

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

SPORT IN SOUTH AFRICAN MINES

AN AREA OF CONCERN

Comrades,

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is very short but an attempt has been made to put a clear picture of what is going on in Sport in the mines. When everybody is having a clear picture, SACOS will be in a position to give us guidance in our attempt to change the picture and replace the present structures and policies with people's structures and policies. SACOS will help us in teaching our administrators that their affiliation to puppet bodies is betraying the miners' struggle against oppression and exploitation. We feel it is our responsibility to destroy the monopolistic tendencies by the bosses where pro-government sport bodies are given the sole right in the mines against the feeling of sportsmen. The structures as will be outlined will, to a great extent clarify some of the questions you may be having, NUM Education programme and longterm aims will clarify what we mean by guidance and help expected from SACOS.

2. STRUCTURES

Sport in the mines was originally meant to relieve hostel dwellers from frustration, and nothing more than that. We are all aware that mines have been behind the migrant labour system for years. They have been responsible for separation of thousands of mineworkers from their families. They have been trying hard to make this system justifiable. One of the systems they have used was to build recreation facilities in the hostels. The mine bosses never thought of any affiliation to any sport body. They only thought mineworkers will play and be relieved from frustration, and hostels play against one another and end there. When sportsmen were developed and started thinking in term of getting affiliated to the national bodies, the bosses again forged relationships with SARA, SAAAU, SAABU and other pro-government bodies.

I will give full details of affiliation in the next item of the paper. What made it easy for the bosses to do whatever they wanted about sportsmen in the mines was that they created their structures in such a way that the sportsmen themselves should have no say in the administration of their sport. Those structures are still working in the mines. Those are the structures we want to replace with peoples' structures.

To start with, let us look at the club committees. Every sports club has a committee. (This committee is called a sub-committee in the mines, being a subcommittee of the main Recreation Club Committee). This committee is fully responsible for the organisation of the club, they maintain discipline, they are responsible for training and coaching of the club and they select teams in their club. But now they have no decision-making power on finances, on policy

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The Recreation Club Committee, which is the sub-committees together, is in the same position as the sub-clubs. The sub-committees sit together and discuss issues of common interest and they cannot take decisions. They can only make recommendations for someone else to take decisions. This is the highest committee the mine sport administrator can participate in at mine level. They cannot communicate directly with Management on issues affecting them. They must communicate through Welfare/Recreation Officers, who most of the time are mangement pawns, having special interest in one type of sport only. The so-called Welfare Officers are appointed to their positions as a result of their performance in one type of sport or the other. With their jobs secured by their sport performance and their jobs safeguarded by management, they become a poor link between sportsmen and management. These Welfare Officers have no authority and no decision-making power.

The hostel manager is the man who has all authority and all the decision-making power for Black employees in the mine. These people have a misconception about Blacks and their needs.

These Hostel Managers are members of Hostel Managers' Associations of an area, eg. Eastern Transvaal Hostel Managers' Association. This Association is the umbrella body for all the sport Associations eg. Eastern Transvaal Rugby Association, Eastern Transvaal Hostel Managers' Soccer League, etc. The Hostel Managers' Association channels the funds to the different sport associations of their own choice. They decide for the associations where to affiliate. They draft the fixtures. They decide on allocation of points, who play the finals and when they are played. It is important to highlight the fact that Hostel Management is highly reserved for Whites.

These are the structure we reject. These are the structures we want to replac. The biggest problem is:

Will we manage? How long will it take? With what do we have to replace them? We have to work hard to get the answers to the questions for the miners.

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3. AFFILIATION

We as mineworkers have realised that since the 80's SARA, SAABU and SAAAU have run to the mines for their support. We discovered that it was when the war against these sports bodies was highly intensified in the townships, SARA, for example, was totally rejected. The miners saw the whole process OPPORTUNITIES in provincial sport. They started dreaming of becoming "SPRINGBOKS". Up to 1979 there was only one SARA province in the mines, ie Orange Free State. Since then the number has grown to seven, covering almost the entire mining industry. On 20th June 1980 SAAA and CF was disbanded and all their members were forced to join SAAAU with Charles Niewoudt dreaming of re-admission to the international arena. SAABU, though, has a strong following in the townships, and has forged recognition and a strong following in the mines. SANA has launched a strong campaign in the mines.

This shows clearly, Comrades, that these pro-government sports bodies are gaining momentum in the industry. They have produced outstanding athletes. They have tried to impress us by awarding springbok colours to people who do not deserve them. They have spent large sums of money in taking miners on tours inside the country and overseas.

This has been an attempt by these sports bodies and the mine bosses to impress the miners. These are seen as practical hurdles we will have to jump to get to our dream.

In a rough survey conducted on the mines, it was clear that mineworkers were not having information about SACOS affiliated national bodies. It was proved that most rugby players had substantial information about SARU as they come mainly from the Eastern Cape. They felt guilty about playing for SARA. But they saw their playing for SARA as the only way open to them to prove their ability. We are seriously planning to exploit that situation. Soccerplayers know almost nothing about any sports body other than NSL and NPSL. Boxers know SAABU only.

The question we are presently trying to answer is: "Where do we start?" Education on SACOS has been the only answer. NUM is an affiliate of COSATU. It is a non-racial union.

Our members are members of multi-racial sports bodies. There is a growing feeling that this is betraying our struggle. We therefore need to correct the situation.

4. NUM EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON SPORT

Four men, two officials and two workers, have been assigned by our education committee to make an indepth study on the issue. They will draft programmes to correct the situation. These programmes will be submitted to the NEC for approval.

This committee of four has agreed that they need more literature and more information on non-racial sport. When we have this information, simplified manuals will be distributed to all the regions. Our regional education committee will distribute this information to all our branches. This information will be discussed widely.

This will be followed by seminars on sport. Our regions will be encouraged to invite Welfare Officers, Sports Committeemembers and Sportsmen to such seminars. The main idea is to conscientise the sportsmen themselves against apartheid sport. We want to see sportsmen themselves revolt against Hostel Managers' Associations.

We want to see the workers demanding the right to decide on policy, affiliation, financing etc of their sport.

In doing so, we need to have strategies to ensure that:

1. We secure recreational funds
2. We don't stop playing; the transitional period should not kill talent
3. Competition should not decline
4. The demand for the change should not be limited to certain areas, but should cover the whole mining industry.

5. LONG TERM PLAN

This plan should be seen as a long term plan. The programme will be such that we tackle the individual games in which we have more chance of success, and then use the players of that game to tackle the players of other games.

Progress will have to be analysed periodically. Problems encountered are to be put under a microscope frequently and solutions to be sought. Information on non-racial sport to be updated frequently. This is the longterm brief.

6. CONCLUSION

Comrades, I hope it is clear that we will depend on SACOS for literature and information on non-racial sport, that SACOS should be prepared to send people to conduct the necessary seminars when we as NUM cannot.

I hope it is clear that it will be a difficult programme resisted strongly by the bosses. It is also important for our struggle to destroy the bases for the Cravens, Sonos, Niewoudts and others in the mines. That will isolate them further. Let us make Ntakas, Ngobenis, Sinques feel guilty when wearing springbok blazers. If we can win, it will be a breakthrough for non-racial sport.

THANKING YOU

GWEDA MANTASHE