



General secretary CYRIL RAMAPHOSA: Progress has been made, but the Provident Fund has gone to an arbitrator

MINEWORKER BRIEFS

NUM workers win overtime case

NUM members won an important industrial court judgement which rejected an application by De Beers Premier Mine to force 1034 NUM members to work overtime.

The mine bosses wanted the industrial court to judge the refusal to work overtime as an unfair labour practise. But the court said the work was not urgent and that individual mineworkers were not committing an unfair labour practise.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said "with the continuing loss of jobs and the high rate of unemployment, a ban on overtime could increase the possibility of job creation".

Union members were already working very hard and producing adequately, he said. Comrade Ramaphosa said "workers should not have to work hard as it only serves to heighten exploitation".

Working overtime caused the disruption of home life and placed strain on family relations, he said.

Polyurethane ban underground

OUR struggle to ban the killer foam polyurethane - cause of the Kinross disaster - took several steps forward when the Government Mining Engineer said he would ban the use of polyurethane underground from January next year.

The NUM called on the GME to issue regulations at once and to monitor the removal of the killer foam and not leave this to the mine bosses.

In South Africa two hundred and eight workers have died in polyurethane fires since 1977. The NUM said it was "saddened by the fact it took two years of vigorous campaigning and the loss of 7 more lives at Western Deep Levels to convince the GME to make this important decision".

The NUM has campaigned strongly for the banning of polyurethane. It is now up to workers to pressure management and make sure that they stand by the new regulations.

May 1, and rises, at General Mining

THE union has signed an across the board minimum increase of 17% for workers on the A-level at General Mining Union Corporation.

Union members will get May Day off as long as they do not take PW Botha's holiday on the first Monday in May.

New minimum wages will be R690 for A1, R748 for A2 and R889 for A3. The new maternity agreement provides for two months paid maternity leave and two months unpaid leave with a job guarantee after the four months.

Ergo party celebrates victory

ERGO workers had a celebration party - for which they each paid R10 - at Happy Valley, Tsakane on 17 December.

The happy workers were celebrating the decision of the Industrial Court to award R500,000 to the over one thousands workers re-employed by management after the August 1987 strike. Management had tried to withhold wage rises from the strikers.

Union negotiates Provident Fund

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has negotiated a Provident Fund for all mineworkers with the Chamber.

A Provident Fund is a way of saving for times of need - workers and management both pay money into it. The Chamber and our union have been negotiating the Provident Fund since August 1988 up till now.

All workers in job categories 1 - 8 underground and surface as well as monthly paid staff will be able to participate in the Provident Fund from 1 March 1989.

A lot of progress has been made in the negotiations. But the union has problems on a number of issues where the Chamber refuses to agree to our proposals.

The Chamber and our union have agreed that the issues in dispute should be taken to an arbitrator to give a final decision. The decision of the arbitrator will be in February 1989.

The union expects the Provident Fund to start working on 1 March 1989.

How the Fund works

It is a benefit for Workers. The Provident Fund is aimed at making sure that workers get

money when they:-

- go on pension;
- die (this will go to their families);
- are retrenched;
- are dismissed;
- resign from the mines;
- are disabled as a result of accidents;
- have to pay for funeral expenses for themselves, or families; and
- workers will also get the interest the money they have in the Provident Fund.

Management pays

In order that workers should get the above benefits the mines will pay: From 1 March 1989 to 30 June 1989 -

The mines will pay R1,50 for every R100,00 a worker earns, that is if you earn R300,00 per month the mine will pay R4,50 every month for you and it will be saved under your name by the Provident Fund.

From 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1990 -The mines will pay R3,00 per month for every R100,00 a worker earns, that is if you earn R300,00 per month the mine will pay R9,00 per month for you.

Workers will pay:

From 1 March 1889 to 30 July

1989 - Workers will have to pay R1,50 for every R100,00 they earn. That is if you earn R300,00 you will pay R4,50 per month.

From 1 July 1989 to 30 June 1990-

Money will be taken off

Workers will pay R3,00 for every R100,00 they earn, that is if you earn R300,00 per month you will have to pay R9,00 per month.

Money will be taken off your salary and be put under your account in the Provident Fund. The money paid by the mine for each worker will be added to the money deducted from each workers' salary.

It will be put in the worker's account in the Provident Fund.

The money put in every workers' account in the provident fund will be his money.

Committee controls Fund

A committee with representatives from the Chamber of Mines and the union will control the Provident Fund.

Workers are asked to attend union meetings and ask shaft stewards to explain the Provident Fund to them. Further information about the Provident Fund will be given after the arbitration.

All must sign new membership forms

THE union appeals to all mineworkers to sign the new union membership forms (stop order authorisation forms).

The new membership forms have been introduced at the insistence of the Chamber. The reason that everyone must sign new membership forms - whether you be an old member or joining for the first time - is because subscription fees have been raised from R1 a month to R2 a month.

This decision was taken by worker delegates at the last

NUM National Congress.

This is the union's first increase in its membership subscription fees since 1983.

NUM members pay the lowest fees out of all the unions in South Africa.

The fee to join the union is only 50c. Old members will not have to pay this money as they have already joined the union. They must just sign the new membership forms.

The minebosses will try different ways to persuade workers not to join the union,

Workers should be warned of this and ask whose interests the minebosses have at heart when they condemn the union.

NUM's National Organiser, Gweda Mantashe said the union would be launching a massive recruitment drive in the new year to get workers to either join the union for the first time or to sign the new membership forms.

Mineworkers, NUM is your organisation.

Sign, or join for the first time without delay.

Forward to NUM Congress

WORKERS should start discussing now what they would like to happen at NUM's National Congress in April next year.

It will start on 13 April and continue over that weekend.

The delegate system has changed from past congresses. In the past there were 50 voting delegates per region.

The new system is that there will be 25 voting delegates per region, and one delegate for every 1000 members. So, for example, the OFS has 73 000 members or 25 and 73 = 98.



A happy scene from a previous congress



1988 - THE YEAR IN PICTURES

The attacks include:

- trying to crush our unity with other sectors through banning UDP as well as its youth and civic affiliates.
- banning of COSATU from taking up all campaigns outside the shop-floor.
- police disruption of shopstewards locals and regional councils.
- raids in our offices and re-location of documents etc.
- mysterious fires in union offices.
- the passing of the new labour law which viciously attacks the power of unions.
- mass dismissals, evictions and threats to sue for what bosses lose in strikes.
- the banning of the Anti-Apartheid Conference.

This repression followed the many anonymous attacks against us last year, including the bombing and the burning of offices.

But the bosses and the state are frustrated that this has not stopped the militancy of workers. COSATU is a powerful force in the huge industrial areas, where workers keep the wheels of the economy turning. Even if they ban the organisation, the spirit of progressive trade unions and worker militancy can never be rooted out.

The bosses and the apartheid state hate COSATU because we challenge their control and power over our lives. They act against us because, together with our democratic allies, we mobilise millions of people against apartheid.

Living wage

This campaign has become like a religion among COSATU and NUM workers. As mineworkers we know that without a living wage, we will never have a decent life. We will never break the chains of starvation and poverty. But the bosses are trying their best to bury this campaign. The attacks which started last year continued this year. They used dismissals - even in legal strikes - evictions and court cases against the unions. They united among themselves in this way they discourage some bosses in different sectors from paying higher wages. The unions can see that the bosses don't want to negotiate properly. In some sectors they offer even less than before because they are scared the campaign will grow into an even bigger challenge to bosses profit making.

However, the militancy of workers has not been dampened by these attacks. In fact it has grown as the year went on. Between June and August there were as many strikes as the whole

of the first half of the year. In these 3 months, 50 000 workdays were lost - and that is not counting political action.

And in many sectors worker militancy led to important victories. NUM won on pension benefits.

Labour Act

The campaign against the new labour law is not separate from the living wage campaign. The new law came after last year's living wage campaign. Bosses are happy that the new law, by attacking our right to strike, will lift the pressure on them.

The campaign against the Bill together with the crackdown on UDF and COSATU led to the Special National Congress of COSATU and allies. This was followed by the Three Day Protest Action (July 6, 7 and 8) that was one of the biggest stop-aways in history.

The success of the action surprised the bosses and the state. The state claimed there was still time to talk. However, 3 months of negotiation with the bosses organisation, SACCOLA, led nowhere. The new law was forced through on September 1 with the blessing of most bosses. SACCOLA refused to reject the bad clauses so that the talks could carry on.

In the last few weeks we have seen the bosses rush to use the new law. Many workers in different COSATU unions have faced interdicts which allow for lockouts and evictions. They have also threatened to take COSATU unions to court to make us pay for lost production.

How will we stop the bosses using this law to attack us? This is the question NUM must answer. COSATU will hold a huge mass summit meeting of workers to discuss this. This meeting will also discuss the need for one union federation in South Africa.

Unity

The Special National Congress called for all anti-apartheid organisations to come together in a big conference. The Anti-Apartheid conference was to discuss action against repression.

The conference was planned for mid-September. About 80 organisations were invited such as Idasa.

The mass saw that the conference would strengthen COSATU and its allies. Both and his allies would be further isolated with even less support. The conference was banned about 24 hours before the starting time.



NUM members arrive in Welkom on KwaZulu Day, 1 October



LEFT: General secretary RAMAPHOSA says union will resist attacks on our rights



NUM delegates at the Special Congress



ABOVE: Factory demonstrations against the Labour Bill
BELOW: Scene from an NUM play on safety



LEFT: Safety before profits



Members of the COSATU national executive at the Special Congress in May which decided to call an anti-apartheid conference, and three days of peaceful protest



BELOW: The United Democratic Front was banned in February