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SUBMISSION TO THE WORKERS SEMINAR, 27-28TH AUGUST, 1983

"WORKERS, THE FUTURE IS OURS - BUILD IT TODAY!"

WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT

Comrade Leaders,
Comrades,

We are meeting here to assess the part activities of the Works Committee and the Production Units, with a view to improving on them. This seminar should review the achievements and shortcomings of the work started by our pioneers, who have laid the foundations for the present workforce, which is constructing and contributing to this fountain of knowledge - Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. It is also the task of the participants in this first workers seminar to identify vital landmarks for the future, to suggest ways and means of improving our planning and our political and organisational work. Having done this, the seminar should try to establish clear guidelines for action over the coming years. It is not my duty to suggest ways of improvement. Other speakers will elaborate on this. My assignment in this seminar is to brief you on the historic background of the Production Units and the Works Committee, the role they are playing, the problems they are facing and to what extent they are solving them.

I must emphasize from the outset that the Production Units (PU's) and the Works Committee (WC) are political organs. They do not replace management. Their main role is to strengthen our workforce by organising and mobilizing each collective to fulfil its production assignments in an exemplary way.

At the beginning in November 1980, the WC was formed to take workers problems and problems of discipline away from the desk of the Project Manager. The early guidelines for the WC were roughly as follows:

- "Production Units set up in each collective of workers are to ensure efficiency, material economy, attendance and work discipline. Disciplinary problems are to be referred to the WC only after they have been dealt with by the PU. Representatives from each PU to the Works Committee are appointed by the management. They report weekly from the PU's to the Works Committee and back. Secretaries and Chairpersons of the PU's are elected by the members of the Production Units.

The task of the Works Committee is to assist and guide the PU's and management to attain maximum efficiency; to coordinate working relations between PU's, to discuss disciplinary cases referred by the production units and, if necessary, to refer them to the Disciplinary Committee." -

Because of the growth of Production Units in other departments, the Works Committee is now responsible to the Directorate. The Production Units which have been set up are as follows:

Transport
Building Site
Technical Department
Agriculture
Administration (formerly Treasury)
Clinic

Tailoring
Mechanics
Supplies
Stores
Carpentry
Electrical

Comrades, for nearly three years the WC has been meeting almost every Saturday afternoon to discuss reports from the Production Units. It is true that in the first months it spent all its time discussing disciplinary cases, and at times it was forced to take strong action. But we could not find time to discuss the reports piling up from the PUYs. Finally we realized that we must consequently insist that the PU's take this responsibility upon themselves. Since then our task has been mainly to advise, and sometimes to correct the actions taken. Serious cases have been referred to the Disciplinary Committee with our recommendations.

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Complex?

In this respect we have had some success. Where PU's have been functioning well, we have been able to strengthen their authority and several PU's have successfully dealt with disciplinary cases, notably the Building Site, the Electrical Department, the Technical Department and Agriculture. However, many PU's are not functioning as they should and there is a big gap between the level of discipline in different units.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Comrades, I would like briefly to highlight some of the achievements of the WC and PU's since their formation:

- The year following our formation, the WC launched a programme of annual emulation. It has become a custom now to award annually the Best Production Units, Best Workers as well as Best Improved Workers and Production Units. We remember also to award our veterans who have played a staunch role as outstanding workers and have given their best to the struggle. We must extend and improve this programme!
- Hand in hand with the emulations we started the custom of workers New Year's Eve Party. The purpose of this party has been to gather our entire workforce in an atmosphere of relaxed comradeship and we have made it a point as workers to contribute towards the costs of the evening so as not to overtax our Treasury.
- It has also become a tradition of the WC to exhibit the fruits of our production at the annual international Saba Saba Trade Fair. Here we have demonstrated proudly to the world our capability and activity as a detachment of the African National Congress. This activity has helped the workforce to appreciate its achievements.
- In support of our new pioneer project, the ANC Development Centre, Dakawa, the WC and PU's have taken two serious initiatives. Last year we organized a programme of weekend Letzima's where production units helped to clear the bush in preparation for planting and this year we have started a similar programme to assist with the trench for Dakawa's water pipeline. In organizing our "shock troops", the WC is also trying to build the collective spirit of the

PU's themselves. On our visits we always try to stay overnight to come closer to the new arrivals and inspire them wherever possible.

- Also to help building the collective spirit and to raise the technical horizons of the PU's, the works committee has encouraged study trips related to the work of the Production Units. Unfortunately only two PU's have taken advantage of this opportunity.
- Early on the WC became conscious of the need for a bulletin to assist in its tasks to help build the new worker, the new collective and to feed the community with news of activities. Here we must pay tribute to the comrades, who have sacrificed their free time to ensure the regular publication of the Bulletin since April 1981. The main shortcoming of the bulletin has been in the dryness of most of the PU reports and the WC and PU's must find ways to improve this. It is also high time that we found a fitting name for the Bulletin.
- The WC has campaigned for a proper holiday programme for the workers and together with management has submitted concrete proposals to the TG's Office. We are still awaiting his response and whilst we realize the need to economise, we must emphasize that it is necessary for any worker to have a rest from time to time. Comrades, a positive response from Cde. TG will impose a greater responsibility on us to increase our production and our efforts. Holidays cost money and money must not be diverted from our struggle at home.
- The WC has insisted that recommendations for scholarships should be channelled through the PU's and the Works Committee, so that recommendations can also be made by the candidates own workmates and we trust this will assist in reducing the comrades who go abroad and disgrace our movement.
- After the death of adult education in the beginning of 1980, when it was handed over to the school authorities, the WC helped to revive it and with assistance from the Youth Section classes were started in the Tailoring Workshop early in 1982. Some of the comrades, who attended then are still proud of their ability to read and write. But the present programme of adult education is inadequate to meet the needs of our struggle and this seminar must examine the problem.
- Where it has been called on to assist, the WC has persuaded comrades who have resigned, to return to their posts. It has helped to solve numerous serious problems, which have sometimes affected the entire community. Take, for example, the case of the clinic. Some years back the staff of the clinic was involved in continuous misbehaviour, drinking and roaming around in the ambulance. The WC insisted on the immediate suspension of one comrade, who was subsequently removed permanently from Mazimbu. It also insisted on a definite programme of clinic hours for the benefit of the clinic workers as well as the community. Many comrades working at the clinic today are not even aware of the battle we fought at that time.
- The WC campaigned for a transport officer long before the Directorate did, long before the accident which killed our comrade last year. We even outlined the qualities needed for the post and searched our ranks to find the right man.
- We have started to make progress in drawing our education

workers into our work. For some months now an observer from the secondary school has been attending WC-meetings, and we have recently been informed that they intend to join the works committee, though they have not yet decided how best to do so. We welcome this and hope that the comrades will soon form a production unit or units which will participate fully in our tasks.

- We have been inspired by the participation of an increasing number of students in after-school work. Many of them are outstanding and we welcome also the formation of the student works committee.

SHORTCOMINGS

- Comrades, our efforts to assist the Charlottes to form PU's has not been whole hearted. The workers in our Child Care Centre need to be organised like any other workers and whilst the Charlottes are the responsibility of the Womens Section, all workers have a duty to assist in this mission. We must redouble our efforts!
- We have done nothing to organise our ANC catering workers into production units and we also feel that all catering should fall under one department. The WC has made many efforts to improve the catering for the workers, who often go to work without breakfast and only eat after knocking off in the afternoon. Better catering could be assured if a PU was set up.
- We have failed to organise the cobblery and garment factory PU's and the Tailoring PU, which once received the Best PU Award is no longer meeting! Other Units like the Mechanics Workshop are also not meeting and this has contributed to serious problems, which the WC is trying to help solving.
- The WC has not succeeded in assisting PU's to submit proper reports. Some do not report regularly, others do not report accurately and try to cover up problems. We have experienced this in the Agriculture, Logistics, the Clinic and Treasury (now Administration). Some units submit dry, dull reports week after week. Poor reporting seriously affects the ability of the WC to strengthen the units.
- Many PU's are failing to hold interesting and productive meetings, which can only mean that they have failed to understand the purpose of the meetings. Some topics discussed include matters completely unrelated to work such as clot-hing and food supplies, complaints about residences, bicycles for personal use etc. The Building Site is notorious for this type of meeting and it has only a competent secretary to thank for its good reports. Such meetings have led to some Department Heads refusing to attend PU-meetings.
- There are PU's (e.g. the Treasury) where comrades are afraid to criticise and correct each others mistakes, especially when their seniors are involved. These comrades are failing in their duty to our struggle and the WC has not been effective enough in assisting such PU's.
- There are also PU's which choose at times to hide behind structures or structural changes in the management (Directorate) to avoid their political responsibilities, when these become uncomfortable in the Unit. The Units, or individuals in the Units, suddenly claim to be responsible to their Department at Headquarters or to the Chief Representative or RPC. This type of thing affects our work seriously and we

- feel strongly that the seminar should take a stand on this issue.
- Only when we solve, once and for all, the question of punctuality and strict attendance at work will we be able to really claim to be the new detachment of ANC workers. Some PU's have taken initiatives in this area but others are far behind and hundreds of manhours are lost to our struggle every week.
 - The programme of meetings between the WC and the PU chairpersons and secretaries has scored some successes but meetings have not been organised regularly and topics have not always been well prepared. We must overcome this to strengthen the link between the WC and the PU's,
 - The WC has not taken strong steps to ensure that all its members attend WC meetings regularly, though generally they do. WC members do not all take notes and reporting back to the PU's is generally weak and sometimes not even a true reflection of WC meetings and decisions. This retards our progress and should be corrected.
 - Since the departure of our former Regional Commissar, the WC has tried but failed to draw into our meetings the complex commissar.

Comrades, the work of the WC members is very full. Little time is left for planning ahead or for active work with the PU's and individual workers. It is becoming increasingly clear with the growth of our workforce that there is a strong need for one or two full time functionaries on the WC. In the meantime our work will continue!

Despite our weak cadres, we have many powerful and conscientious workers in our ranks on whom we can depend for the success of our mission.

Our projects like Somafo and Dakawa are battlefronts and no matter what difficulties we face we pledge to fulfil our mission in an exemplary way!

We will develop our heroes!
Forward to Victory!

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