

National Workers Union

MEDIA RELEASE



43 Fifth Street, Barataria, Trinidad & Tobago

Tel: (868) 675-1267 :: Fax: (868) 638-6413

e-mail: headoffice@workersunion.org.tt

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2022-10-27

NWU CONGRATULATES EPA ON FOOD INITIATIVE

The National Workers Union (NWU) extends warmest congratulations to the Estate Police Association (EPA) for embarking on their food initiative which will allow them to assist their members with wholesale prices thus reducing their grocery bill by as much as 27 % if the same items were purchased from the groceries.

This initiative by the Estate Police Association has focused on basic items which a household needs. It is open to members of the Estate Police Association and is extended to any member of the public who, on becoming what the EPA calls an associate member, on the payment of a small fee,

The EPA has taken to heart the historic mission of the trade union movement which is to advance, protect and defend the interests of the working people. This mission is not just restricted to handling grievances and engaging in negotiations, but encompasses all issues which affect the livelihood of working people in their quest to for a decent and civilised quality of life.

While the NWU is delighted to support this innovative initiative by the EPA it is not surprising. Over the recent period the EPA has been waging tremendous struggles to ameliorate the horrible conditions which many of its members labour under and in which the NWU has collaborated.

Some of these struggles focus on the discrimination in the minimum wage orders that debar estate police officers from enjoying sick leave, vacation leave and the provision of uniforms.

Other struggles include the highlighting of the abysmal conditions under which security officers, who are barred by law from joining the EPA, suffer, including the failure of security companies to register their workers for NIS coverage and in cases where workers are registered to deduct NIS contributions and not remit them to the NIB.

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The Estate Police Association has demonstrated a vision that augurs well, if adopted by other unions and associations of working people, for the future of the movement which today is under extreme pressure and which is at its weakest since the 1930s.

Understanding the need to build a bottoms up organisation based on class solidarity, mass organisation, collective action, organisational democracy and political education, the EPA has developed training programmes for its shop stewards in grievance procedure and basic industrial relations practices with input from the Ministry of Labour and other notable industrial relations practitioners.

The NWU has built fraternal links over the years with the EPA and is confident that with the passage of time those links will be strengthened as the working people and their unions face an uncertain future as the institutions of the capitalist system crumble and disintegrate.

Working people and their unions must defend with all their might the gains that workers have won through bitter struggle. They must also develop new organisational mechanisms to deal with the changing face of how production is organised so that working people can survive this period of growing instability.

The Estate Police Association has certainly understood what is necessary going forward and is becoming a beacon, a shining light that illuminates the path forward for working people and the poor.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gerry Kangalee (National Education and Research Officer – Cell: 785-7637)

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