

HOW TO FORM A FACTORY COMMITTEE

1. Discuss the committee with all the workers. If more than three/quarters of the workers want a committee, then go ahead. Do not be dismayed if it takes many weeks to persuade the workers about the committee.
2. Call a meeting of all the workers during a lunch hour. Tell the boss about this meeting.
3. If the boss is chairman of the meeting, and if the workers elect all the members of the committee, then ask the boss to register the committee as a works committee with the Department of Labour. This will protect the committee against victimization.
4. At the meeting, the boss must not run the meeting. His job is just to keep order. One of the workers should propose that a committee be elected to serve for one year. If this is agreed to, then workers should be proposed for the committee. Work out beforehand how many members there will be of the committee. A small factory will have five members on the committee, a big factory will have more. (Not more than 20).
5. If more workers are nominated than there are seats, there will have to be an election. This can be done at the meeting by a show of hands.
6. Once the workers are elected to the committee, the committee will draw its own constitution and elect its own chairman and secretary. It must then make sure that the boss has informed the Department of Labour that a works committee has been formed. Write to "Abasebenzi", 317 Durban Road, Korsten, P.E., if you need help with the constitution.
7. If the boss refuses to have the meeting, or to allow the workers to form a works committee, then he is breaking the law. Inform the Bantu Labour Officer (Telephone 46641).
8. If the Bantu Labour Officer does not help you, then write to "Abasebenzi". (317 Durban Road, Korstan).
9. If your factory already has a liaison committee which does nothing for the workers, then the workers will first have to agree to do away with the liaison committee before it can elect a works committee. This can best be done by persuading the members of the liaison committee to resign. It can also be done when the term of office of the liaison committee ends. Otherwise you draw up a petition to the boss, asking for a works committee instead of a liaison committee. Get all the workers in the factory to sign this petition.
10. If you have any problems in forming your factory committee, or in getting registration with the Department of Labour as a works committee, write to "Abasebenzi".
11. Only African workers can be members of the registered works committee. But are your coloured fellow-members not to be organised too? Discuss this matter with coloured workers. They should elect their own representatives. These should attend committee meetings and take part in committee activities. By bringing African and coloured workers together you will have formed the true factory committee representing all the workers and uniting the workers.
12. If there are fewer than 20 African workers in your factory, the committee will not be registered but should still be formed to represent the workers.
13. Having a factory committee is your RIGHT, not a privilege.