

Dairy Maid Boycott – A Postscript

Following meetings with Dairy Maid management on 13 and 14 February, Food Beverage and Allied Workers Union issued a press statement announcing its settlement with the company:

- * the company has agreed to reinstate immediately 80 workers involved in the dispute, by 21 February 1985
- * the company has agreed to pay R70,000 to the workers in full settlement
- * the company has undertaken to recognise the union once representivity has been established
- * the union has therefore agreed to inform the community to discontinue the present boycott against Dairy Maid products.

Consumer boycotts prompted by labour disputes are suddenly back in vogue. Hard on the heels of the Simba Quix boycott came the news that CUSA had launched a national boycott of the ice-cream company, Dairy Maid, which fired 90 members of its Food, Beverage Workers Union after a strike in Pretoria in February 1984. (See SALB 10.4 for background) In theory, this boycott had an even greater chance of success than that at Simba. Ice-cream is hardly a staple food and boycotters would not have to make an undue sacrifice. The company is also part of the Barlow Rand group; which meant that a boycott had far more potential for embarrassing that company than the Simba action which, much to the pleasure of Federale Volks, was never connected with them.

However favourable the circumstances, effective boycotts need to be extremely well organised. The question was whether CUSA had the ability to organise such a boycott and whether other unions would swing their weight behind the call to forgo Dairy Maid's frozen delicacies; as Moses Motsuenyane said in his letter of appreciation to supporters:

UNITY IS STRENGTH!!!

An injury to one worker is an injury to all workers. United worker action proved in the Simba Quix boycott and the recent stay-away that we can achieve worker goals if workers are united and stand firm.

(CUSA communique, 11.3.85)