

FRAME BLAMES LOW WAGES ON BLACKS' POOR PRODUCTIVITY

Recently Mr Phillip Frame, the head of the multi million Frame group of companies, said that the low productivity of African workers was the reason for the low wages in the Textile Industry.

He compared the productivity of the South African weaver with the productivity of the weavers in Europe and Japan. This made our weavers look like poor workers.

The National Union of Textile Workers, a Union representing African workers in Natal, reject this claim that Frame is looking for a scape-goat for his own deplorable wages. The Organisers of the Union said that the following points must be taken into account:

OLD MACHINES

1. Productivity has as much to do with machinery as it has to do with skill. In the blanket section, Mr Frame operates looms over 30 years old, which require the weaver to fill and feed the shuttles for the loom. All modern looms are automatic and the weavers are then able to operate more looms.
2. Productivity depends too upon management and the correct organisation of production. The Union has found that there is a large amount of short-time and lost time in the industry due to bottlenecks in the production process.

MIGRANT LABOUR

3. When one comes to the workers themselves, one finds that Frame does not select the urbanised African workers to run his factories... he imports his labour from the rural areas. This use of migrant labour is governed not by the desire for higher productivity but for cheaper labour. The more educated urbanised and productive African worker, demands higher rates of pay.

The whole state of the industry is such that the workers see no future in remaining in the industry. Young workers coming into the industry see workers who have been in the industry for 30 years receiving the same wages as they are signed up on. These workers use the industry as a stop gap until they get a job in the metal industry or commerce where competitive wages are paid.

This is one of the reasons for the high labour turnover in the industry. Without job security, without a living wage, without proper housing and without a future, what can the employer expect? The workers are not going to feel motivated enough to produce their best.

OTHER TEXTILES EMPLOYERS

4. The fourth point is that other employers do not experience this problem. Mr Stott, Managing Director of Goodhope Textile, and one of the biggest cotton manufacturers told the Financial Mail in July 1972: "I reckon our output per man is as good as in Europe." Kennard from S.A. Fabrics stated: "One South African operator looks after as many knitting machines as an operator in Britain, even more in the case of circular knitting machines."

The Union's final point is that Frame's statement is more a reflection on him than it is on the workers who have produced all that he owns.

IYINI LE-URA

Iphephandaba lenu liyoxoxa kancane kancane ngamaqembu akhona ezindaweni enihlala kuzo. Okwamanje abantu baseMlazi bathi 'Iyini iURA? Iphephandaba lenu laya kokhuluma ne URA kwaba yilokhu elikuzwayo.

Umgwamanda wezakhamuzi zaseMlazi obizwa ngokuthi yi Umlazi Residents' Association (URA) yasungulwa ngo September 1973 lapho izakhamuzi ezithile zahlangana zadwebisa isisekelo (constitution) esamukelwa ngomhlaka 25-ku November 1973 samukelwa abantu abayinkulungwane ababekulowomhlango.

IZWI LABANTU

IURA yathi yayingeneliswa amakhansela amsebenzi wawo kungukumela izakhamuzi. Bathi ama 'khansele' awanakwazi ukumela izindlu eziyinkulungwane ezingamashumi amabili (20 000). Bathi "iURA ngabantu baseMlazi" ngalokhu inokuletha izinkinga zabantu emakhanseleni. I-URA ithi amakhansela amatasatasa ekubeni angalalela abantu tuffi umuntu akudingeki aze angume isikhathi nosuka lokubonana nalowo owakhethelwa ukumela.

OKUFUNWA YI-URA

Sabuzi iURA ukuthi ifuna ukwenzenjani ngalokho, sathelwa ukuthi iURA ifuna ukungeneliswa kwabantu kwaziwe.

I-URA futhi ifuna ukuqala izindlela zokusiza mathupha. Ukwenza lokhu, isungule amakomidi ayisithupha enqubekela phambili. Sathelwa ukuthi okusemqoka kulokhu amakomidi aqondene neMfundo kanye nenhlalakahle kuMphakathi. I-URA yagcizelela ukuthi iyazikhathaza ngeringa lemfundo, ukwesweleka kwembundo kwalabo abasuke bekhubazeke ngokomqondo, kanye nesibalo esikhulu sabantu abaswele umsebenzi eMlazi.

UKUNYAKAZISA ABANTU

I-URA ifuna ukufaka bonke abantu baseMlazi ezinhlelweni ezithile, nasezindabeni zezinto zokuhamba ngezindiza, ezokuzithokozisa kanye nezemisebenzi, ngokuba nabazomela wonke amawadi emakomidini.

Emva kwalokukubonana izintatheli zabona ukuthi i-URA ineqiniso ngezinhloso zayo kodwa inokuphumelela kuphela uma bonke abantu baseMlazi babezongena nabo. Uma lokhu kwenzeka izinkinga ezinkulu kunazo zonke eMlazi zaziyoqaca bese-ke zisetshenzwa, i-URA ithi emva konyaka amakhansela ahlukele ngoba ayesabalahlile abantu. Emva konyaka mhlawumbe kuyocaca ukuthi ngabe i-URA iyophumelela ezinhlelweni zayo zokuthuthukisa umphakathi waseMlazi.

BACABANGA UKUTHINI ABAFUNDI

Sicela abafundi basithumele imibono yabo nge URA nokuthi yizini abazibona ziyizinkinga eMlazi noma yikumuphi omunye umphakathi abahlala kuwo.



Nkk. N.M. Sithole, uNobhala we Umlazi Residents' Association (URA).

THE HOMELESS OF CHATSWORTH

The shortage of housing for the Indian Community in Durban has reached crisis level.

According to a Daily News report (21-2-74) the Minister of Community Development said in Parliament that Indians in Natal are still short of 12 600 homes. Although this is very serious, it seems as if the true position is far worse. According to the Social Worker at the Garment Workers' Union, the shortage is really about 23 000. People who apply for a house now are given a reference number in the 49 000 range, and at the moment the Corporation is dealing with applications in the 26 000 range. The gap, or shortage of houses is thus about 23 000.

WAITING FOR 1983

The officials in charge of housing are only this year able to deal with applications made in 1965. This means that unless the situation changes soon, a person who applies for a house now is not likely to get it until 1983.

Just how bad the situation is can be seen from the following case, which is typical of problems in Chatsworth.

THE CASE OF MRS A.

Mrs A. applied for a house seven years ago. She is a widow of 60. Since she was uprooted by Group Areas Laws she has been sheltered, along with her three children, by various friends. She has had to move from one friend's house to another because the Corporation Caretaker of the Block threatened her hosts with eviction unless Mrs A. moved out. At the moment Mrs A. is still waiting for a favourable reply to her application.

Such problems can only arise where there is a terrible shortage of houses. But how does this shortage arise? Who is responsible for building the houses?

HOW IT WORKS

The City Treasury Office explained that the National Housing Scheme builds the houses that they think are needed. Then the Community Development Department takes half the houses and gives these out to people who are homeless because they have been moved from their old homes under the Group Areas Laws. The other half of the houses is handed over to the Corporation and the Corporation gives these first of all to people who have been moved out of slum Areas, or to people who have been moved because roads are being built. Only after these people have been housed is the normal application for a house considered. This means many years of waiting.

FOR REFERENCE USE ONLY
Reproduced from the original in
The Yale University Library
Permission necessary
for reproduction or publication

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Who is to blame for the housing crisis?

The Corporation says it is in the hands of the Department of Community Development.

The Department of Community Development says they do not have enough money to build more houses. Parliament does not allocate enough money for Indian Housing Schemes.

The Minister in Parliament seems to underestimate by far the number of houses needed.

It seems that, in the next 10 years at least, the Authorities will be able to do very little to ease the crisis.

OVER TO THE PEOPLE OF CHATSWORTH

How can the people of Chatsworth help themselves? This is a very difficult question to answer. We would like readers to send in any ideas they have which could offer a solution, or part of the solution, so we can publish them.