

Workers charge the Minister of Police

FORTY WORKERS pressed charges against the Minister of Police in the Boksburg Magistrates' Court last month.

The workers were arrested after stopping work at Rely Precision Castings in May 1980 and claim they were assaulted by the police.

Workers told the court that all 55 workers in their factory had been pushed into a police van which is designed to hold only 30 people.

When they reached the police station, they said, they were taken out of the van one by one and

assaulted with rubber truncheons and wooden batons.

Police hit them on the back of the hand, the knuckles, the elbows and the back of the legs, they said.

Phineas Myeni told the court it seemed as if they were trying to

hit all the joints.

LEGAL AID

The Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) immediately arranged legal and medical aid and provided the money to get the workers out on bail the next day.

After discussions with MAWU the workers decided to lay charges against the police. This proved to be more difficult than they expected.

When they went to the police station to lay charges, the same policemen that they said assaulted

them took their statements.

One worker complained: "You don't go to a thief to complain about robbery."

'TIMES ARE CHANGING'

The workers are suing the Minister of Police for R60 000 - R1 500 each. As Rodney Mwamba, Transvaal branch secretary of MAWU, has said:

"We want to show the police they cannot assault workers and get away with it. Times are changing and we intend to make them understand that."

New strike wave hits Wadeville

A NEW wave of strikes has broken out in Wadeville.

Five factories organised by the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) came out on strike in support of higher wages and the reinstatement of dismissed workers within the space of a few days.

HAWKER-SIDDELEY

The strike wave began on Friday February 26 and spread through most of the next week. First to stop work were workers at Hawker-Siddeley and McKechnie Brothers. At Hawker-Siddeley, workers demanded an R1 an hour increase, the reinstatement of two workers and the recognition of the union.

At McKechnie Brothers the company's 1 100 workers demanded a R2 an hour increase. The present minimum is R1,13 an hour.

Both companies agreed to negotiate with MAWU if the workers returned to work. Mass meetings of workers at FOSATU's Katlehong offices agreed to these terms.

The Chubb and Hubco factories in Wadeville were next to be hit by strikes, also over wage demands. Workers in these factories were still in the process of joining MAWU, and negotiations are continuing at these factories.

HARD LINE

A hard line was taken by the management of Transvaal Malleable

Foundry. This is one of the longer established MAWU factories in this area, and workers joined the union early in 1981.

Here, workers struck on the morning of March 3 after the unfair dismissal of two fellow members and a management refusal to negotiate with the union's shop stewards.

According to MAWU the manager stated his intention of re-employing selectively and recruiting new workers from the homelands. He refused further discussions with MAWU, saying he had tolerated the union too long and he would not allow workers controlling his factory.

A successful strike over dismissals took place at the company late last year.

ABSURD CLAIM

Some employers in the area suggested that MAWU was deliberately encouraging the strikes because Industrial Council negotiations over wages were only one week away.

But Moses Mayekiso, MAWU organiser in the area, has described this as absurd, as the union was still busy recruiting members at several of the factories involved in the strike wave.

"But," added another MAWU spokesman, "this does not mean we would not do it if we were forced to."



STRIKING workers salute at one of the factories affected by the renewed wave of stoppages in Wadeville.

Colgate workers win R2 an hour

THE CHEMICAL Workers' Industrial Union recently concluded its first round of wage negotiations with Colgate-Palmolive since the company agreed to recognise the union in July last year.

Colgate-Palmolive have agreed to a minimum wage of R1,95 an hour from the beginning of May this year. All other grades will receive over R2 an hour.

A further increase in the minimum wage to R2,04 an hour has



been agreed to and will come into effect in November this year. The other major gain won by

the union is in working hours. The hated Sunday night shift and Saturday morning shift have been scrapped.

Jacob Mabena, shop steward at Colgate, has said: "We struggled for eighteen months for the right to negotiate and called a boycott and strike before the company gave in."

"The workers are pleased that in the first round of negotiations we achieved the FOSATU target of R2 an hour."



WORKERS mass outside their factory during the Wadeville strike wave. Workers demanded pay increases and the reinstatement of dismissed workers.