

BOSSSES SEND WORKERS HOME TO DIE



KROST Brothers' strikers on the third day of their stoppage. They were watched closely by a small force of riot police further down the road.

WE WILL NOT BE USED — MAWU

WE will not be used as window dressing while SEIFSA continues to sign agreements with the old minority unions — says the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

MAWU said this after the recent round of wage talks at the metal industries' Industrial Council.

At a meeting on June 20, MAWU attacked the director of the giant employers' association, Sam van Coller, for getting the union on to the Council so that it would look as though it now represented black workers and now would look after their interests.

But it still went behind MAWU's back and signed an agreement with the old minority unions on the Council — as it always had done.

SEIFSA did this at the meeting of the main Industrial Council when it signed an agreement with the old unions for an increase of 10c an hour.

DID IT AGAIN

The employers' association then went and did it again for the Cable Manufacturing Industry.

At the meeting with both the

Cable Manufacturing Association and SEIFSA, MAWU made it quite clear that its members had rejected the 11c to 14c per hour increase that was being offered.

SEIFSA then raised the offer to 12c per hour but then refused to allow MAWU to take this offer back to its members.

WENT AHEAD

Instead when the other unions agreed to accept the offer, SEIFSA just went ahead and signed an agreement.

MAWU said this clearly showed that SEIFSA intends to negotiate in 'bad faith' with the union and was blocking MAWU from democratically reporting back to its worker members.

'It seems that SEIFSA is intent on continuing with the bad old ways of negotiating with unions representing a minority of the workers and which do not involve their members in negotiations nor report back to them,' MAWU said.



METAL workers at a report back meeting to discuss pension meeting and Industrial Council meetings.

down. At Krost Brothers at Heriotdale the workers would not accept that management could just call in their shop stewards and tell them the company had retrenched 140 workers.

The entire workforce stopped work for four days until the company agreed to talk to MAWU.

Shop steward chairman, Elias Novela said as well as management refusing to discuss the retrenchment of the 140 workers, when the shop stewards raised the issue of severance pay 'the managers just walked out of the room'.

Krost Brothers has now agreed to just lay off the 140 workers and has begun to negotiate a retrenchment agreement with MAWU which will also cover these workers.

Litmaster workers also struck for two days after management retrenched 40 workers without any negotiations.

Although, the company at the end of the strike agreed to talk to MAWU, negotiations have deadlocked and the union is considering legal action.

Brother Mayekiso said it was clear that many companies were retrenching workers in order to get back the money they were having to pay for wage increases.

He said MAWU felt that the government should ban all retrenchments and make it compulsory for companies to negotiate short time or lay offs.

A RETRENCHED WORKER TALKS

I worked for a metal company for 9 years in Vereeniging. In February this year I was told that there was no more work. I left with 30 other workers and came back here. I came with my weekly wage of R40 and they gave me R12 for the train. I am still waiting for work and my family is suffering.

I go to the labour bureau once a week — it costs me 70c for the bus but now there are many of us. I was sending R60 a month to my family and also meat and sugar when a car was going from Johannesburg.

I live with my parents (67 years old), my four brothers, my wife and three young children. We get nothing now — no food. I am afraid for my children — one of them has died of sores in the stomach. This was the baby born last year while I was still at work.

Only my mother gets a pension — R40 every two months — and sometimes my father gets a little money when he sells herbs. I went to borrow money from my friend who is still at work and he gave me R60 — now I do not know anyone with money.

We sold four cows this year for R60 each and now we only have two left and a calf. There are a few chicken left and I am thinking of selling another cow soon.

My two brothers are at school but I must pay R15 and there is nothing for this. My kids need jerseys for winter and now the other little one is sick and should go to the Doctor.

In April I applied for my Unemployment Insurance money but there is nothing yet and I must go again this week to ask at the office.

We do not eat much — only porridge and nothing with it — we need money for food. We need tea, sugar and wood. We are all hoping that something will happen but there are many of us like this.



MOSES MAYEKISO

'Employers must learn to share the profits with their workers in bad times instead of kicking them out in order to keep profits high,' he added.

Brother Mayekiso said unemployment was a threat to everybody in this country and the only way this could be curbed was by forcing companies to negotiate with unions.

However, although the companies have tried to retrench workers without negotiating with the union, not all the workers have taken this lying

METAL PENSION FUND BOARD MADE MORE REPRESENTATIVE

THE Metal and Allied Workers Union has booted off the Board of the Metal Industries Pension Fund a number of racist unions.

Previously, unions like Yster and Staal and the Amalgamated Engineering Union (which only allow white members) have sat on the Board although they did not have any members in the fund.

But at the insistence of MAWU and its sister unions — the General Workers Union, the Chemical Workers Industrial Union and the National Auto-

mobile and Allied Workers Union — these unions have been kicked off the Board.

And as part of the push to make the Board more representative of the workers who belong to the fund, it has been agreed that only the biggest unions will be represented on the Board.

However, SEIFSA — the giant employers association — has once again rejected MAWU's demand that the employers be allowed less than 50 percent of the seats on the Board.

SEIFSA has claimed that they could not possibly co-operate with the unions if they had less

than half the seats on the Board of the fund.

MAWU made it quite clear at a recent meeting of the pension fund that it did not accept this position.

MAWU has continually argued that the money in the fund belonged to the workers and there was no good reason why the employers should have 50 percent of the seats on the Board.

Surely the workers have more right to decide what to do with their money which has grown to millions of Rand in the pension fund?