

Workers' Rights

Workers' rights in a ^{non-racial} Democratic South Africa will have to be considered in the context of ^{other} far-reaching changes: the re-distribution of the land, the placing of the mines and monopoly industries under public ownership, the abolition of the pass laws, the location system and all other controls over movement and residence. Furthermore, the workers shall have political rights in a ^{truly} Democratic society, the country ^{who} constitute the majority of the population and who are the true owners of the country's wealth will have a say in ^{Parliament and} all ~~the~~ organs that the new society is run in the interests of the mass of the people and not just a relatively small group of exploiters, whatever their colour. Further, the workers ~~will~~ at present the most deprived of education, will be the main beneficiaries of the opening of the doors of learning and culture, ~~total~~.

I can't recall when I wrote this or for whom. The paper seems Mozambican. This could have been for the In-House of Seminar in Lusaka 1988

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But the workers as workers will still have ~~the~~ ^{special} rights to ~~special protection~~ at ~~the~~ ^{need} point of production. ~~at the point of production.~~ guaranteed rights, especially at the point of production.

First, all the ^{physically} ~~cruel~~ abuses of the present system will have to be abolished - the ^(exploitation) abuse of child labour, the tot system, the hiring out of prison labour, the locking up of workers in compounds, the ^{use of physical} punishment against workers and, ~~the whole system of~~ ^{especially above all,} ~~the whole system of~~ ^{migrant labour}.

Second, all discrimination at work will be outlawed and made punishable. At present there are normally ~~eight~~ ^{six} rates for the job, depending on whether you are black, white or brown, and ^{in each case} again on whether you are male or female. ~~Similarly, all colour bars and forms of job reservation~~ ~~all colour bars and job reservations will be prohibited~~

^{will be prohibited, as will discrimination in social facilities at work, pension funds and disability benefits.}
Third, there will be a ^{basic} minimum wage and a policy of consistently raising the wages of the lowest paid workers so as to eliminate the ^{existence of} widespread poverty in a ~~poor~~ wealthy country.

Fourth, there will be an extensive programme of training unskilled and semi-skilled workers (while at the same time enhancing the skills of the more highly qualified workers), by means of in-service training, evening classes and special courses.

~~The general educational advances and the liberation of the creative initiative of the people will provide the economic basis for these changes.~~

How well these far-reaching improvements be financed? Partly by means of a more effective ^{and wealth tax} income tax system ^{redistributing the income of} aimed at the wealthy, but more especially by the increase in productivity that will come - ~~after the initial setbacks in production~~ - after the difficult initial phase of re-adjustment - through the increase in workers' education and the liberation of ^{the} workers' creative initiative. Furthermore, the thousands of millions of rands at present spent on depression and preparations for war will be diverted to production of goods ^{required} to satisfy the material needs of the workers: bread instead of bullets, houses instead of prisons, water pipes instead of cannons, electricity instead of the atom-bomb.

Finally, as a guarantee that all the above changes take place rapidly and harmoniously, the workers will be guaranteed the right to form trade unions, elect their own leaders and enter into collective agreements at work. All workers will have the same basic rights, whether from the countryside or town, whether from outside the country's borders or within, irrespective of race or sex. The trade union movement will base itself on the principle of the unity of the working people rather than their division, and will dedicate its

energies to ~~the~~ advancing the rights of the most exploited ~~and disadvantaged~~ workers rather than protecting the privileges of the most advantaged.

The unions will have a wide range of responsibilities going beyond wages, conditions of work, health and safety. They will encourage the education of workers, look after social security and organise subsidised holidays for workers and their families: the great ~~holiday resorts~~ ^{resorts and maintenance} at present ~~the~~ reserved for those who work the least, will be opened up to those who work the hardest, especially ^{to} those doing heavy physical or dangerous work.

Once the apartheid system is destroyed, and with it the ~~pattern of supervisor/work gang~~ ^{pattern of supervisor/work gang}, the true identity of interests of all the working people, ~~will emerge of all producers of the country's wealth,~~ will emerge.

Finally, in the new society, a whole new attitude to work will be developed. Work will be regarded as a right and duty of all. Today the mass of people hate their work: they are poorly paid, abused, treated as 'boys' or 'girls', openly discriminated against, robbed of the fruits of their labour. They work through threat of the sack ^{and} starvation, all decisions are taken by their bosses without their

consultation, they do ^{endlessly} boring and strenuous
their arms and legs and lungs are destroyed ^{at work,}
^{by machines and dust,} they are separated from their families, treated as
mere units of labour, ^{disabled when old & sick,} They do not eat the food
they grow, or wear the clothes they make, or drive
the cars ^{or live in the houses they construct.} they assemble, in the new South Africa
they will be producing for the benefit of the whole
^{including themselves and their families,} community, and not just for a relative handful of
exploiters, they will take part in making decisions
about their work, and all the degradation of apartheid
will be removed. The working people will be
honoured as the producers of the ~~food, clothes~~
~~and shelter~~ ^{material needs of the} society. Their great talents, and
capacities ~~of the people~~ will be unleashed,
and instead of ~~being~~ ^{regarded work as} a curse, ~~work will be~~
~~transformed into a source~~ they will come to
see it as the greatest source of reward
in life.