

ABASEBENZI - - THE WORKERS' NEWSPAPER (NUMBER.2.)

Words of encouragement to workers from the Chief Minister of KwaZulu Legislative Assembly - M.Gatsha Buthelezi.

I wish all our Black workers to know well that we sympathise with them in their struggle demanding those rights which must be applicable to all workers both in this country and in all other countries.

It is our wish that difficulties of workers be solved amicably and peacefully. We wish to encourage you in forming Workers' Committees in order to make representations to your employers. We realize however, that some of you fear victimization as you are here in Cape Town. The Prime Minister Mr. B.J.Vorster has said that no one must be victimised because of membership in a Workers' Committee.

We have tried to request that you be given the right to form Trade Unions. This request has not been successful for the time being. But then do not lose hope because we also are God's creation, let us not despair. Let us continue to hammer for our rights until they are granted to us.

Unity is strength, I personally say to you all Africans unite as workers, let there be no Zulu, Xhosa or Sotho. The rights which you desire are not meant for one race, they are for all of you, the Black Nation as workers.

Listen to explanations given to you on how to organise yourselves in order to get your rights as Black workers in a peaceful manner. I hope you have seen how peacefully the Blacks have campaigned in Durban.

BE ORGANISED AND BE UNITED

CHARTER OF WORKERS' RIGHTS

1. EVERY WORKER, REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOUR OR CREED, SHOULD HAVE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN RESPECT OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT.

This would imply that all workers should have free access to non-discriminatory education and training and that there should be no discrimination in the form of the industrial colour bar or job reservation to hinder the free access of workers to jobs of their choice.

2. EVERY WORKER SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHOOSE THE PLACE OF HIS/HER WORK WITHOUT EXTERNAL INTERFERENCE.

This would imply that all workers have the right to choose for whom they will work, and where they will live and work, and that no legislation should exist to interfere with their mobility in this regard.

3. EVERY WORKER SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE ASSOCIATION AND THE RIGHTS TO ORGANIZE.

This implies that workers should be allowed to form legally recognized trade unions in the manner they see fit.

4. EVERY WORKER SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AFTER ALL NON-DISCRIMINATORY CONCILIATION PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED.

5. EVERY FAMILY SHOULD BE PAID NOT LESS THAN THE EFFECTIVE MINIMUM LEVEL.

In most areas, the Effective Minimum Level is roughly R30 per week.

6. NO WORKER SHOULD BE COMPELLED TO WORK OVERTIME, AND WHERE OVERTIME IS WORKED, THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK INCLUDING OVERTIME SHOULD NOT EXCEED 56 HOURS.

7. THE RATES OF OVERTIME SHOULD BE AS LAID DOWN IN THE FACTORIES, MACHINERY AND BUILDING WORKS ACT, BUT EVERY WORKER SHOULD BE PAID THE EFFECTIVE MINIMUM LEVEL BEFORE OVERTIME IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

8. EVERY WORKER SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO THREE WEEKS LEAVE PER ANNUM.

9. EVERY WORKER SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO TWENTY-ONE DAYS SICK LEAVE PER ANNUM WITH FULL PAY.

10. ALL WORKERS SHOULD QUALIFY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION PENSIONS AND MEDICAL BENEFITS.

The 10 points above are in addition to, and not excluding, the Factories Machineries and Building Works Act.

HOW OUR WORKERS' COMMITTEE HELPED US - by a Worker.

The following is a story told by a worker at a large Company in Cape Town.

The story shows how workers can organise themselves and gain better conditions.

WORKERS' COMMITTEE FORMED

A worker, Mr. X, came to the workers' meeting room at the Company's offices, and told the other workers that he had been insulted by one of our foremen, for no good reason. This situation was intolerable - the workers could lose their patience and this could result in their being discharged. The workers were also put in a difficult position because they have families which they support. So what could they do?

Mr. X. demanded that the incident be reported to higher authorities, and that the workers take action to stop this attitude in the part of the foremen. The issue was put to all the workers who were there. A worker proposed that a committee of five be formed in order to represent the workers. This was done, and it was unanimously elected. The committee was instructed to raise the workers' complaints with their employers.

The Committee drew up a memorandum, listing six complaints, and posted it to the Board of Directors of the Company.

Workers' Met the Manager.

About a week later, Mr. Z (another worker on the Committee) was called by the Branch Manager and asked if he knew about the letter. Mr. Z told the Manager that he did, and explained the grievances to the Manager, who told Mr Z to let the workers know that their letter was under consideration and that a reply would come soon. Mr Z refused to convey the message and suggested that the Manager should meet the workers personally as it was desired by the workers. This was agreed.

He came to see the workers accompanied by two other white office workers, finding all the workers already waiting. He introduced himself as Mr. A, the Branch Manager of the Company.

He said: "You have written a letter and sent it to the Board of Directors".

The reply was yes.

He mentioned that the letter contained 6 points of complaint of the workers.

The reply was yes.

He said that the letter had been referred to him for consideration. He told the workers that the company was a business concern and





