



NUM NEWS

SEPTEMBER 1992

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

SPECIAL EDITION

UNION AND BOSSES DEADLOCK ON WAGES DIAMOND STRIKE LOOMING

Diamond mineworkers are preparing to strike soon in an attempt to pressurise De Beers bosses to accede to their modest and reasonable wage demands.

Initial reports from diamond mines throughout the country show an overwhelming support for strike action. Workers are demanding a modest wage increase ranging from 15% to 15.4%.

NUM demands an increase of R134 for the lowest paid workers whereas the bosses have made an offer of a mere R83.

On average they are only prepared to offer 9.5% to workers already under financial straits,

due to inflation running at 15%. It was after protracted negotiations that the union was forced by the bosses' intransigence to declare a dispute. The dispute was subsequently referred to conciliation board, and a deadlock was reached. Workers were left with no option except to ballot for a legal strike at all De Beers mines.

The mines and projects that will be affected by industrial action are: Finsch, Koffiefontein, Kimberley, Premier, Kleinzee and Geology Mine.

Six thousand workers are expected to take part in the strike unless a significant move is

made by the bosses.

Meantime tensions are still simmering as De Beers workers challenge management to reinstate workers dismissed for having taken part in the national general strike of August 3 and 4 to support peace and democracy.

Recently workers at Premier and Kimberley staged protest marches to managements' offices demanding reinstatement of dismissed workers.

At Finsch mine in Kimberley workers protested against the dismissals by staging a sit-in in management's administration offices.

Negotiations between the NUM and De Beers have since started to address national protests and related matters.

At the time of going to press ballot results of a few mines were still being counted.

The last strike at De Beers called by NUM over wages and conditions of work was in 1989.



Chief Negotiator for NUM, Godfrey Ollphant at De Beers.

EDITORIAL COMMENT

South Africa is still gripped by political turmoil as the masses of the oppressed surge forward without relent to a democratic non racial future.

The apartheid regime is still clinging to political and economic power by sheer brute force used against those who want peace and democracy.

On the surface melodious political tunes are sung by apartheid politician about their commitment to a new South Africa where the people shall govern. We are made to believe that the control of political structures and economic resources by a tiny white minority is a thing of the past. The stark reality of the oppressed is that we still don't have the right to elect a government of our own choice let alone deciding on the distribution of economic resources.

The white minority regime knows no better life than white domination and privilege. Any serious threat to these privileges is viewed as subversive. Massacres of Boipatong and Bisho clearly showed that the regime would cling to power and perpetrate its rule at all costs.

Any talk of change of heart on the part of the white supremacists is political folly bordering on betrayal of the aspirations of the oppressed of our country.

The racist government was solely responsible for scuttling the negotiations at CODESA II. It was out of bitter experience that the oppressor were not prepared to allow the will of the people to rule, that we were reminded that the people are their own liberators.

Politics of mass participation mobilised millions of freedom yearning people workers, women, rural poor, students, church people behind the Liberation Alliance to mount a major assault on the regime.

Mass action has become an indispensable weapon to ensure the birth of democracy. Abandoning mass action without democracy will be suicidal.

It was the victory of the masses that the regime was forced to make a firm commitment to meet key demands put forward by the ANC.

Political prisoners are being freed with clear signs of the willingness on the part of the regime to tighten security around hostels used as barracks by perpetrators of violence against innocent civilians.

The urgent political task is the establishment of an Interim Government of National Unity that will put an end to the present regime. A democratically elected sovereign Constituent Assembly to draft a democratic constitution can not be delayed any longer.

While the ANC leadership will be engaging the regime in talks to work out details about these critical issues the masses on the ground must keep pressure through various forms of mass action to ensure that the outcome of negotiations is not aborted democracy.

We have to marshal all our forces now to educate our people on how to vote. The outcome of democratic elections will determine the future of this country and for many generations to come. Southern Africa looks forward to a new democratic government for stability and economic development.



Mass action to continue rolling until a new Non-Racial Democratic S.A. is established. In the front of the march, NUM president Cde. James Mollatsi; Cde. Ronnie Kasrils — ANC.