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EDITORIAL

Your involvement in a trade union may be because of a personal problem. But the moment you have joined the trade union which is stimulus to collective bargaining, you are looking into any problem as problem for the mass of our workers' lot. A problem that has perhaps been fought against since the early stages of industrialisation in this country.

Therefore it is worth realizing from the onset that all our workers' problems will only be successfully confronted when we are able to organise ourselves into a solid bloc. This is the only way our demands can be made felt.

Now is the time to initiate for ourselves what we believe would be the normal situation. Let us not wait for tomorrow. All the workers' needs must be fought for now; because our workers' rights are being violated now. We must create a union movement now.

In as much as we need our pay increased and other attached benefits, we must not lose sight of the fact that in this country only a CHANGE in industrial legislation will change our situation.

AROUND THE UNIONS

METAL UNION

The Metal & Allied Workers' Union is at present conducting shop steward courses on Tuesday and Thursday every week and as a result of these courses the organisers find that from the factories where there are these shop stewards there are very few workers who come to the Union's offices with complaints because most of them are dealt with by their shop stewards in the factories.

On the 30th August 1974 the Union Secretary received an invitation from Non-Ferrous Metal Works' Management to come and have some discussions so as to clarify some points on the Union's representation of the workers.

On the 6th September 1974, the Secretary, together with one of the Organisers of the Union, went to N.F.M.W. where they had discussions with the Director, Mr Lazarus and his Associate. After the Director had perused the matter that had been written to him previously asking Management to recognize the Union, he seemed to be interested in the Union's benefits, enquired about the system used for collecting Union subscriptions and also how the firm would be expected to work if it were to recognise the Union. He also pointed out that they had a Works Committee but that most of its members were also the Union's shop stewards as they had pointed out at a previous meeting that they wanted the Works Committee to be replaced by a Shop Steward Committee also stating he was not against this move.

After a long discussion he pointed out that N.F.M.W. would like to be the pioneer in the Metals Industry in Natal to recognise the Black Trade Unions but also that he was anticipating hardships with SEPSA and other employers' groups. He requested the Secretary to furnish him with information and names of the factories where they have signed agreements with the other Unregistered Unions.

The Union Secretary has also had talks with the Defy Industries management who also, after a long discussion, said that although they had a channel for communication, being the Liaison Committee which has not been accepted by the Pinetown plant, they will be prepared for the time being to have unofficial negotiations with the Union on matters concerning workers in their Company so as to avoid unnecessary strikes.

TEXTILE UNION

The dynamic National Union of Textile Workers and its Indian counterpart, the Textile Workers' Union of South Africa, jointly signed an agreement on the 18th July 1974 with the management of Smith & Nephew, a British owned textile company.

This event marks an historic milestone in the struggle of the African worker for trade union rights. The entire black working class movement has been opposed by the State and big business. All actions and arguments used by these two forces to oppose the worker amount, in short, to nothing but threats and an ability to create confusion among the workers, i.e. stating that Black unions are not recognised as having the right to legislate on wages and working conditions and also that black workers are not able to run their own unions.

Between the Unions and Smith & Nephew undermined, in the entire actions and arguments of the State and

The agreement between one massive blow, the bosses.

in some detail the contents of the Smith & Nephew agreement means that the African Union and the Indian Union have equal rights in the factory. Both are recognised and the factory leaders are workers' leaders elected in the factory and represent the workers in the

Let us now examine the agreement. The Indian Union have and the factory led by the workers, at the factory.

Management will meet and discuss wages anytime after the 15th of August

The unions and management the 15th of August

laid down in writing that workers' wages will rise each year as the cost of living rises. Say, for instance, if the cost of living rises by 15% the wages would automatically rise by 15%. On top of this the agreement also lays down a standard of living increase of 2 1/2% per year. So there are two automatic increases plus any increase obtainable if the cost of living rises in August every year.

The agreement sets out automatically each year, for instance, if the cost of living increases by 15% the wages will automatically increase by 15%. There are two automatic increases. The Union can negotiate

clearly lays down a production bonus and how it is calculated, holiday allowance and shift allowance, holiday bonus, sick leave, overtime rates, public holidays.

The agreement also covers - a service bonus, annual leave, sick leave

Finally, the agreement lays down the procedure for the dismissal of workers. In this agreement it is stated that if anyone is dismissed, he can take it up with the management, together with the shop steward. If nothing is resolved the union secretary or an organiser is then called in and if this problem continues, then the management can call in an independent person to sit on the job, the case can be thoroughly examined before anyone is dismissed.

Most important of all, the agreement sets out the procedure for dismissal. In the event of dismissal, he can take it up with the management, together with the shop steward. If nothing is resolved the union secretary or an organiser is then called in and if this problem continues, then the management can call in an independent person to sit on the job, the case can be thoroughly examined before anyone is dismissed.

Another thing is, that if a worker is warned by the foreman and the worker is of the opinion that the warning is not called for, he can then say so. Each worker must be given two verbal warnings and then a written warning, and if the worker does not make the same mistake the written warning must be destroyed after three months.

We have examined this historic agreement in some detail so that workers can see what, and how, a Union can really be the only way to protect the interest of the workers.

If you want more details then contact any of the Unions in Gale Street.

CHEMICAL UNION

Since C.W.I.U. has employed two fulltime organisers, Mr Omar Badsha and Mr Patrick Tabets, very little time has been lost in expanding and strengthening the union especially at A.E. & C.I.

"Isisebense" learned that inevitably bosses at A.E. & C.I. had reacted to the Union by going around and "persuading" the workers not to join the C.W.I.U.

This action seems to have had the opposite effect on the workers. On Saturday the 12th August 1974 over 200 workers met at Bolton Hall and after a very lively session resolved to get every worker at A.E. & C.I. to join the Union. The Secretary, Mr Badsha, was instructed by the workers to write to the Chairman of A.E. & C.I., Mr Harry Oppenheimer, and get the company to recognise the Union.

The events at A.E. & C.I. all point to the fact that a long and bitter struggle lies ahead, but workers are resolved to stand firm and obtain full recognition for their Union.

The Secretary called on the workers at S.A.T.P., the sister company to A.E. & C.I. to join the Union. A mass meeting of workers at S.A.T.P. is to be called in the future.

BENEFIT FUND

A group of 102 workers were issued with summons following alleged strike action taken a few months back.

An Admission of Guilt - R40,00.

Some have agreed to pay a deduction of R5,00 per week. The rest have taken the matter up with a lawyer and a collection is being made to meet legal costs.