

PARALLEL UNIONS - HOW DO THEY WORK ?

In 1979 the Parallel unions mainly with the support of TUCSA and its affiliates began to be very active. The important question is - How do these Parallel unions work? Last year FOSATU prepared a long report on the activities of the Parallel Unions. Here is one example of the way Parallels work that is taken from that report.

PARALLEL UNION ACTIVITY AT S. AFRICAN GENERAL ELECTRIC BENONI.

PARALLEL UNION INVOLVED:
Electrical Allied Workers of
S.A.

Around the end of September the Black Personnel Officer called the Liaison Committee members and told them that officials from a trade union were coming the next day to speak to them. These officials, the next day explained to the workers about the union and how the union would help them. These were the main points.

1. If they lost their jobs the union will support them with R2,50 a week while they looked for another job.
2. If they died they dependents would get money (the amount not specified).
3. They would be members of a sick-pay fund and receive R3,00 a week whilst sick.

The were told the subscriptions were 50 cents a week and this would be deducted from their wages. A question was raised by the workers about the Liaison Committee - union relationship. Workers asked whether they would be able to form a Works Committee in the firm, rather than a Liaison Committee. One of the officials replied that the management would not allow it. He said that the Liaison Committee and the trade union would work together in the firm.

He also told the liaison committee members that they must not fight in the factory.

Joining forms were given to the Personnel Officer. He gave them to the Liaison Committee members and told them to tell workers about the Union and to give out forms in their departments.

The Liaison Committee members and the Personnel Officer were invited to a Union meeting in Riger Park, Boksburg. The liaison committee members did not attend, but the Personnel Officer reported to them that a Chairman and Treasurer for the East Rand had been elected at the meeting.

The Liaison Committee members were told that the joining forms would be collected by the Personnel Officer on 26 Oct. 1979. No further meetings were arranged between the liaison committee members and union officials, either at the firm or at the Union Offices.

The liaison committee members report that they are unhappy about this union: They have said "It seems just like liaison committee or Industrial Council ... They don't want to solve our problems. They talk about canteens and first aid but if you talk about money, they don't want to hear you".

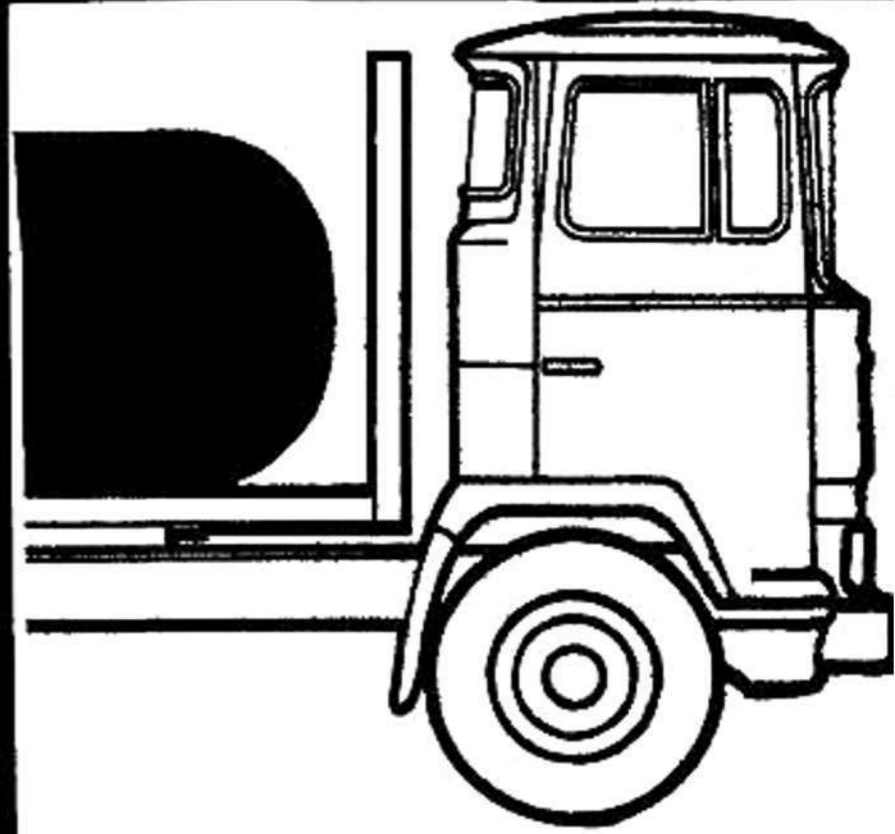
"This Union helps us when we are dead. When we are still alive it doesn't help us".

They report that workers are also suspicious, especially about the 50 cent deduction.

FOREIGN COMPANIES

A FOSATU report released in February shows that in general the record of foreign companies on Union recognition remains bad.

FOSATU stated that the most important test of the Codes was whether they promoted Union recognition. By this test the Codes had been a failure. FOSATU's report which is the most detailed information that has yet been presented in the Codes showed how Companies have delayed, blocked and refused Union recognition.



Leyland

SOUTH AFRICA

After reaching a deadlock and having to go to arbitration the FOSATU affiliate Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union and Leyland reached a new agreement covering the Cape plants.

The Agreement contained wage increases and more important greater rights of union recognition and important new conditions of employment. Its believed that this agreement is probably the most progressive signed by any registered union in South Africa.

CONGRATULATIONS LEYLAND WORKERS.

STRIKE

The seriousness of the wage problem was shown when workers at the Elsie's River plant of Leyland went on a wildcat strike on the . Despite initial management refusal they then agreed to talk to the Union. During the negotiations it was agreed that management would consider wage increases. The strong role of the Union and their discipline saved the situation from chaos. On 12th February, 1979 the management announced increases of between 10c and 20c per hour bringing the minimum hourly wage to 98c per hour.

BRITAIN

Judging by our newspapers one would think that British Leyland shop stewards were

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