

## MINEWORKER BRIEFS

### Hungry strikers stand strong

At the time of printing NUM News, Rustenberg Refineries have been on sit-in strike for three weeks despite management attempts to cut off their food supplies.

The union has proposed independent mediation in an attempt to break the deadlock.

The 800 workers are demanding a 22 percent wage increase while management is stuck on 14,5 increase.

Workers are striking under very difficult conditions as management is trying to cut off their food supplies, and is denying them medical attention and shelter.

Local communities are being refused permission to give food to the striking workers. The Rustenberg workers are also demanding improvements in working conditions, proper housing, and June 16 as a paid holiday.

### Office closed after accident

Management at Vaal Reefs East has closed down the union office at No 8 shaft after workers boycotted a memorial service for the 10 workers who died in a fire on 9 March.

Workers boycotted the service because officials were not allowed to speak. The union described management's action as 'a low blow to workers so soon after the accident'. The NUM said it was part of management's general strategy of repression and intimidation of the union.

### Provident Fund to start soon

NEGOTIATIONS for the Provident Fund for all mineworkers are complete. Soon mineworkers will be able to benefit from the Provident Fund the union has won through negotiations with the Chamber.

A Provident Fund is a way of saving for times of need. Workers and management both pay money into it. Workers get the money when they go on pension, die (goes to families), are retrenched or dismissed, resign from the mines, are disabled as a result of accidents, or have to pay for funeral expenses.

### R12 000 for Elandsrand workers

SEVENTEEN mineworkers dismissed from Elandsrand Gold Mining Company have got R12 000 each.

The settlement was made out of court. The workers were unfairly dismissed for striking during the 1987 strike. The management had argued the workers were not allowed to strike because they were monthly-paid officials.

### 'We don't eat, we don't work'

WORKERS at Witbank Colliery and Arnold Colliery went on sit-in strikes for a few hours because the food was so bad and not enough

Workers have demanded a catering committee made of workers and management to improve the quality of the food.

### Gencor mines are retrenching

OVER ten thousand workers face retrenchments in different parts of the country.

There are major retrenchments in the Gencor gold mines. The affected mines are Leslie, West Rand Consolidated, Bracken and Buffelsfontein gold mines.

There will also be retrenchments taking place at Amscoal, Eskom and De Beers. The union is meeting with management to attempt to negotiate the cases of our members. The union has also declared a dispute with the gold mines over the retrenchments.

### Natal under attack from Inkatha

CERTAIN members of NUM are being attacked by supporters of Inkatha and UWUSA.

Northern Natal regional chairman, Mandla Dlamini, is in hospital after having been attacked by certain Inkatha members.

Members also won a supreme court case in February which ruled that UWUSA official, Mr Ntombela, was not allowed to intimidate or assault NUM members.

### Three public holidays at Eskom

UNION negotiations with Eskom have won four months maternity leave with 30 percent pay for female workers.

NUM members are now recognised under the salaried staff category. Eskom has also agreed to open its medical aid to all employees of all races. Negotiations about wage rises are continuing.

Eskom has also agreed to give workers three extra public holidays a year to take of their own choice - such as June 16.



After two years of struggle seventeen workers unfairly dismissed at Elandsrand during the 1987 strike have won R12 000 each in an out of court settlement

## World miner congress votes for solidarity

THE NUM was represented in full force at the recent 46th Miners International Federation (MIF) Congress in Harare from 7 to 9 March.

Over 50 NUM delegates attended the Congress which was special because it also marked 100 years of international solidarity.

There were 19 countries representing 20 organisations and a total of 111 delegates who all collectively carried 38 votes.

The countries attending included: United States, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Belgium, Phillipines, Turkey, Guyana, Austria, France, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Portugal, Norway, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Spain.

There were also observers from Zambia, Botswana, Peru, Colombia and Namibia.

### 100 years

The Congress was significant as it was the first time such a congress was being held in Africa - especially in Southern Africa. The MIF was also celebrating the 100th year of its existence having been established in Europe in 1889.

Delegates and participants had an opportunity of meeting each other as miners and miners organisations and learning about each union's experiences in its country of operation.

Delegates and observers proclaimed their support for the struggle for South African workers, in particular members of the NUM.

The Congress was opened by the President of the MIF, Anders Stendalen, of the Swedish

Mineworkers Union. Other speakers were the Minister of Manpower and Planning of Zimbabwe as well as the President of the Zimbabwean Mineworkers Union and the General Secretary of the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions.

The following people were elected as office bearers: President-Anders Stendalen(Sweden), First Vice President-Kante Mehta(India), Second Vice President- Heinz-Werner Meyer, Third Vice President - James Motlatsi(South Africa), General Secretary-Peter Michalzik- (Germany). Comrade James Motlatsi received the highest number of votes over and above all the people who were nominated, which showed the NUM even though it is a young union is able to hold its own in international forums.

### Apartheid condemned

Speaker after speaker condemned the system of apartheid and the brutal treatment of workers at the hands of the mining bosses and the apartheid regime. Delegates would not have hesitated to march to Pretoria.

Congress resolutions on the situation in South Africa were:

- It endorsed a boycott of the Royal Dutch/Shell group until it disinvested from South Africa;
- Migrant labour was condemned as a "crime against humanity";
- Noted that South Africa had the highest rate of mine disasters in the world and called for improvements in health and safety;
- Reaffirmed its full support to



the NUM in its struggle to improve conditions and end apartheid.

### International Solidarity

The NUM of South Africa and the United Mineworkers of America proposed the MIF merge with another International Trade Secretariat to build a more effective federation. The MIF Executive Committee was authorised to call for an extra-ordinary congress to finalise such a merger.

Resolutions were passed on the violation of human rights in Colombia, Guiana and Peru.

Other resolutions were passed on job security and social policy, an international health and safety conference, and changes to the constitution.

The Peruvian Miners expressed their thanks to the NUM for having made a solidarity grant during their strike in 1988.

In typical tradition the NUM delegate closed the congress by singing the national anthem. All delegates at Congress rose to join in even if some of them could not sing or follow the words.

What is significant is that they all raised their fists in the way that miners and workers in this country do and the congress ended on that high note.