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MINE bosses face national
action unless they eradicate
racial discrimination on
South Africa's mines.

This ultimatum was an-
nounced following the Na-
. tional Union of Minework-
ers' Central Committee (CC)
meeting attended by about
320 delegates representing
about 270 000 paid-up
members last weekend.

The decision comes after
weeks of protest action
against discrimination and
the adoption of an increas-
ingly hard-line stance by
bosses against demonstra-
tions by workers.

Delegates at the CC meet-
ing identified over 50 areas
where mines practise racial
discrimination.

'Among these areas are the .
hoisting of workers to the
surface after their shift,,
schooling assistance and
food.

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hoisting of workers to the
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While most mines reserve
one of three decks in a lift
cagesfor whites, Western
Holdings management has a
special cage for the exclu-
sive use of whites.

BecauSe of the discrimina-
, tion. black miners are forced
to queue for up to three
hours after their shift before
being hoisted to the surface.

This means that white
workers reach the surface
four hours before their black
counterparts.

Because they do not have
to queue as black miners do,
white workers can afford to
arrive at work much later.

According to delegates at
the CC, the majority of
whites are transported down '
to the shafts around 7am,
while black miners start
queuing up at 4.30am.

Whiletmost whites from
the morning shift reach the
surface at around 2pm,
blacks sometiines-have to

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NEW NATION April 27 - May 3, 1990 Page 23

PEACE

IONAL-

Union leaders at the NUM's Central Committee (CC) meeting last weekend. Delegates to the

wait until after 4pm.

There is a delay in hoisting black miners after an underground accident. Whites are hoisted to the surface immediately.

Only black miners are subjected to strenuous heat tests before being sent underground. Not only are newcomers subjected to these tests but also workers returning from annual leave, NUM members claim.

"Black mineworkers do not only see this practice as racist in its application, but have strong feelings against it as it is extremely strenuous while it does not benefit them to cope with working conditions underground," one worker said.

The tests are also said to be humiliating and many workers see it as a form of punishment.

According to workers, they are herded into a hall in large numbers where they are forced to undress completely. They are then led into a room where they undergo heat tests for up to four hours at a time for five days. The test is repeated if the results are unsatisfactory.

In contrast, white miners are allowed underground without having to undergo the acclimatisation procedure.

Workers at the CC meeting pointed out that, despite 'claims by the Chamber of Mines (CoM) in its 1989 review that it would continue upgrading living conditions, this is largely non-existent.

At the Libanon hostel, meeting threatened action against racism on SA mines. rooms with three cement bunks have been "upgraded" to rooms with two cement bunks. Workers still have to pay between R33 and R50 for mattresses.

With one exception, namely Springfield hostel, workers reported an abundance of lice, cockroaches and vermin.

Hostels at Leslie and Bracken mines have not been-sprayed with insecticide for four years. Saai-plaas hostels have not been sprayed for two years.

NUM warns bosses on racism
In most cases workers are

forced to clean the hostels on their own. This is not the case with living quarters occupied by white miners. t Workers pointed out that ' hostels remain divided along ethnic lines. Anglo was said to have-re-introduced ethnic segregation at two mines following the 1987 strike. In contrast to these living conditions, most white miners stay in family houses with parks, tarred roads, cinemas and stores.

Although some mines provide houses where miners could live with their visiting wives, this type of accommodation is extremely limited.

Workers from Western Holdings point out that there are only 15 houses to be shared by an estimated 47 000 workers.

At Grootvlei, management provides only three houses to be shared by about 3 000 workers. At Clydesdale, 300 workers have to share one house. An estimated 1 300 workers at Kriel share 20 houses.

The shortage of houses means that miners' wives can only spend a maximum of seven days instead of the 21 allowed in terms of mine regulations,

Racial abuse at the hands of white miners is a common experience. "You can be assaulted if he (white miner) does not like you in his work-gang. Any form of retaliation is a certain dismissal," one worker said.

. Underground toilets are also segregated. While white workers have cubicles as toilets, black workers have to use carts parked off in the open or have a few buckets arranged alongside each other.

At the President Brand mine, three buckets service up to 200 black workers and, at Kinross, one bucket services up to 500 workers.

We back ANC's COSATU's biggest affiliate, ' the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), voted over the weekend to give its unqualified support to the ANC's initiative to talk to the government next week in an attempt to end political conflict. _

The decision was taken by
 the union's Central Committee (CC), NUM's highest
 decision-making body after
 COSATU's women member
 in the Wits and Nonhem
 Transvaal regions will be
 taking to the streets tomorrow
 in protest against the
 Labour Relations Amendment
 Act (LRAA).
 The Wits march will take
 place in Johannesburg and
 over 2 000 women are expected
 to take part.
 Women will be meeting at
 St Mary's Cathedral in De
 Villiers Street at 9am.
 From there they will march
 to the Union Buildings.
 In supporting the talks, the
 320 delegates to the CC also
 warned the government that
 its failure to respond positively
 to the ANC's demands would
 leave the liberation movement
 and its allies with no option
 but to intensify the levels of
 mass action.
 The meeting also welcomed
 Cosatu's decision to go to the
 Department of Manpower and
 John Vorster Square police
 headquarters.
 The Northern Transvaal
 region's march will be held
 in Pretoria starting at
 1.30pm in Brown Street.
 A memorandum has been
 prepared by women in the
 Wits region which will be
 presented to state representatives
 at the manpower department
 and the police headquarters.
 The women's demands are
 to join the ANC and SACP in
 an alliance to ensure the
 establishment of a non-racial,
 democratic country.
 A key focus of the CC,
 which was attended by
 representatives from every
 NUM branch, was geared
 towards preparing for a
 post-apartheid country.
 "The creation of a skilled
 workforce is the key to
 as follows:

- 0 The amendment of the LRAA.
- 0 Fair labour legislation for domestic, farm and public sector workers.
- 0 The right to picket, protest and strike.
- 0 Work for all at a living wage.

0 Centralised bargaining.
0 National health services
for all.
0 An end to privatisation.
NUM has initiated a training
prosperity," said NUM gen-
eral secretary Cyril Rama-
phosa.

SKILLS

With this in mind, the
programme for minework-
ers, together with mine-
workers' unions from Swe-
den, Britain, Canada, West
Germany, Zimbabwe and
0 Scrapping of the death
penalty and the release of all
workers on death row.
0 An end to migrant labour.
0 Decent, affordable hous-
ing for all.
0 Free education and train-
ing for all.
0 An immediate end to
apartheid.

According to spokesper-
sons for Cosatu women in
the Wits region, the idea of a
march by Cosatu women

I A public inquiry into state was first raised In February.
violence.

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All regions were due to

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Australia.

By the end of the year, the -
union will have sent 100
mineworkers to these coun-
tries for training in all min-
ing-related skills at colleges
- and universities.

The mineworkers will be
selected from current and re-
trenched workers who have
manic.

NUM will also ask the
hold marches tomorrow but
only two regions have been
able to organise them.

"We are asking all women
in the community to join us
in our march," said the
,women.

"We have approached the
Federation of Transvaal
Women. Southern Transvaal
Youth Congress, UDF and
ANC.

"We are also expecting
Cosatu members from as far
as Nigel to attend the
march."

talks initiative -,- CC
mining industry to subsidise
the studies of 250 mine-
workers a year at South Af-
rican universities.

Wage negotiations were
also discussed at the CC,
-and the NUM's 1989 con-
gress demand of a minimum

underground monthly wage of R600 and surface wage of R543 being reaffirmed. In addition, the union is demanding an 80-hour working fortnight for underground workers and an 88-hour working fortnight for surface workers.

The minimum annual leave demanded by the union is 35 days for underground and 30 days for surface workers. They are also demanding March 21, June 16 and October 1 - National Health and Safety Day after the Kinross disaster - as holidays. '

Further demands on income security for injured workers, accident and travelling compensation, have also been submitted to the Chamber of Mines in preparation for the start of wage negotiations next month.

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