

# Jaguar settles out-of-court

MUCH of the National Union of Textile Workers' year-long battle to break into the leather industry has been focused around Jaguar Shoes in Pietermaritzburg.

Since the Jaguar workers crossed the floor from TUCSA's National Union of Leatherworkers last year, it has been an uphill struggle to win recognition of NUTW.

Apart from demanding recognition, NUTW has also launched several other industrial court cases revolving around the unfair retrenchment of union members.

Jaguar countered by bringing its own case against NUTW in order to stop an overtime

boycott. The boycott was started by the workers when the company delayed recognition.

Now, however, the battle is drawing to a close and the union has got its foot firmly in the door of the leather industry.

In a recent out-of-court-settlement, the company has agreed to:

- deduct stop orders;
- recognise union shop stewards;
- re-employ the 12 retrenched workers — half now and half in two months time;
- pay the retrenched workers R4 500 in back-pay.

Similarly, an out-of-court set-

tlement has been reached with Pinetown clothing factory, Sea Gift.

More than a year ago the company unfairly retrenched workers.

In the settlement the company has agreed to sign a full recognition agreement; take back all the dismissed workers; and pay out R4 500 in back-pay — this is over and above the three month's wages Seagift was ordered to pay in an earlier industrial court hearing.

At both these factories, TUCSA unions have bitterly opposed the workers' swing across to NUTW.

And they have used their po-



Union lawyer, Halton Cheadle, with the retrenched Jaguar workers

sition on industrial councils to block NUTW's applications for stop order facilities.

However, the settlements,

which were both made orders of court, effectively overcome these technical manoeuvres by the TUCSA unions.

## More profit to be made in other lands



**T**he real formation of profit had been discovered. This was not like profit earned in trade. Now the worker got a wage that was needed to keep him or her alive, and the product was sold at a value equal to the amount of time it took to produce. The capitalist had earned his profit by capturing the surplus — produced by the creative power of the working class.

This great new source of profit made the capitalist wealthier. Wealth gave him more power, more education and more knowledge. With these weapons, the parliaments remained firmly in their control. So much so that when workers demanded the vote, the capitalists slowly gave them the vote because they felt confident of their power.

The government passed laws to protect private property, and the police and army became the servants of capitalist greed and the ceaseless whip of competition.

In their greed for profit the capitalists tried to pay as little as possible. Men, women and children were forced to work for starvation wages. But even this was not enough for the capitalists.

### The capitalists move out of their own countries

Once the capitalists had discovered the secret to profit in their own countries, they realised that there were other countries where they could do the same. In other words, if they were making profit through trade with far-away lands, then surely they could make even more capital if they introduced wage labour there as well.

Again, however, the capitalists faced big problems. This was because in these lands there were no factories, industries or workers. People were still working on the land, and there was no need for them to look for work. Let us take a closer look at the position in Southern Africa to see how the capitalists went

about trying to solve this problem in their search for bigger profits.

Before 1870 most Africans lived in independent chiefdoms. Some of these chiefdoms were: the Swazi, the Pedi, the Venda, the Zulu, the Basotho of Lesotho, and the various chiefdoms of Ciskei and Transkei, for example the Mfengu and the Pondo. Although these tribal societies had different ways of organising their daily lives, there were many important similarities.

The chief was in control of the land which was handed out to his headmen. These headmen were in charge of individual hamlets or villages. The villages were usually self-sufficient, and each family lived off the land. Whatever they grew (maize, millet etc.), or produced, or hunted was distributed among family and friends. Any surplus which was produced was either given to the chief, or traded with other tribes. Of course, this was not a system without conflict. Not only did the chief and headmen have a lot of power and many privileges which they often used to their own ends, but, as in feudal Europe, there were many battles and wars fought between different tribes. Thus, armies were an essential part of a social system in which people were struggling to eat and live.

### Wars and taxes were used to force people off the land

As was the case in Europe, if the capitalists wanted to make more profit they would have to build factories. Before, they could do this, they needed workers, so they would have to force people

off the land. Now this was a long and often violent process, and we can only mention a few of the ways in which they did this.

Firstly, the capitalists had the support of the European governments and their armies. Thus, many wars were fought between the settlers from Europe and the African tribes. In South Africa, soldiers from Britain were often directly involved in these wars. For example, in 1879 they beat the Zulu army which speeded up the breakdown of Cetshwayo's kingdom. With the army defeated, it made it far more difficult for these people to live in the way in which they had before.

These wars were usually fought over the ownership of land. As the capitalists needed more and more labour however, it became necessary to use other ways to force people to work for them. This was especially the case after diamonds were discovered in Kimberley, and gold on the Witwatersrand.

Even before then however, people had to pay taxes with money. But to get money they had to work for the capitalists. Over time, the taxes became more difficult to pay which meant that people had to work for longer and longer periods. For example, the Hut Tax was one of the taxes which people had to pay in the early days of the mining industry. It cost one pound per hut, and a person only had to work for three months on the mines to pay the tax for his family and parents. The Poll Tax was bigger. Two pounds was taxed on every person over the age of eighteen years per year. African unskilled workers were earning between 5 to 19 cents per day. With this money

they had to buy food and clothes for themselves. It took them much longer to work for wages to save enough to pay this tax. This meant that they had to spend less time on their farms.

### The pass laws made sure the labour was where it was needed

The government's support for the capitalists' drive for profit can also be seen in the various pass laws which made sure that the capitalists had labour in the areas where it was needed most. The law also helped the capitalists to get labour by passing acts which dispossessed (deprived) Africans of their land.

With the profit the capitalists made on the mines,

and with the capital from Europe, they were able to build factories to make other goods such as clothes, shoes, steel etc. This further increased the need for labour, and has led to the growth in South Africa of a large working class from whose labour capitalists are able to make profits.

As in Europe, workers were not prepared to accept this for ever. The very conditions in which they worked and lived, and the fact that they and their families had very little food or comfort and were very often sick and dying, made them see the need to fight against these conditions.

Next issue: Workers fight back against the capitalists by forming trade unions.

## POEM

I arise  
I look through the window of my bedroom  
And it's time  
The clearness of the growing is the end of my joy  
Because I know to whom the day belongs  
More than a drop of my blood will be sucked  
Because I know who profits from my work.

And my money paid in taxes is used to buy more guns  
More Casspirs  
To assassinate my people  
To oppress my people  
To detain me when I say I'm exploited.

Ah!

I'm the peasant  
From the rising to the setting of the sun  
In the black dust of the exploited earth  
I'm a fighter for freedom  
I'm a poor worker  
God bless the workers.

By a student from Newell High School, Port Elizabeth.