiser, one should always take an initiative to change problems into hurdles and opportunities.

With all the problems we have in the N.U.M., we have managed to recover from the 1987 strike and the 1989/9/91 retrenchments. We have recovered from being a declining union into a once more growing union. 21 organisers are servicing 296 00 members today. This is due to the understanding that these mistakes should be overcome at all cost.

MISTAKE NO. 5

Failure to set up targets. For example:-

recruiting 200 members over a period of one month can easily be seen as a big figure. The issue is not the figure but 200 against what target?

PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THE ORGANISATION

Nobody can be expected to join an organisation he does not know. People should know the basic things about an organisation, like:-

- * what it is, i.e. its' history
- * what are its' structures
- * how it derives its strength and power in the struggle for liberation
- * what it has done to push regime

The organiser must demonstrate that an organisation is the members themselves, and not the regional office or the Head Office.

HOW TO ORGANISE SUCCESSFULLY ?

There are five basic steps that an organiser should follow. Once an organiser tries to jump one of these step whatever he has done will always show serious weaknesses or collapse. Those steps are:-

1. GETTING INFORMATION
2. PLANNING
3. GIVING INFORMATION
4. RECRUITMENT DRIVE
5. FORMING STRUCTURES

1. GETTING INFORMATION

Before organising begins. certain information must be collected:-

- what is the general attitude towards the A.N.C. in the area
- what is the level of consciousness in general terms
- what is the dominant class in the area

- are there specific problems around which the community can be agitated
- what is the security situation like? Is there a prominent activity of the security police in the area
- are there apartheid structures in place. B.L.A., Joint Management Council-Structures etc.
- how densely populated is the area? It is this information that will help organiser assess whether the chances of organising a particular area are good, fair or poor. This leads us to the second step.

2. PLANNING

Having completed this survey, organising should start. This survey will help the organiser to decide:-

- not to organise a particular area or rather postpone organising it or to start organising it outright. The best thing is to survey a number of areas e.g. townships in the East Rand. This will help the organiser in deciding where to start organising and devise an effective plan for organising a particular area.

(a) Choosing where to begin ?

In choosing where to begin an organiser should take into consideration the following:-

- * The size of the area
- * the population of the area
- * the problems likely to interfere with organising
- * likelihood of success

The organiser should target areas, one success should be followed by another success immediately.

(b) Which Areas need intensive information distribution?

An area that is either hostile towards the A.N.C. or passive will need a lot of preparation work with specific emphasis on the intensive distribution of information on the A.N.C. Door to door work asking for signatures around a particular issue. This will change the attitude towards the A.N.C.

e.g. An area that is predominantly aspirant Bourgeoisie or a rural area that never heard anything positive about the A.N.C., and have been actively involved in Bantustan structures.

(c) Which areas need intensive education programme?

This will be an area that is very receptive of the A.N.C., an area that is prepared to join the A.N.C. in thousands, but does not know why joining A.N.C., not knowing the A.N.C. policies.

(d) Giving the information

Having collected the information about the area, you process that information in useful information. Problems in a particular area are turned into positive propaganda to mobilise the people. This marks the beginning of formal education. The organiser should always assume that people do not know a thing about the A.N.C. It is important to give information on the following:-

- * history of the A.N.C.
- * structures of the A.N.C.
- * what the A.N.C., stands for
- * what our struggle is all about
- * Link the problems of apartheid to the people's day to day problems

This stage is the most crucial stage for an organiser are being tested.

The information should be given in the following ways:-

- * general meetings
- * small inhouse meetings with activists and volunteers
- * distribution of A.N.C. publication
- * visiting people in their homes and hostels

This should immediately be followed by the next step.

4. RECRUITMENT DRIVE

If the organiser was thorough in the first three steps by the time serious recruitment starts a demand for the A.N.C., will be high. People will be wanting to join the A.N.C.

It will be easy to set up structures to coordinate who have been consistent in the first three stages. It is these activists who will form the core for the first branch structures. Activists who take the responsibility of recruiting for the A.N.C., should be subjected to intensive education. At this stage of building the A.N.C., the organiser should visit the branch regularly. The organiser should give recruiter sufficient time to report on problems and progress. An independent check should always follow.

5. FORMING THE STRUCTURES

This will be followed by the actual launching of branches. To me this stage is just a culmination of the work done in the first four stages. The strength and weakness of branches depends on what has been done in the first four stages. A big A.N.C., can collapse to nothing in three to five years time if the first stages were not followed correctly. I prefer a branch that grows in a medium pace if it follows these steps than a branch that grows fast organising have been done incorrectly. What is important is a solid foundation for the A.N.C., because that is the guarantee for the future.

MISTAKES COMMON IN ORGANISING

MISTAKE NO. 1

We usually assume that the newly employed organiser is capable of doing the organisational work because he/she has been in one organisation or the other or he/she has been a member of the organisation.

This mistake can be overcome by conducting proper induction for new organiser and subject him/her to a short introductory course which should be a combination of theory and practical.