
Hot, dry justice ...

Labour law had a difficult birth in KwaNdebele recently. In the first case to be heard in KwaNdebele's newly established industrial court, 56 dismissed FAWU workers were demanding reinstatement. But the court couldn't even get into the court room, let alone reinstate the workers. It seems the keys were lost. Eventually a caretaker opened a spare court. But the air conditioner was not working. There was no water for the judges' tea.

The court was presided over by none other than the eminent Prof Wiehahn. But there were no court orderlies or policemen, and the bantustan's manpower director was nowhere to be found.

The case is still pending. But RED EYE wonders if it is worth making a judgement. Who will enforce it? ♦



Anglo's hired gun

In December last year the ANC held a workshop on competitions policy. The aim was to discuss issues such as whether the conglomerates should be unbundled. The ANC, being an open-minded organisation, invited the biggest conglomerate in town to come and give its views.

Anglo American immediately tried to advise the ANC on the agenda and help select who the speakers should be. The ANC said it was their idea and Anglo was really only a guest. Anglo got upset. Well, RED EYE supposes that's how

conglomerates get to stay conglomerates – by controlling the agenda.

In the end, Anglo settled for bringing in a hired gun from the US to push their line. This time their hired gun was only an ideologue – but then, it was only a workshop. RED EYE wonders what Anglo will do when we actually move to unbundle them – call in the US marines? ♦

SALB starts new political party

The other day, our editor asked a trade unionist in Cape Town to write an article on the challenges of organising coloured workers. You know how democratic they are down there – so they decided a group of unionists should get together to discuss the issues.

But you know they also like jolling in Cape Town. So they got together over a braai and a dop, and brainstormed some good ideas for the article.

The next day ANC intelligence pitches up at the office of one of the unionists:

“We want to speak to you,” they say.

“What about?” asks the unionist.

“We know you and some other guys had a meeting last night, disguised as a braai, to plan a political party for coloureds ...”

No comment ... ♦



Waiting for justice in KwaNdebele ...

Photo: William Matlala

Transparent secret

The three heavyweights – capital, labour and the state – tried to keep the launch of the NEF last November secret. They were so successful that only two journalists pitched up. Because this was a tripartite forum, no-one felt they had the authority to unilaterally evict them, so the journalists were allowed into the room while the delegates discussed what to do with them.

RED EYE hears Bobby Godsell was somewhat peeved. "Why don't we say nothing to them? We're not obliged to speak to the press."

At which point one of the journalists piped up: "What about the principle of transparency?"

Derek Keys – who was chairing the meeting – responded: "Isn't it transparently obvious that we don't want to speak to you?"

Clearly these guys are witty. But are they democratic? ♦

An unfair dismissal somewhere

According to the *New Nation*, two organisers were retrenched when the National Union of Leather Workers (NULW) closed its Johannesburg office in December, a few months after it was opened.

In January an

advertisement for the position of Transvaal organiser for NULW appeared in the *Sowetan*.

Meanwhile, NULW general secretary Kessie Moodley, who resigned in January, has been offered a new job in the union – as legal officer. To defend the union against unfair dismissal cases? ♦

NP for non-whites

FW de Klerk told a media briefing recently that the perception that the NP is a white party is "simply not true". This is very puzzling until you remember that NP leaders have always had a special relationship with the truth. They told us it was simply not true that there was war in Angola, that thousands were in detention, that there was no corruption, no hit squads, no financial support for Inkatha. Now they are a non-white party ... ♦

Losing direction

NUMSA and SACCAWU, involved in separate disputes with Anglo American and furniture group Lubners, marched to the Johannesburg offices of Anglovaal in the belief they were protesting outside Anglo's head office. The marchers did, however, manage to find their way to Lubners. ♦

Sign of which time?

Iscor management says the company is now effectively owned by Iscor workers through their employee share ownership scheme (ESOPs). South Africa being what it is, most workers in the company are black.

So, does this mean it was the workers who chose to put up these signs (below) which were seen there recently, or do they own the company, but not the toilets? ☆



Photo: William Matlala