

# COSATU



# NEWS

Official newsletter of the Congress  
of SA Trade Unions

Number 5, 1987



## **HANDS OFF COSATU**

**We demand  
the right to  
organise  
freely**

**We demand  
the right to  
meet and  
speak**

**We demand  
an end to  
harrasment &  
intimidation**

**DEFEND YOUR ORGANIZATION**

**LIVING WAGE** struggles affecting more than a million workers are now unfolding.

And as the gap grows between the wages workers need and the profits bosses want, massive worker action for a living wage seems likely this year.

In the metal and mining sectors — the backbone of Cosatu's living wage campaign — the wages and conditions of nearly 900 000 workers are presently under negotiation.

The 370 000-strong National Union of Mineworkers is demanding, among other things:

- An across-the-board increase of between 45% and 55%.
- Danger pay.
- An end to PAYE tax deductions from July 1.
- A reduction in hours of work.

The mine bosses are offering a 12% increase for coal mines and an increase of up to 16,9% on gold mines.

The NUM has already declared a dispute with the mine bosses and will be able to go on a legal strike within a month.

Meanwhile the Metal and Allied Workers' Union and other metal unions in the Industrial Council for the metal industry are headed for a similar dispute.

The bosses are offering 10,5% increases — well below the rate of inflation — which have been rejected by the unions.

The unions are demanding that the bosses lower the difference between what semi-skilled workers earn and what unskilled workers earn.

All Cosatu unions are, meanwhile, building the living wage campaign to fight for:

- A living wage for all workers.
- An end to tax deductions.
- Decent education and training for all.
- An end to the hostel/migrant labour system and decent



Join the Living Wage campaign — build worker unity.

housing near our place of work.

- A 40-hour week.
- Six months' paid maternity leave.

## Under attack

YOUR newspaper, Cosatu News, is under attack.

The second issue, produced in November 1986, was banned because the state felt it was "too militant". Cosatu is appealing against the banning.

The fourth issue, produced in May 1987, was also immediately banned. But before it was banned, the police raided our offices countrywide and confiscated about 55 000 copies under the emergency regulations. We were unable to print the Zulu and Sotho editions because of this.

The Cosatu Executive Message, which was produced in February this year, was also seized all over the country. Close to 100 000 copies were

taken by the police.

Last week the police once again raided Cosatu offices countrywide and confiscated pamphlets about the attacks on our organisation.

**WORKERS** and subscribers: Because of the attacks on Cosatu House, Cosatu News and other Cosatu publications, Cosatu's Executive Committee has decided that we can no longer produce Cosatu News as a standard newspaper for the time being.

Cosatu News will still come out — but it will be the size of this issue, between 4 and 8 pages thick, and more regular.

**SUBSCRIBERS:** We have been unable to get all our records from Cosatu House, so please bear with us. We will be restructuring our subscription service in line with the changes to Cosatu News. You will soon be receiving Cosatu News and other information.

# Forward to the National Congress!

COSATU's first National Congress (NC) since our launch in December 1985 will take place in Johannesburg in July.

The congress is the most important decision-making body in Cosatu.

It is the place where our policies are changed or added to.

It is the place where our constitution can be changed.

It is the place where we elect our national leaders.

The NC is democratic. Every union in Cosatu is entitled to one delegate for every 500 paid-up members it has. There must be a majority of worker delegates in every delegation.

With Cosatu's paid-up membership of over 700 000, there will be at least 1 400 delegates at the NC.

Unions in the 12 major industrial sectors must merge before the NC is held, or face disciplinary action by Cosatu. Unions in the mining, metal, food, domestic and construction sectors have already merged into big industrial unions. Once all mergers are complete, there will be 14 unions in Cosatu — including the farm and unemployed unions.

This NC is taking place when our country is in crisis — attacks and repression against the worker and democratic movement are greater than ever.

But workers are leading the mass struggle against poverty and oppression.

The decisions that come out of our NC will guide Cosatu for the next two years, and will have a major impact on the future of our struggle and our country.

Every worker in Cosatu must make sure that resolutions and policies for Cosatu's NC are being widely discussed in your union.

Forward to the NC!





## NUMSA: The new giant

COSATU's second-largest affiliate has been launched, boosting our campaign for one union in each industry.

The National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa (NUMSA) was launched in Johannesburg on May 23, bringing together more than 130 000 workers from eight different trade unions in the metal, engineering and motor industries.

The new union's office-bearers are Daniel Dube (president), David Madupela (vice-president) and Percy Thomas (second vice-president).

Comrade Moses Mayekiso — who is presently being charged with treason for his community work in Alexandra — was elected general-secretary, even though he was unable to attend the congress because of his incarceration.

Comrade Mayekiso was given a standing ovation by the more than 400 delegates.

Among the major resolutions adopted by the new union are:

- A national demand for a 40-hour week, a living wage of R4,50 an hour, the right to strike, six months' maternity leave, March 21, May 1 and June 16 as national paid

holidays, an end to migrant labour and the hostel system, and equal vocational training for men, women and youths.

- The adoption of the Freedom Charter and the development of a political programme for workers, as the only way the organised working class can take the lead in the struggle for liberation. The Freedom Charter was adopted as a set of "minimum demands" for a free and democratic South Africa.

- Resolutions stressed that the end result of worker struggle should be a socialist society where workers control government and industry.

- Affiliation to Cosatu, the International Metalworkers' Federation and the International Chemical and Energy Foundation.

This makes NUMSA the second-largest Cosatu affiliate, and the second-largest union in the country — second in size only to the National Union of Mineworkers, which has also adopted the Freedom Charter.

Explaining the role of the new union, NUMSA president Comrade Daniel Dube said: "This union was not only

created for those who took part in the congress. We campaign for all workers in the metal industry — this is a home for all of them."

He added: "Unity is essential for all workers, to increase our bargaining power and our political power — the power of all the oppressed."

The new union also condemned the recent attacks on Cosatu and other democratic organisations.

These attacks were referred to by Cosatu general-secretary Comrade Jay Naidoo at the opening of the congress, when he told delegates: "We must build organisation — it is our defence. We must consolidate and advance in all sectors.

"The tides have turned; workers are on the march. The greatest defence of Cosatu is to understand this."

The president of the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), Comrade Peter Makhoba, gave a similar message in his address to the new union.

"We must build alliances between the youth and the working class," he said. "We must work together in the trenches to overcome the enemy."

## For millions, voting meant staying home

ON May 6, while two-million white people voted in the whites-only election, an estimated three-million black workers took part in a massive protest — a two-day nationwide stayaway from work, school and university.

Workers and youth were responding to a call by Cosatu, the UDF and the NECC for two days of protest action on May 5 and 6. Cosatu demanded:

- The unconditional reinstatement of the 16 000 dismissed SATS workers.
- That negotiations take place between elected worker representatives and SATS to settle the dispute.
- That the killings, harassment and intimidation of Cosatu members stop and that we be allowed to meet and speak freely.
- That all detainees be released.
- That repression end and a climate be created which is favourable for democratic activity.

In addition the action was, as Cosatu said, "a response to the all-white elections which capitalise on and deepen racism, ignorance and fear" and "which aim to consolidate power and wealth more firmly in the hands of the minority".

The white elections, said Cosatu, did not even remotely touch on the real issues dominating the lives of the millions of oppressed and exploited.

In fact, the elections concentrated on how to repress and control the democratic organisations supported by the vast majority of people.

Since the two-day protest action, none of the demands Cosatu made has been met and repression has got much worse.

But there have been real gains — the unity, solidarity and strength of workers and youth has grown a thousand times and has been felt by millions all over the country.





The May Day mood: Namibian workers march through the streets of Katatura township in Windhoek after a rally attended by more

# One country. One federation.

WORKERS learnt a valuable lesson from May Day this year: The more they organise into one union in each industry, the more powerful the unions become and the more workers join up.

The more unions come together in one federation, the greater the power of the federation — and the greater the impact of organised workers on the unorganised, the youth and all oppressed people.

If May Day means working class unity, then working class unity means one union in each industry and one federation in the country.

Cosatu is committed to one trade union federation of national industrial unions in South Africa. Our slogan is: One Country, One Federation — One Union, One Industry. Today, Cosatu is closer to this goal than ever before.

In the *transport* industry, workers from the Cape-based Tramway and Omnibus Union, Nactu's TAWU, the SATS staff association BLATU and

**In true style, President PW Botha declared May 1 a workers' holiday — and then banned virtually all outdoor rallies organised by workers. But this didn't stop workers all over South Africa from celebrating the true meaning of a workers' day. Thousands attended indoor rallies, and thousands more stayed away from work. But what are the lessons to be learnt from May Day?**

Zakheni have made contact with Cosatu transport affiliates to become part of the one big transport union which is being formed. SARHWU alone has grown by 15 000 members in the past six weeks.

In the *textile* industry, Cosatu's NUTW is a major force in the 200 000-strong textile, clothing and leather union federation formed by all the major unions in the industry. Most of the unions were in Tucsa. The federation aims to eventually form one national union in the industry. Already merger talks between

NUTW and TWIU are fairly advanced. NUTW is busy forming one union with SATAWU and other textile workers in Cosatu

In the *commercial and catering* industry, HARWU and the 3 000-strong Cape Liquor and Catering Union are talking unity, while other locally-based hotel unions want to come in. Cosatu's CCAWUSA, HARWU and RAWU are forming one union in this sector soon.

In the *paper and pulp* industry, over 3 000 workers from the NUFW have joined Cosatu's PWAWU in the past month.

Meanwhile PWAWU, NUPAWU and other Cosatu affiliates with members in the industry have finalised plans for merging.

In the *metal* industry, one big union was formed at a congress in Johannesburg from May 22 to 24, bringing together more than 130 000 workers from Cosatu unions

and MICWU. Many other workers are expected to join this new union.

All IMF unions were invited to participate in the new union's founding congress.

In the *chemical* industry, the entire Northern Transvaal branch of NACTU's main affiliate, SACWU, have joined CWIU and others are joining in the rest of the country. CWIU has repeatedly approached SACWU to discuss unity in the chemical sector.

In the *municipal* sector and the *public* sector, big gains are being made too. The organisation of municipal workers is spreading from the industrial centres to smaller towns and progress is being made in merging Cosatu's affiliates in the sector. The Natal-based DIMES wants to come into Cosatu's municipal union. The public sector is still weakly organised, but national organisation is being pulled together around health workers both inside and

To Page 7





than 10 000 people.

# One May Day

From Page 6

outside Cosatu. The newly formed organisation of postal workers, POTWA, has close ties with Cosatu and will decide in October whether to affiliate or not.

Cosatu is busy organising the millions of unorganised farm and unemployed workers. Unions for farm and unemployed workers will be launched as soon as national organisation is strong enough.

At the same time, organisations of teachers and artists have approached Cosatu to unite with the mass of organised workers. And youth, student and civic organisations are seeking unity in action with Cosatu.

In the mine, food, construction and domestic sectors, national industrial unions exist. These unions are all growing fast. CAWU has grown by a third since its launch in January; NUM is the fastest growing union in the world and FAWU now completely dominates the food industry in South Africa.

While Cosatu's affiliates are

consolidating national industrial unions, the structures of Cosatu are coming together as well.

At a national level, the number of affiliates has fallen from 33 to 21 through mergers. Only unions representing the national industrial sectors are expected to participate in Cosatu's July National Congress.

At a regional level, all Cosatu's nine regions have been successfully launched. The last regions to be established were the OFS/Northern Cape region; the Western Transvaal region and the Eastern Cape region. Together these regions unite over 200 000 Cosatu members.

At a local level, about thirty new locals are being set up throughout the country. In big industrial centres and small towns, thousands of Cosatu shopstewards are uniting at a local level to consolidate organisation and plan action.

The lesson from May Day is clear: The more unions come together, the greater the impact of workers.

## May 1 is our day — and always will be

**PW Botha says:**

The first Friday of every May is "Workers' Day" — a public holiday.

**Cosatu says:**

No thanks. You can't give us what we have already won.

May Day is ours. May 1 is ours. We had it last year. We had it this year. And we'll have it again next year.

Every year, on May 1, we will have our holiday — our workers' holiday.

We have demanded and won this already.

This country's employers have recognised that May Day is ours. It is written into agreements affecting hundreds of thousands of workers that they will have a public holiday on May 1, and be paid for it.

So what is this "first Friday every May"? Who did you consult? Who gave you the mandate? We never raised the demand.

We said May Day was ours. We told employers it was something we could not give up.

And we won't.

**PW Botha also says:**

- The state of emergency must stay.
- The Group Areas Act, bantustans and apartheid education must stay.
- The police and army must stay in the townships.
- People must stop campaigning for the release of detained leaders.
- People must stop campaigning for the unbanning of banned organisations.
- Opposition organisations must stop getting funds from overseas.
- People must stop promoting organisations like street committees and defence units.
- The ANC must be crushed.

**Cosatu says:**

We are opposed to what PW Botha says. We think the only way stability can be restored in our country is if:

- Apartheid is abolished completely.
- The emergency is lifted immediately.
- Leaders in detention and prison are released.
- The army and police are withdrawn from the townships.
- Basic democratic rights are guaranteed.
- Banned organisations are unbanned.

**Meanwhile the police:**

- Ban Cosatu meetings.
- Detain Cosatu leaders and workers.
- Ban Cosatu's newspaper.
- Raid Cosatu offices constantly.
- Monitor Cosatu meetings and offices.
- Seize thousands and thousands of Cosatu publications and pamphlets.
- Accuse Cosatu of promoting communism by campaigning for a living wage.
- Accuse Cosatu of being part of a conspiracy with banned organisations like the ANC and SACP to overthrow the existing political and economic system by violence.

**This is how workers responded:**

Over 3 000 000 workers decided to vote with their feet on May 6. They stayed away from work in protests against the activities of PW Botha and his police.

They demanded:

- The right to organise.
- The right to hold rallies.
- The right to promote the living wage campaign.
- The right to speak and write what they feel.
- The right to campaign for the release of their detained leaders.
- The lifting of the state of emergency.
- The unbanning of banned organisations.

They said, loud and clear:

We will struggle for a non-racial, united, democratic South Africa — despite what PW Botha has to say.



ON June 12, 1986, PW Botha's government declared another state of emergency in an attempt to smash the spirit of resistance which had swept across South Africa since late 1984.

On June 12, 1987, the state of emergency will still be in force -- and so will the spirit of resistance.

The "anniversary" of South Africa's third and longest emergency gives us an opportunity to look back on the past year to see the impact of the most terrible period of repression in the country's history.

In that period, PW Botha and other reactionaries have:

- Launched massive attacks on the union movement and promoted the establishment of vigilante forces to attack workers.
- Detained at least 30 000 activists, many of them members of Cosatu and our affiliates.
- Killed more than 1 000 people in our townships, many of them youths.
- Invaded many of our neighbouring countries.

Perhaps the biggest insult of all came from PW Botha himself — he called an all-white election on his wife's birthday to get a mandate for more repression.

Now, as we remember the introduction of the state of emergency, a few names and places are worth remembering, too:

- Moses Mayekiso, Noel Williams, Lizzie Phike, Mathew Oliphant, Denis Neer, Enoch Godongwana, Amos Masondo, Richmond Buti and the hundreds of other Cosatu members who are still in detention.
- The Kinross mine disaster where 177 workers died.
- The Cosatu House bombs and the bombing of our offices in Nelspruit.
- The sieges of Cosatu House.
- The sacking of 16 000 SATS workers, and the subsequent shooting of at least seven workers at Germiston and Doornfontein.
- The shooting of Mawu members at their rally in



## THE STATE'S EMERGENCY NOT EVEN TANKS AND TROOPS CAN BREAK OUR SPIRIT

Durban.

The list is endless. Then, there are the dozens of security police raids on our offices and meetings; the countless vigilante attacks on our members, especially in Natal; the seizing of our newspaper and pamphlets; the constant bannings of our rallies — especially our living wage rallies, and the total crackdown on the celebration of May Day as a true workers' holiday.

Yes, PW Botha, his government and the other reactionaries have done their best to try and squash the spirit of resistance.

Have they succeeded?

Judge for yourself, on just a few examples:

On June 16 last year, when the emergency was just four days old, millions of people stayed away in solidarity with the youth and in protest against emergency repression.

Tens of thousands of workers, mainly from shops and mines, went on strike against the detention of union leaders under the emergency.

On July 14, hundreds of thousands of workers in different parts of the country took strike action against the emergency.

On October 1 more than 300 000 Cosatu workers mobilised behind 300 000 NUM workers for the biggest national industrial strike ever in our struggle. The strike was

in protest against the unsafe conditions on the mines which led to the death of our Kinross comrades.

On December 1, hundreds of thousands of workers again took action in protest against the vicious attack on the MAWU rally in Durban which left one worker dead.

Then from December till February over 10 000 OK Bazaars workers mobilised the longest-ever national strike for a living wage — and won.

And in March over 20 000 railway workers and 8 000 post office workers came out on strike. The post office workers returned to work after a month — victorious. Our railway comrades are still on strike, still strong and still united.

On May 1, the whole country stopped as millions of workers stayed away to celebrate May Day.

On May 5 and 6, 11 months into the emergency, more than three-million people stayed away from work in protest against the election. Despite the detention of leaders, and vicious attempts to smash existing structures, people stayed away in their millions in solidarity with the dismissed SATS workers and to protest the racist election, the repression and the continued detention of our comrades.

The spirit of resistance is stronger than ever before. The workers' movement is more determined than ever before. Worker action and leadership of the mass democratic struggle is greater than ever before.

More than ever before, millions of workers are determined that this time we will continue to go forward. The bomb that hit Cosatu House might have been the biggest on the Witwatersrand, but it was nothing compared to the power and strength of the millions of workers and youth who supported the two-day protest action on May 5 and 6.

Nothing on earth — not even nuclear bombs — is as strong as the organised power of the working class.