

W H A T N O W, W O R K E R S ?

Much has happened in Cape Town since the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau was formed, exactly two years. In those two years, over forty factories have organized and joined the Advice Bureau, bringing more than 4000 workers together to fight for their advancement.

And the Advice Bureau has achieved much for its members. Its organizers have provided invaluable advice to the fledgling factory committees. training courses have ensured that the leaders of the workers understand the nature of their tasks; and countless workers from every kind of job, with every kind of complaint, have found the Advice Bureau ready and willing to assist them.

Now, two years after their first hesitant steps, the Advice Bureau and the workers of the Cape are ready to move forward yet again. Up till now, the factory committees have been concerning themselves only with matters in their own factory. Their work has been to raise wages for the workers in their factory, to improve conditions and do away with abuses.

But it has become increasingly clear that the workers' problems are not merely with the single boss in their own factory, but with all the bosses together ! Just as the bosses act together in all important matters, it has now become necessary for the workers to act together in all larger matters.

But it is not only that workers are realizing that improvements can only be obtained by organizing in unity with workers from other factories; workers are also beginning to realize that not all their problems begin and end in their factory !

Take the matter of busfares - this is clearly a matter which neither begins nor ends in the factory ! And while workers will certainly want to press for higher wages to cover the higher fares, you should know that no amount of persuading will make it possible for your boss to reduce the bus fares ! No, this is one of the many matters that workers as a group must confront.

Bus fares is just one of the many matters that workers in a single factory are powerless to change - but that workers as a group can battle against and win victory !

So far, in Cape Town, there is no body which effectively brings the representatives of the factories together. This step cannot be any longer postponed ! While the bosses devise new ways to divide the workers, the factories in Cape Town are still acting in isolation - as if the other factories did not exist ! What sort of organization is best suited to bring the factory committees together in unity ? This is a matter on which there must be much discussion. But certain rules can be laid down from the beginning.

The first is that such an organization must be directly responsible to the workers in the factories. That is, each factory should elect delegates which carry the workers instructions to the meetings, and which report back to the workers afterwards.

Secondly, the organization must be controlled by the workers and no-one else. This means that the trainers and the "intellectuals" must be kept firmly in advisory positions; that the organizers must be prevented from exerting undue influence; that those who seek their own advancement and power should be kept out; and that the timid and weak should be replaced by the progressive leaders who faithfully follow the wishes of the workers !

The third is that such an organization of the workers should be clear about its task. Its task is not to make things easier for the boss by keeping the workers in check; nor to build "good relations" with the boss while the workers starve. Its single task is to pursue the interests of the workers without hesitation and without delay - wherever that path might lead.

The formation of such a general union of workers - breaking through every barrier between factories, between industries and between races - is the next great step forward for the workers of Cape Town. Soon the Western Province Workers' Advice Bureau is to call a conference of factory committees to discuss this matter.

MAKE SURE your factory has elected a factory committee !

MAKE SURE your factory is sending its factory committee to the conference.

GET IN TOUCH with the organizers for further details and help.

9 Benbow Building,  
Beverly Street,  
Athlone.

THE CALL TO THE WORKERS OF CAPE TOWN - FACTORY COMMITTEES PLUS A GENERAL WORKERS' COUNCIL !!