

EDITORIAL

Workers often ask - "What is ABASEBENZI?" In this article we will look at who publishes ABASEBENZI and why it is produced.

ABASEBENZI is published by an organisation called the Wages Commission, which consists of a small number of students from the University of Cape Town.

Why do these students publish this newspaper? Firstly, we believe that workers are deprived of information and knowledge. It is extremely important for workers to know about the things that affect them. Only if workers know how to organise can they unite for better wages and working conditions! Only if they understand the causes of their exploitation, can they put an end to exploitation!

The workers of Cape Town need this knowledge to advance their interests. They need to know what is happening to workers in other factories in Cape Town as well as in the rest of South Africa. They need to know what other workers are thinking and doing, so that they may unite more easily. This then is the main task of ABASEBENZI; to assist (in only a small way) the workers' movement in South Africa.

The second reason why ABASEBENZI is published is to help individual workers with particular problems. Most of the problems which face workers are problems which can only be solved by workers acting together. But there are other problems which can be more easily helped. ABASEBENZI, therefore, also tries to inform workers about such things as their pay-slips and unemployment insurance. In this issue, for example, we look at Overtime.

ABASEBENZI attempts at all times to be of service to the workers of Cape Town. Because of this, it welcomes any criticisms that the workers may have. When we receive criticism of ABASEBENZI from the workers we are happy, not angry. Criticism does not mean we are weak, but rather that we are strong. It infuses more life into our body. That is why we welcome it.

ABASEBENZI is for workers and much of it is written by workers. Tell us what YOU think of ABASEBENZI. Either write to us at ABASEBENZI, c/o the S.R.C, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch. Otherwise why not speak to your fellow workers, your works committee or the Workers' Advice Bureau about ABASEBENZI?

ENGINEERING WORKERS UNITE!

Workers must organise themselves in every factory! But when they have done so they must not sit back. Rather they must go out and organise workers in other factories. Only in this way can they increase their strength and achieve greater things.

This is what ABASEBENZI heard when it was invited to a meeting of Engineering workers in Cape Town last month. The workers came from three different factories - Gearings, Transcape and Cape Steel. They were meeting together to see if it was possible to unite all Engineering workers.

Workers in these factories have found that often, when they try to make demands, all the bosses in the Engineering factories are united together. If workers make demands for higher wages they are told that they cannot receive more money. The bosses tell them that what they receive is the same as the wages of all the workers in the rest of the Engineering industry. If workers ask for better conditions they are told that the conditions are the same throughout the Engineering industry.

The lesson for workers is clear. If the workers are to achieve their demands they cannot remain isolated in one factory. Long ago, the bosses organised together to further their own interests. It is now time for workers to do the same.

This is the aim of the engineering workers at Gearings, Transcape, Cape Steel and Trawler Engineering. They want to unite all workers in the engineering industry. Only in this way will they be able to achieve some of their demands.

The basic demand of these workers is for higher wages. At present the wages of Engineering workers are about 50c an hour. At Transcape they are even lower - 44c an hour. The workers say that their basic wages are inadequate. They have to work a great amount of overtime in order to get sufficient money. The work they do is often skilled work and it is often dangerous too. The workers therefore feel that the minimum wage for the industry should be at least 70c an hour. In order to achieve this and other demands they want to organise and unite with other engineering workers.

ABASEBENZI carries their message. The workers of Gearings, Cape Steel, Transcape and Trawler Engineering call on all workers to organise and join the Advice Bureau. In particular, they call on all workers from other Engineering factories to contact them. These workers should contact the Advice Bureau and ask to speak to the workers who are organising the Engineering industry.

WORKERS ADVICE COLUMN - OVERTIME

In this ABASEBENZI we will look at OVERTIME. How much overtime is a worker allowed to do each week, and how much must he be paid for this work?

As always, workers must remember that the rules below only apply if there are no special rules laid down for the industry in which they are employed. Workers must first check up if there is a wage determination, industrial council agreement, or order applying to their job, and if this measure says anything about overtime.

For workers who are not covered by these special rules, the following rules apply:

Workers may be required to do up to 10 extra, over basic time, per week. It is counted as work if the worker is not allowed to leave the factory premises. Also, although meal times are not usually counted as work, if a lunch break is over an hour long, the time over one hour is counted as time worked.

Overtime pay, except for Sundays, must be paid at at least one and a third times the normal rate. On Sundays pay is different

- 1) If a worker works less than four hours on Sunday he must be paid at least one ordinary day's pay.
- 2) If he works more than four hours on Sunday he must be paid at least twice his ordinary ,OR at least twice one ordinary day's wage, whichever is more.
- 3) Another way in which bosses may pay on Sunday is to pay one and a third times the ordinary rate PLUS one full day off on full pay.

Workers should check that the correct number of hours are recorded - both for basic pay and for overtime - when they receive their pay slips. They should then check that the overtime is paid at the correct rate. Everything should be recorded on the pay slip, and workers should demand to know what the different figures, codes and amounts on their pay slips mean. This is the only way they can check that their bosses are paying them all that they are obliged to pay.