

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?

We have seen the workers' perseverance throughout a long period of struggle. Why did they not succeed?

Many people think that the law gives workers and bosses an equal chance before the law to get what they demand. However, in this case we see that the bosses did not give in to the demands of the workers, who were only asking for a works committee elected by show of hands. This is allowed in the law. And yet, the workers were still found guilty of striking, and most still lost their jobs. Meanwhile the bosses lost nothing.

The Duens workers stood up for their rights, but they were not strong enough to stand against the bosses and against the law all on their own.

WORKERS' ADVICE COLUMN

YOUR PAY SLIP

In the last ABASEBENZI we looked at Basic Pay, calculated by the number of hours worked. There is another way in which wages can be calculated - the PIECE RATE system. Here you are paid a certain amount of money for each 'piece' of work you do, for example for each tyre you retread.

If you are working on this system, you must make sure when you get your pay slip that the correct number of pieces have been recorded. Most factories do not use a simple piece rate, since the workers are not usually responsible if the machinery goes wrong or the material breaks. It would be unfair to pay a very low wage just because the workers produced very little because of a failure of machinery or materials. So the law says there must also be a basic rate for the job, which is the lowest the wage can go. This is the TIME-RATE, and is the minimum you can get for a certain period of time worked.

So, if you are on a piece rate system, your pay slip will have both the time rate and the piece rate for the job. It will show how many pieces you have made, and how much you should have been paid for those pieces. Then, if that amount is less than the time rate, the time rate will count as your basic pay.

If you think that you have not been paid the correct amount, or for the correct amount of pieces, you must complain. There should be a record of what you have produced. Ask to compare this with your payslip. Demand the money which is due to you.

In the next ABASEBENZI we will look at overtime.