



CONTENTS

- ★ From Ongulumbashe to Cuito, From Cuito to Windhoek ...
- ★ ACTWUSA says, 'Workers, Do it Yourself' Zenzeleni Clothing Project
- ★ Every Act of Struggle are Act of Culture
- ★ Siyanda Consumer Co-operative Project

PLAN Fighters - A Place to Live and Work

In Namibia today the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) says that the organised labour movement must play an active role in helping PLAN fighters and the war refugees, to find somewhere to live and to find work. They say: "All these people are the relatives of us who remained behind. Together we must look at what our needs are in the communities where we live, and find ways of meeting our needs."

"We must use the skills of the combatants to help the community and the community in their turn, must welcome all those people back from the war. The organisations of the people, the trade unions and SWAPO, must help in this process."

How can the NUNW help all the people returning from the war to find their place in the community? The NUNW says we need to first understand the strengths and weaknesses of the people and the country.

The Problem of Unemployment

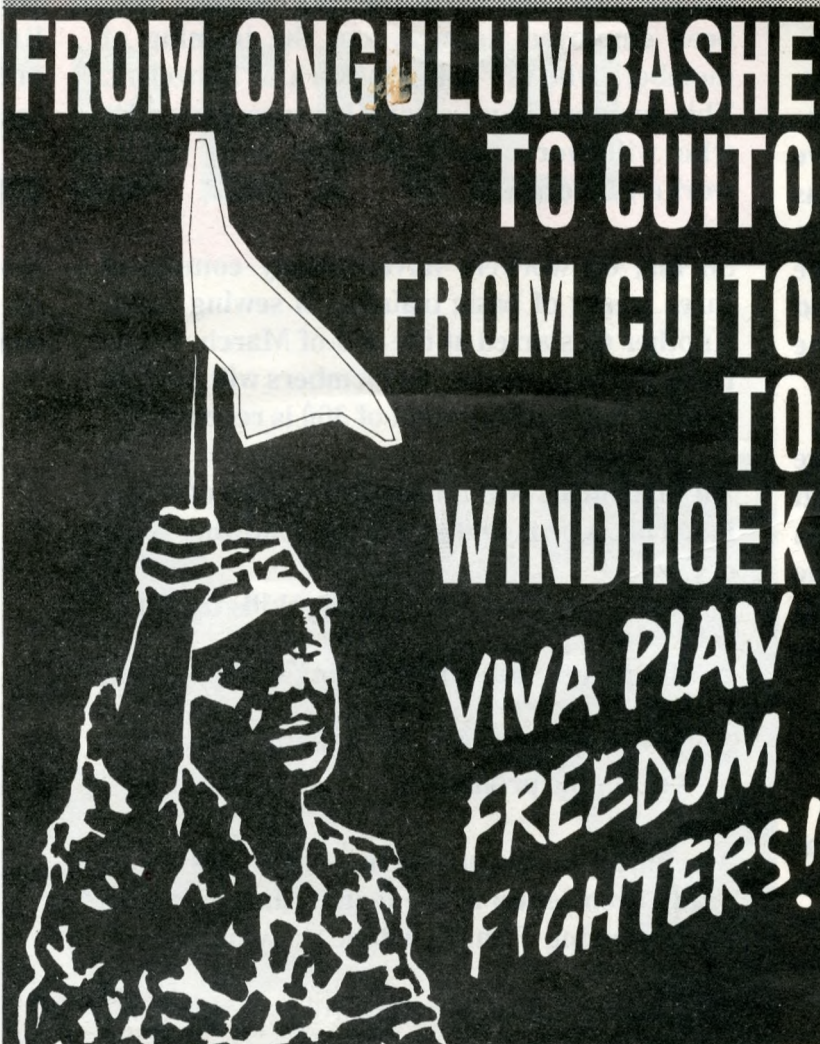
For many years capitalists and the state have made profits and continued to feed the war in Namibia out of the exploitation of Namibian workers and unemployed youth.

Many Namibian people found work in the services sector, which supplied the SWATF and the SADF troops who occupied Namibia. Unemployment forced many young Namibians to become recruits of the South West African Territorial Forces (SWATF) - the largest single employer in Namibia.

Now that the war has ended, the state and capitalists are ready to dump these very people. The Pienaar regime is planning together with the capitalist bosses to sell the state services such as transport, post and telecommunications, health and water to private companies. Many people stand to lose their jobs from this theft of the state

FROM ONGULUMBASHE TO CUITO, FROM CUITO TO WINDHOEK...

This slogan of the combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) tells us not only about their victorious battles against the enemy, but it also gives us an idea of what new battles these comrades will have to fight. For any people who have been fighting a war for many years, there always remains the task, once the war is over, of rebuilding their country. This new battle is a burning question in their minds and for their supporters at home. What to do?



owned services of a future government of the people.

Those people who worked for the 15 ethnic government structures under the South African colonial regime, will also lose their jobs, when these apartheid structures in Namibia are dismantled.

PLAN fighters and war refugees are returning from the war. They too may be forced to join the mass of unemployed unless Namibia plans for their homecoming today.

The Problem of Bantu Education

The NUNW says many people in Namibia never had a chance to get proper education. Bantu education and apartheid capitalism did not help people to get some of the skills they need to build the country. But it is also true that some people through their involvement in the people's organisations learnt and were educated. Such people will have to be active in helping to train others.

Working Side by Side

The NUNW says those who were forced to serve in the SWATF are as much victims of apartheid as those who were forced into exile or became refugees in their land of birth. Co-operative and self-help projects in the community, can help all Namibians to learn to work side by side to build their country.

Such projects should focus on meeting the needs of the community. The NUNW sees the activities of these projects as including the following: poultry and small livestock farming, market gardening, mechanical and electrical repairs, brick-making and building, house painting, plumbing, carpentry, etc. Each project should be small and should not have more than 10 members.

The first step would be for the NUNW to use their organisational skills and structures to train a wide number of workers in the skills necessary to set up and manage projects.

continued on page 4

ACTWUSA SAYS - Workers, do it yourself!

Clothing made by workers for workers! That is what the Zenzeleni Clothing Project is all about. It is the ACTWUSA-owned clothing co-op in Jacobs, Durban, where union members make overalls and T-shirts.

The idea to set up the Zenzeleni Clothing Project grew out of the need for the workers in ACTWUSA to try to do something about the massive retrenchments that took place at the Frame company in 1988.

Negotiations with Frame

Although union negotiations around retrenchment succeeded in reducing the number of members to be retrenched and improved the severance package, this was not enough. What about work? You can't live on severance pay for the rest of your life.

Everybody has the right to a job, the workers of ACTWUSA believed. And if employers could not provide jobs for members, organised workers had to do something themselves. Why not set up a factory owned by ACTWUSA where the work done, is for the benefit of the members?

The decision to start the project was taken by the NEC of ACTWUSA in September 1988. In further negotiations the Frame bosses agreed to give the union R2,5 million to help finance the project.

Zenzeleni and other Co-ops

The intention is not to compete with other co-ops, rather it is believed that there should be co-operation between different projects that have been started by the unions. ACTWUSA has held meetings with comrades from other union co-op projects such as NUMSA which has the SAWCO project near Pietermaritzburg and another co-op in the Eastern Cape and the NUM which has co-ops in the Transvaal.

Meetings have also been held with many large employers to discuss supplying them with workwear. The initial discussions have been promising. Employers have not been against the idea in principle and Zenzeleni feels confident that they will be able to produce quality garments.

The project today

Today, just a few months later, the co-op has started work. At the moment 120 members who were retrenched from Frame CCC have been taken on and are undergoing training. But the total workforce at the co-op will be 300.



Zenzeleni Clothing Project makes T-shirts and workwear, for union co-op projects, like SAWCO and for companies too.

Six instructors from the clothing industry have been employed to carry out the training of members who are going to work at Zenzeleni. This training is necessary because comrades who will work there have all been textile workers before.

So far, 60 workers have already completed three weeks of basic training in sewing skills. Another 60 started at the end of March. Every three weeks, a further 60 members will join the project until the full total of 300 is reached.

All machinists will undergo 10 weeks of training. This is broken down in the following way:

- * three weeks of basic sewing skills training
- * four weeks advanced sewing skills training
- * three weeks on the job training (this involves simple production).

Machinery for the production of overalls has already been set up at the factory and machines for producing T-shirts will be arriving soon.

The main production items will be T-shirts for the unions and other progressive organisations.

Workwear, such overalls, will also be made. Besides comrades who will be involved in production, there are also eight members working as security guards.

Workers' Rules

When the first sixty workers were taken on, they drew up a basic code of conduct. These workers' rules say that:

- * no one will steal from the co-op or other comrades
- * fighting amongst comrades will not be allowed
- * comrades must not drink alcohol during work-time
- * attendance is important for the fairness of equal effort
- * comrades must not smoke in production areas

Wages and working conditions at Zenzeleni are to be in line with the Industrial Council agreement for the Durban clothing industry.

Management of the Project

The areas of clothing manufacture, even if they are fairly simple clothes, and of running a factory was something new to members of the union. They have recognised that they don't yet have these skills. Their decision was therefore



Cde Glen Cormack (above), Zenzeleni factory manager, is part of the co-op's board of directors, together with the marketing manager and ACTWUSA's president and General Secretary.

to employ some people who had the skills and who would be willing to work in a democratic way and pass on their experience.

Comrade Glen Cormack was employed to manage the factory and Comrade Stephanie Miller was employed to deal with marketing the clothes made.

Both are under the control of the union board of trustees. The people on this board are the ACTWUSA President, Amon Ntuli, the General Secretary, John Copelyn, the National Organiser, Elias Banda and the Pinetown Branch Chairperson, Gilbert Phewa.

Then there are also a "board of directors" which ensures that everything proceeds in a proper way at Zenzeleni. This is made up of the union's President and General Secretary and the two comrades who have been employed to manage the factory.

Both comrades have wide experience in their work. Comrade Glen was a manager at Tiger Oats, a very large and powerful company, before he came to work for the union.

For Comrade Glen, the move has been a very happy change. "When I was working for Tiger Oats, I always felt that I should do more for the workers' movement in South Africa, not just be a good manager," he said.

"The almost total lack of rights for workers in our country limits what individuals can do in a company. I am very happy to now be part of the workers movement."

Shop Stewards

He said that workers at the factory will elect shop stewards to represent them and in this way will have representation at all levels of the union. The senior shop stewards will attend the Durban Branch Executive Committee meetings, for example.

"But," he added, "these shop stewards will have to do more than those in ordinary factories. They will have to encourage members to get seriously involved in the special education programme of the co-op. This will involve skills and theory training, so that committees can be set up to look at various aspects of the factory's operation. Examples of such planned committees are raw materials, sales, production, quality and finance committees.

"The aim is to get workers involved in the whole operation. Once this is done, these workers could then assist in setting up similar co-ops in Ladysmith and East London.

Working for the Future

"Although co-ops cannot solve the unemployment problem, we will be able to build workers ability to run a production and distribution operation through democratic structures of their own choice.

"We must influence a move to greater workers involvement in the economy. The co-op and others that have been set up, could equip people to play a leading role in a more democratic South Africa", he said.

article adapted from ACTWUSA Worker News 6 April 1989.

ZENZELENI BASEBENZI



Zenzeleni Clothing is part of an ACTWUSA project which aims to give employment to retrenched workers from Frame companies in Durban, Ladysmith and East London.

← This picture shows workers registering at Zenzeleni Clothing



above: Cde Frans Januarie from VW helps Imvaba cultural workers to spray paint the giant mural.

below: Imvaba cultural workers have lunch and discuss the mornings work.



"One Amandla hamburger, please!"

Every Act of Struggle an Act of Culture

Imvaba cultural workers designed and painted a giant window mural for the coffee bar of the consumer co-op.

Cultural workers from Imvaba were happy to meet the request for assistance from the NUMSA co-op. They explained that they like to do work for all progressive organisations. But, more important for them would be to work with organisations - they would like to involve workers from NUMSA in the project.

Cde Frans Januarie, a spray painter from Volkswagen in Uitenhage was happy to use his skills in a new and creative way.

And so, through the collective work and organisation of Imvaba, a mural celebrating the strength of workers appeared on the windows of the Workshop Coffee Bar.

Siyanda Consumer Co-operative Project is putting its name into practice. Slowly and surely the project is growing. By the middle of July some of the first consumer projects, 2 coffee bar and T-shirt shop, will open their doors.

Space has been set aside to open a place where everyone can sit down, relax, have a cup of coffee and something to eat. The Workshop Coffee Bar hopes that it would also become a venue where cultural workers can play music, read poetry and exhibit paintings, sculpture or photographs.

The T-shirt Shop will sell different kinds of T-shirts. Its main aim will be to effectively distribute in the PE area, T-shirts from other co-operatives, like SAWCO and the NUM T-shirt co-operative in Phalaborwa.

But, the T-shirt shop will not only sell T-shirts. It will also have for sale union tracksuits. As the other co-operatives develop their products, it hopes to find a market for other products like caps.



From Ongulumbashe to Cuito, from Cuito to Windhoek ...

Continued from page 1

The industrial unions will also set up joint committees for the reintegration of returnees and all other Namibians. Through grass roots structures such committees must monitor ways of integrating returnees. Literacy and numeracy teachers should start working with groups of workers. The NUNW is in a strong position to do this work because it has branches in many areas of the country.

A New Future

But co-operatives and self-help projects are not separate from the larger economy. In the economy of Namibia there are also other problems.

Today, much of the wealth in the country remains in the hands of the large mining monopolies. More than 60% of the land which can be used for farming is owned by whites. Almost half of whom do not even live on this land or farm the land. Namibia has very rich fishing grounds, but these have largely been exploited by South African owned fishing companies.

A future government will have to plan to overcome the problems created, because the wealth of the country remained in the hands of a few people. The colonial war against the people of Namibia, unemployment and lack of educational skills are the direct result of the system of exploitation and oppression in

Namibia.

Co-operative and self-help projects can only begin help address some of these fundamental problems, if they are part of the plan of a future government to radically change the system of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The challenge of this struggle is the real battle that faces Plan fighters returning home from the war and the majority of the people of Namibia.

From Ongulumbashe to Cuito, from Cuito to Windhoek. The struggle continues.