

A MESSAGE FROM THE COSATU PRESIDENT



COSATU

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MAY DAY MESSAGE PRESIDENT OF COSATU

Comrades, this is the 100th anniversary of May-Day, the 100th year since workers organised themselves to fight against the exploitation and domination of big business.

In SA itself we know that the discovery of gold in 1886 brought slavery to our people. Our people spend their lives in the dark pits of the mines, the inside of factories and working long hours in the sun on the farms. We made South Africa rich. We built the roads, the cars, the clothes we wear, the shops, houses, factories and the food we eat.

But in South Africa millions of workers and their families live in poverty, hunger and starvation. Our lives and families are broken by the pass laws and migrant labour, we live in matchbox houses with no families. Our children are given a slave education which condemns them to the factories and mines.

While a minority live in wealth so great that they are amongst the richest in the world. Their wealth is made through the blood, sweat and toil of the working class.

Therefore as Cosatu we must challenge this domination. Our demands our clear. We want our freedom from apartheid and the cheap wage system. We must mobilise and build organisation everywhere in the factories, farms, mines, schools, townships and rural areas.

We must build Shop Stewards, Shaft Stewards, street and area committees everywhere. This is the basis of our people taking power. The working class must play a leading role in the struggle for freedom. We must involve ourselves in all spheres of struggle from fighting for a living wage and the right to strike, to support the struggle of students for democratic SRC's, the unbanning of Cosas, to demand the release of Comrade Nelson Mandela, Oscar Mpetha and all political prisoners, the unbanning of all political prisoners, the unbanning of all banned organisations, and the end to influx control and the pass laws.

Cosatu is committed to campaign for these rights for our freedom, and we urge all worker leaders, members and all patriots in South Africa to work together, plan and co-ordinate our actions to win our freedom and break the chains of poverty and cheap labour which bind the majority of people in South Africa today.

Let us make this one hundredth May Day the biggest and most successful in our history. Let it inspire us to redouble our efforts to organise and mobilise South Africa's workers so that it will not be long before we achieve our liberation.

VIVA COSATU!

AMANDLA NGAWETHU! MATLA KE A RONA!

ALUTA CONTINUA!

E. BAKAYI
COSATU PRESIDENT

they will lose their jobs. Dugard says it is his impression that they will not sign, but it's too early to tell whether there will be a total boycott or not. ■

INDUSTRIAL COURT

Disciplining GFSA

The employee disciplinary procedure practised at a Gold Fields of SA (GFSA) mine has come under heavy fire from the Industrial Court. The court severely criticised the procedure — applied on all Gold Fields

mines — when it ordered the temporary reinstatement of David Theko, chairman of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) shaft stewards committee at Kloof mine.

Theko was dismissed last August after Kloof's manager had endorsed the recommendations of a disciplinary committee which heard a complaint brought against him by another worker, Themba Kotyana.

Kotyana lodged the complaint after an altercation between the two workers over attitudes towards a legal strike the NUM planned to stage at the mine. Kotyana alleged that Theko had accused him of being a management informer and had threatened to

kill him and other Pondo workers on the day of the strike. Theko, who apologised when Kotyana challenged him to a fight, denied issuing a death threat.

Theko applied to the court for temporary reinstatement arguing that the mine did not have sufficient cause to dismiss him and that the disciplinary committee had been biased in its treatment of him. The central point in the case was whether Theko had been entitled to representation at the hearing.

Counsel for Kloof argued that the mining industry is prone to certain "awful happenings." And, after describing the general situation at Kloof, argued that the mine could

INKATHA v COSATU

Shaping up for battle

Our relations in Natal this year are likely to be marked by an intensification of the battle for the hearts and minds of the province's black workers. The protagonists are Kwazulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). And, it seems, the battle is poised to move from sniping from public platforms into the factories themselves.

Until late last year, the dominant union force in Natal — the now-dissolved Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu) — and Inkatha operated without coming into open conflict, even though the unofficial truce between them was sometimes uneasy.

However, when Cosatu's inaugural conference attack on the homeland system specifically included KwaZulu and Inkatha, Buthelezi lost no time in responding angrily. That was not unexpected. But recent developments suggest that the conflict is hotting

Last Wednesday, when Buthelezi visited the Mondi plant at Richards Bay — a stronghold of the Cosatu-affiliated Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union — he launched an attack on Cosatu, warning that Inkatha will respond to its "insults" by entering the labour relations field.

Then, at its central committee meeting last weekend, Inkatha established a sub-committee led by its finance committee chairman Simon Conco to consider further action in the labour field. Inkatha, said Buthelezi, must be prepared to mobilise workers to respond to Cosatu's "declaration of war." One option he suggested was the formation of Inkatha branches in every factory.

Inkatha secretary general Oscar Dhlomo tells the *FM* that feedback from Inkatha members who belong to Cosatu unions shows that they are "discontented and confused" by their unions' support for disinvestment and socialism, and their hostility toward Inkatha itself. He says the sub-committee will

be considering three main alternatives for action:

- The creation of new unions for workers who are unhappy with their present unions' affiliation to Cosatu;
- The expansion of the only union affiliated to Inkatha — the National Union of Sugar Manufacturing and Refining Employees (NUSMRE) — to accommodate workers in other industries; or
- Attempting to find common ground with the existing unions.

Dhlomo says the committee will be guided by members' wishes. He intimates, though, that the NUSMRE option is less likely than the creation of new unions. (This is a wise move on Inkatha's part as NUSMRE is not held in high esteem by many, including some leading Natal industrialists and labour relations consultants.) Dhlomo is also extremely doubtful that peace talks with other unions would have any chance of success.

Meanwhile, there are signs which show that Inkatha's work on the ground has already begun. Rumours abound in northern Natal of groups of disenchanted workers planning to break away from Cosatu unions. And it appears that Inkatha will be approaching companies to discuss labour issues. The *FM* understands that Inkatha has similar plans in Maritzburg. Further, a mass meeting called by Inkatha supporters is to be held in Eskaweni near Richards Bay on Sunday. Dhlomo says it is not an official Inkatha meeting, although it has been organised by its supporters, including some disenchanted ex-officials of Cosatu unions. Workers from all over Natal have been invited.

According to Dhlomo, the meeting has been called to allow workers to voice their dilemma over dual Inkatha/Cosatu union membership. He predicts that a decision will be taken to form a committee mandated to "ensure workers' aspirations are realised on the factory floor." A questionnaire canvassing workers' views on issues such as disinvestment and free enterprise has been circulated by the same Eskaweni group.

Cosatu general secretary, Jay Naidoo, has declined to comment at this stage. He says these developments are being discussed and will be considered at a national executive committee meeting next month.

But there is consensus among labour observers in Natal that an Inkatha initiative to draw members away from Cosatu unions could have serious consequences for the new federation — in northern Natal and in the short-term at least. Inkatha, they say, has particularly been able to make capital out of Cosatu's perceived unconditional support for disinvestment.

The long-term consequences of such a struggle are, however, more difficult to predict. Despite Buthelezi's accusation that Cosatu unions have sacrificed economic priorities in favour of political ones, most of them have won significant material rewards for members. Whether Inkatha-initiated unions can provide the same quality of leadership is also questioned. One Natal-based union source (who asked not to be named) reckons: "Any loss of membership to pro-Inkatha unions will eventually be reversed when workers realise Cosatu unions are better able to deliver financial benefits."

Another problem new Inkatha unions could face is that their strength would largely be confined to one region of the country, Natal. Cosatu is likely to maintain substantial strength in the metropolitan areas of the province, and would continue to have a presence in northern Natal, although somewhat weaker.

Employers in the region certainly do not relish the prospect of a disruptive inter-union war erupting in their plants. Despite Cosatu's militant political stance, many employers have come to appreciate the advantages of dealing with its disciplined and professionally-run affiliates on day-to-day industrial relations matters. But barring the negotiation of a new truce, which appears increasingly unlikely, a scarring conflict for both Inkatha and Cosatu — and employers — seems inevitable.

FEATURE



TUCSA LOSS MEANS GAIN FOR COSATU

By SIBUSISO MNCADI

THE Congress of SA Trade Unions is set to receive a major boost to its already large membership with the affiliation of two major trade unions — among them a disenchanted Trade Union Council of SA break away.

After several talks on unity, five domestic workers' organisations from all over SA have finally agreed to form one union — the SA Domestic Workers' Union.

This resolution was taken at a meeting held at the Lutheran Centre in Johannesburg, where October 24 was set as D-day for the new union's launch.

The organisations which are due to disband to make way for Sadwu are South African Domestic Workers' Association, the Cape Town based Domestic Workers' Association, National Domestic Workers' Union, East London Domestic Workers' Union and Port Elizabeth Domestic Workers' Union.

Sadwu national organiser Mary Mkhwanazi said the decision to unite came at a time when it was needed more than ever before.

"We felt unity will make the domestic's voice stronger and struggling side by side with our sister organisations within Cosatu will help bring the Government to a negotiating table.

"Our main priority is to fight for domestic workers to have laws regulating their minimum wages and working conditions.

"And so the resolution to affiliate to Cosatu came as no surprise as already some of us have been closely linked to certain of its af-

filiates," said Mkhwanazi.

She said Sadwu will be launched at a mass rally in Johannesburg. At first they had chosen Durban but after experiencing fighting there during the National Education Crisis Committee Conference they decided to change venue.

Mkhwanazi said some of their members who attended are still having nightmares about the impi raid which left two of their members dead.

In major policy shift, the 6 000-strong Durban Integrated Municipal Employees' Society is to investigate the possibility of affiliating to Cosatu. This follows a decision taken at its annual general meeting to pull out of Tucsa.

Dimes honorary organising secretary Dharam Kisson Singh said: "At our AGM it was pointed out that Tucsa no longer represented the views of the majority of workers and failed to indentify with the aspirations of the black people."

"It was also pointed out that Tucsa was moving in the opposition direction to the general mood of the majority of workers who sought a new deal. It had failed to respond to the challenges facing the country and identified too closely with the State and establishment," said Singh.

Singh said it has been suggested by some members that Dimes affiliate to Cosatu, but as notice of this was not given to the meeting, no decision could be taken.

But the general view was that Dimes should affiliate to Cosatu. This will be discussed at a later stage.

Boycott ends in double victory

By DAVID NIDDRIE

MEDUNSA students have won their three-month long boycott over the admittance of a conservative white student to the university.

And they have succeeded in their bid to kick security chief WP Steyn off campus.

A mass student meeting decided on Wednesday to suspend the boycott — which has effectively delayed the opening of the GaRankuwa campus since the start of the academic year.

The meeting voted to resume classes on Monday, on the basis that students were not sure of the motives of Piet Kruger — who registered with Medunsa this year after earlier rejection by a number of other SA Medical schools — remaining on campus despite the almost total boycott.

An SRC spokesman said students felt that prolonging the boycott might serve Kruger's undisclosed interests. They said Kruger's presence on campus had disrupted the university's academic program.

Last week, talks were held between university authorities, the SRC and the National Education Crisis Committee in a bid to end the boycott — described by students as "highly successful".

Jubilant students told *City Press* the authorities had also suspended assistant registrar and campus security boss WP Steyn and "removed him from campus".

Steyn, who also controls campus workers and catering, has been a frequent target of student criticism. Students had slated the standard of catering at Medunsa and Steyn's role in suppression of student activities — particularly during the March 21 Langa-Sharpeville commemorations, when two students were injured and hundreds more harrassed by police and campus security officials.

Students will resume the boycott if Steyn returns, and discuss its resumption if Kruger returns.

Court tests man's