

Contract workers

want more leave

CONTRACT workers are complaining that their Christmas holiday is being cut short by as much as a week because of the time they spend travelling to and from their homes.

Shop stewards' committees in several FOSATU factories on the Rand are discussing ways of solving the problem.

ONLY TWO WEEKS

Workers say that many employers on the Rand give only two weeks annual leave together with the public holidays over Christmas. This adds up to fourteen working days altogether.

Contract workers who live as far as the Ciskei and Transkei complain that many days of their holiday are wasted because of the time they spend travelling.

A worker from one rubber factory interviewed by Fosatu Worker News has said:

"I live 30 km from Idutywa in the Transkei. I got fifteen days leave this Christmas but spent seven days travelling."

'NO TIME TO REST'

"I only see my family once a year and there are too many jobs to do when I get home. Because I rush to sort out all the problems, I have little time with my family and no time to rest."

Committees in several factories are discussing the question. Many feel that at least three weeks plus public holidays should be given as happens for example in the engineering industry.

Contract workers in engineering factories say that is still too little.

Engineering union expelled

THE ENGINEERING and Allied Workers' Union (EAWU) has been expelled from FOSATU.

The decision was taken at a central committee meeting held in February.

EAWU was charged with violating FOSATU's principles of non-racialism, and with failing to cooperate with the local, regional and national committees of FOSATU.

REFUSED TO ATTEND

The union refused to attend several central committee meetings to answer to these charges.

Many of EAWU's members did not agree with the EAWU executive's decisions and the Vaal branch, which contains most of

EAWU's members, invited guest speakers from FOSATU to its Annual General Meeting in Sharpeville, held in January this year.

It subsequently decided to send delegates to meetings of FOSATU's Transvaal regional executive committee as observers.

BRANCH EXPELLED

EAWU's head office, which is based in Springs, then instructed Vaal delegates not to attend, and shortly afterwards expelled the Vaal branch.

The Vaal branch is now exploring ways of rejoining FOSATU and FOSATU has found it new offices in Vereeniging.

Henkel workers down tools

HENKEL workers in Durban stopped work on March 9 after Henkel management had unilaterally broken off negotiations with the CWIU.

Workers at Henkel's Isando plant were considering taking similar action.

Henkel management has been dodging negotiations with the workers for several months. Late last year they refused to negotiate on the basis of the union's wage proposals after shop stewards had travelled from Isando to Durban at their own expense.

CANCELLED

Management cancelled the next negotiations at a few hours notice when the Isando shop stewards had again already left for Durban.

At this point it became clear to the union that Henkel management was trying to break the common front of workers at the Durban and Isando plants.

In February, Henkel management again refused to negotiate with the workers over pensions and wages. They also arbitrarily reduced the wages of shift workers when workers prevented them from increasing the length of the shift.

LOWER WAGES

Workers say Henkel management has been paying wages far below their main competitors. Until recently, the minimum paid by Henkel was R50 a week as compared to R78 at Colgate. The massive expansion of Henkel at its new plant at Alrode is seen by the union as the result of the lower wages it pays.

According to a union spokesman a situation similar to that at Colgate last year has arisen at Henkel. He said: "We hope it won't require the same measures to bring them to their senses."

DEMANDS

The employers' argument is that low productivity is caused by workers being inefficient. The two demands that managements usually make are:

- * reduction of absenteeism and late arrivals at work.
- * that bonus schemes be introduced in place of flat rate wage increases.

Recent examples of this are the Sigma Motor Corporation in Pretoria and Piggott Maskew Rubber Company in Boksburg.

No wonder Transkei doesn't want unions!

THE MINISTER of Social Services of the Transkei has announced new minimum wages for workers in three industries in the Transkei.

He has appealed to all workers to keep up high productivity to make the new determinations worthwhile.

Mr Mlongeni said the new wage levels were in line with his pledge to look after the welfare of Transkeians in the social and labour spheres.



CONTRACT workers on their way home for their annual leave — "We have no time to rest," a worker has said.

Low productivity:

Put the blame where it belongs

BECAUSE industry is growing more slowly in 1982, employers are talking about low productivity.

They are demanding that workers increase production before management increases workers' pay.

Several FOSATU unions are facing this problem. The reply they are giving is that low productivity is mainly management's fault.

Sigma has put forward absenteeism and late-coming as one of the major problems that workers must solve in the plant.

PIGGOTT MASKEW

Piggott Maskew insisted late last year on a productivity bonus instead of any increase at all, and forced the issue before workers were able to put forward proposals for joint union and management discussion on the organisation of production.

The result was a strike, and an attempt by Piggott Maskew to cancel the union agreement.

FOSATU unions involved in these negotiations have stated that low productivity is mainly the result of poor organisation of work in the factory. They argue that workers themselves know where most of the production problems and hold-ups occur, and so should be involved in joint decision-making over the organisation of production.

SHORTGAGES OF PARTS

At Sigma, for example, shop stewards have pointed out that shortages of parts cause the production lines to close down.

The supervisors then speed up the lines so that they can make up for lost time. Workers have to work faster and the quality of the work declines.

The workers get blamed but the fault is not theirs.

Workers are also obliged to work overtime on Saturday. But they still need time at home so they stay absent from work some time during the week.

Then a man who is not as skilled in their job has to take their place. Again the quality and speed of production declines.

So workers say the only real solution to the problem of absenteeism is to make the organisation of production more efficient and to have workers jointly involved in making these decisions.

CONFIRMED BY EXPERT

Expert opinion confirms what workers have long felt. According to Dr Deming, an expert on motor car factories in the United States, 85% of spoiled parts are the result of management mistakes and only 15% are the workers' fault.

Japanese factories have been taking his advice and improving productivity, and some American car companies are also beginning to listen.

Martin Ndaba, NAAWU organiser in Pretoria, has said: "We aim to make more managements in South Africa realise this too."

The determination also lays down a minimum increase of 1½ cents an hour each year until further notice from the Wage Board.

Together with the Ciskei, Venda and other Bantustan governments, the Transkeian government is opposed to trade unions operating inside its territory.

Transkeian workers on the Rand say: "It is easy to see why this is so!"

The new wage levels in the manufacturing, building and civil engineering industries have been increased to 34 cents an hour for men and to 32 cents an hour for women.

This means a man will earn R15,64 (without deductions) for a 46 hour working week, and a woman R13,72.