

FRAME FIRES 500

On the 9th August more than 500 Textile Workers from Wentex Mills in Jacobs Dbn. were fired for striking for higher wages.

The salary of the average workers at Wentex is R12 to R15. The Frame Management said in the papers on the 9th August that the workers were getting R90 to R120 per month. This is a lie. The workers demanded a R5 to R7 increase they were given a 49c to 76c increase.

These workers who are still living below the poverty datum line went on strike for less than the wage which the management told the newspapers they already had!!

A reporter from Isisebenzi went to the Wentex Factory spoke to the workers there. Many workers were despondant at the lack of solidarity which led to the failure of the strike. It was felt that had all the workers remained united in the demands, they would have succeeded in the struggle.

The Isisebenzi reporter asked a Trade Unionist present at the factory to comment on the strike:

It is very difficult for people who live on starvation wages to strike for more than one or two days. There is no money coming in and the money saved is soon spent. In England part of the Trade Union membership fees go towards a strike fund. Trade Unions are the able to support their members financially while they are not working.

In Durban a Textile workers relief Fund was established and R5,000 has been collected.

Isisebenzi has noticed that workers may not speak out in many factories because they fear dismissal. In Wentex there are now only three out of twelve members of the Works Com. left. Nine of the Works Com. were refused back into the factory on Monday along with 50 Other workers. The rest of the 500 workers fired on Friday who reapplied for their jobs on Monday, were accepted back into the factory.

Isisebenzi joins Mrs Bolton in wondering ~~and~~ what strength and value the Works Committees have.. Mrs Bolton said yesterday: "If the employers demonstrate this total lack of respect for their Works Committees, the what respect are workers expected to hold?"

Workers will remember the law protecting Works Com. members, and Mrs Bolton say that her Union-the Textile workers Union will investigate any possibility of ~~retaliation~~ action regarding these members.

The 50 sacked workers will all receive support from the R5000 already collected.

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MEMBERSHIP BOOST

Recently a very successful first meeting was held of the Metal and Allied workers Union for the Sarmcol Workers. The executive of the Union was surprised at the large turn out ~~even~~ considering the fact that the management had handed out notices to the workers which tried to discourage them from attending the meeting.

At the meeting workers discussed the constitution of the Union at great length as well as the composition of the Union. With a unanimous decision they decided that a union was what they needed in order to secure a greater share in the riches of this country. Sixty new members were signed up after the meeting and another sixty two have since joined, bringing the total number of members up to 197 which is most encouraging.

Mr Moses Mbanjwa, organizing secretary of the Union, asks any workers who need information or have problems to contact him either at telephone number 24596 or to meet him outside the gates at Sarmcol.