

The Education Strike

The recent boycotts of classes by thousands of school children and university students of all races has seriously challenged the educational system. Since education is central to society the "education strike" clearly raises wider questions about the society that has produced these inequalities in education.

The children have attacked the second class quality of education for Blacks. They attack the poor facilities, teaching and government and police interference in education. They see this as part of the general oppression of Black people and so are attacking the system.

Since the vast majority of these children are the children of workers and will become workers this is clearly an issue for a worker organisation. Workers identify with the children's criticisms but

raise other important criticisms.

"We as workers don't earn enough to allow ourselves or our children to get a proper education. More than this the education we get ignores workers and their problems and history. The education doesn't really help us as workers, it is more useful for the employers and management", says a workers' spokesman.

So far political leaders seem mainly concerned with packing every one back at school. Minister Steyn wants children back at school but hasn't offered much to solve the problem.

Even Chief Buthelezi seems to see the boycott only as a challenge to the political authority of Inkatha and the Kwa Zulu Government.

Whether they like it or not though, the boycott shows there are limits to everything.

Sullivan Signatory Opposes Union Recognition

The Sullivan signatory Colgate stated in their letter to CWIU and in their press statement that "we resist the establishment of trade unions throughout the world". Two days later Mr. Nocker the managing director claimed this was an error and that their policy was "neither to resist or encourage trade unions".

Prior to this statement Colgate had said "no" to a request for recognition from the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, despite a petition from 180 workers.

Their letter said "We are opposed to the unionisation of our workforce because we firmly believe that as enlightened employers...no trade union can do more for our workers than we can".

They said this even after receiving the petition from CWIU calling on them to recognise the union.

Colgate is a signatory to the Sullivan Principles and all along they have been reported to be one of the top 20 companies that are making good progress in putting these principles into practice.

Colgate has done away with segregation of certain facilities such as toilets, canteens, bathrooms and change-rooms, but as far as the workers are concerned, the Company has violated the major principle by depriving its employees of the right to have

a full say and union representation on their working conditions. "Toilets and such other facilities are not our priorities" said the Chairman of the Colgate Shop Steward Committee.

Colgate claims not to be prepared to recognise any unregistered union. The CWIU has discovered that Colgate already recognised one unregistered union in the Transvaal at one of its plants Helena Rubinstein, to the extent that they had granted stop order facilities. The Union has learnt that when the struggle for recognition at Colgate got strong, management immediately withdrew stop order facilities from the other Union.



"Well everyone makes mistakes I suppose, but their anti CWIU stand in no mistake or accident - that is the real policy. The mistake was to say it plainly in public", said Ms Dlamini Secretary of CWIU (above) commenting on the Colgate statement.

THE CAPE MEAT WORKERS

Six week long struggle continues

800 meat workers from 14 meat firms in Cape Town have been locked out by their employers after demonstrating their support for their fellow workers at Table Bay Cold Storage.

These workers have been fighting for recognition of their democratically elected non racial committee by Table Bay Management.

In April, Western Province General Workers Union (WPMWU) which has 100% membership in the firm sent a letter on behalf of the workers, asking for a meeting with management. Management refused to meet the workers saying that they would only recognise the liaison committee and told the workers to disassociate themselves from the WPGWU.

Table Bay workers stood firm in their demand for recognition of their committee. A large meeting was held to inform other meat workers about the dispute, where it was resolved to notify all meat firms that they would not do the work of Table Bay workers. The meat bosses together then decided to take a hard-line over the Table Bay issue. So when the meat workers staged a one day work stoppage in solidarity with Table Bay workers, the managements fired all 800 meat workers. In fact on their return to work the next day, they were confronted by the riot police.

The workers are continuing to press their demands for unconditional reinstatement and recognition of worker committees at two factories.

The support from the community has come in the form of finance as well as an active campaign to boycott red meat.

LEYLAND - WAGE INCREASE

Workers in the Leyland factories in Cape Town have received a 7c per hour across the board increase in wages. Joe Foster Secretary of Western Province Motor Assembly Workers Union says "In view of recent price increases and the problems in the Cape the increase is welcomed".