

WORKERS WIN LIVING WAGE

ANOTHER battle for a living wage has been won - this time at Isando factory, TW Beckett.

In terms of wage talks between the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union and the company, the minimum wage has been increased to R2 an hour.

The workers' night shift allowance has also been increased from R1,80 to R2 per night.

FOSATU president, Chris Dlamini, who was involved in the negotiations said it was 'quite an achievement to push up the minimum weekly wage from R68 to R90 especially in the middle of a recession'.

'It just goes to show that if workers are involved in negotiations they will push even through a recession - and win,' he said.

COMPANY IMPROVES WORKERS' HOSTELS

VAST improvements to hostel accommodation have been won by the workers at Duropenta near Germiston in the Transvaal.

Although the hostels are managed by the East Rand Administration Board, workers felt that it was time their company took some of the responsibility for their housing.

They therefore instructed the Chemical Workers Industrial Union shop stewards to take up the issue of the disgusting conditions of the hostels.

COMPLAINED

Workers complained that there was no heating in the rooms, windows were broken, there were no mattresses and because of the lack of lock-up facilities food and clothing was stolen.

After an inspection of the hostels with the shop stewards and a CWIU organiser, Duropenta agreed to complain to ERAB about the conditions.

The company has also bought mattresses for its workers and has had the windows fixed.

Duropenta also agreed to put a full heating system into the hostels.

LOCKERS

And since the hostel inspection, management have provided lockers for storing food at the factory and have provided soap and towels.

Also, the company has opened a non-racial canteen with subsidised meals.

Hopefully more companies will take up Duropenta's example and begin to take responsibility for their workers' housing.

WAGES DOUBLE

WORKERS at Rolfes, a crayon and explosives factory at Elandsfontein must be overjoyed with the Chemical Workers Industrial Union.

Since the union achieved recognition at their factory last year their wages have nearly doubled.

The latest wage negotiations have brought the minimum rate up to R1,70 an hour.

When the CWIU started organising in the factory, Rolfes was the lowest paying chemical company in the Transvaal.

Workers were only getting 80c an hour.

But the CWIU kept on fighting for a living wage and even in the middle of recession was able to win this tremendous increase for Rolfes workers.

END OF TEN YEAR BATTLE IN SIGHT

THE long ten year struggle for union recognition at Sarmcol at Howick may well be over - the company has finally agreed to sit down and negotiate with the Metal and Allied Workers Union.

Since about 1973 MAWU has been organising workers at Sarmcol against tremendous odds.

The company has continually refused to talk to the union, has had organisers arrested and at one stage was telling its workers that it was illegal to join MAWU.

In the middle of a renewed campaign at Sarmcol which began last year, the company retrenched 13 union members without any consultation with MAWU.

In the light of this, the union decided to take the company to the Industrial Court for this 'unfair labour practice'.

But before the matter could come before the court, Sarmcol decided to settle.

In settling the dispute, the company agreed to pay out R7500 which MAWU said would go as severance pay to the retrenched workers.

Sarmcol also agreed to negotiate a recognition agreement with MAWU as soon as it got 50 percent plus 1 members.

And in the meantime, it has agreed to implement the union's stop orders from July and has granted MAWU officials access to the factory.

MAWU branch secretary, Geoff Schreiner said since the company was approached by the union in October it had been stalling on the question of recognition.

'It was getting quite ridiculous as during those six months we only had one meeting,' he said.

The settlement is a major victory in the history of union struggle at Sarmcol.



FARM FARE VICTORY BALLOT

A BALLOT held at Farm Fare at Uitenhage has proved once and for all that the majority of workers at this chicken factory want to belong to the Sweet Food and Allied Workers Union. However, the ballot is not the end of the workers' struggle for union recognition. In spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the workers voted in favour of the union, management is still requiring that the workers pay union dues for seven weeks before they will discuss union recognition. But as the photo shows, the spirit at the factory is high although the company is being so stubborn.

KNITTING WORKER TAKEN BACK

THE National Union of Textile Workers has won the re-instatement of a Polyknit worker who was dismissed in February.

She will also get six weeks back pay for the time she was out of work.

But the fight for the re-instatement of the senior shop steward at this Transvaal factory who was fired when he tried to take up her case, still continues.

The issue arose when the woman worker was asked to especially come in on a Saturday to work a special machine.

Overtime is voluntary in this factory but she agreed to do it.

However, when she arrived at work she found the machine already had an operator so the manager told her to sweep the floor.

She refused and was fired by the company for supposedly walking off the job.

The senior shop steward, Moore Mehlomakhulu tried five or six times to take up her case but management refused and finally told him that if he persisted with the matter he would be fired.

When he walked out of the factory to go and tell the union, all the workers stopped work.

The company then fired the senior shop steward for 'causing the strike'.

The NUTW then decided to take the case of both the fired worker and the shop steward to the Industrial Court.

Before it could get to the court, Polyknit agreed to take back the fired worker.

But the senior shop steward has not yet been taken back and his case will still go to court.

Samson Cele Remembered



ON July 18 1980 a central National Union of Textile Workers' shop steward at a Frame factory, Samson Cele, was shot dead at point blank range. Why? Nobody knows. But what we do know is that he was a key figure in the negotiations which took place during the 1980 Frame strikes. But the struggle for union recognition at the New Germany mills continues. And on June 27 this year, thousands of Frame members of NUTW gathered to remember Brother Cele. At the memorial meeting, Jabulani Gwala (who was also a Frame shop steward at the time but is now an NUTW organiser) said 'We must all put the spirit of Samson in our hearts and continue the struggle. If we don't go on we will be asked one day - what did we do for Samson in the struggle.'



HE WAS KILLED ON 18 JULY 1980 HIS SPIRIT IS ALIVE!



The latest news in the union's struggle for recognition at Frame, is that the company went to the Industrial Court in an attempt to get the NUTW to pay for its costs in the recent unfair labour case that the union brought against the company. But once again NUTW was victorious. The court said Frame must pay its own costs.