

COSATU cracks CP

Carletonville shows how

COSATU's Western Transvaal Regional Secretary Cde Vavi describes the boycott in Carletonville.

Carletonville will never be the same again. Mass action by the black people of Carletonville is hurting the racists. Led by the COSATU Local Action Committee, Khutsong residents are boycotting shops in town. They are protesting against the CP's decision to put back "whites only" signs in public places.

So far a number of bosses in the town have been forced to close. Many shops are making less than 20 % of normal profits. Profits have been cut by more than half in almost every shop. On some days, big supermarkets did not have a single black customer. The bosses are crying; they are pleading with the town council to take away the apartheid signs. But they kept quiet before the boycott. Bosses only respond when there is pressure on them, when their profits are affected.

There are about 45 000 people in Khutsong. There are another 100 000 workers on the mine compounds. NUM membership alone is about 45 000. Most of these people are now shopping in Klerksdorp, Lenasia or Johannesburg.

The COSATU Local has been discussing the campaign since late last year. The action committee called a meeting of representatives of all sectors on 18 February. The youth and the civic were represented (although they have no structures). The Khutsong and Wadela Taxi Associations, the churches, and the Khutsong Black Chamber of Commerce were there. It was supposed to be a meeting of

representatives, but it turned out to be a mass mass meeting.

The Action Committee did well in drawing the community into the planning. The people feel it is their struggle. They took the decision about when to start the campaign; they also decided about transport arrangements and reporting centres for those who are assaulted.

Unions involved are NUM, PPWAWU, CAWU AND T&GWU. A committee has been formed to look at developments. Regular meetings are held. The committee checks if taxis are operating properly; that local traders are not exploiting; that those assaulted by the right wing get help in reporting cases to lawyers. We are having some problems with the taxis. Only some taxi owners are charging cheaper fares. The committee would like all the taxis to lower prices. But they are not getting full co-operation - 2 meetings failed through lack of full attendance. The local traders are also behind the campaign. The meeting of the 18 February asked them to set lower prices as supermarkets like OK do. But they said they could not - big supermarkets get bargains from wholesalers. The traders promised to

keep prices the same as they are.

It seems repression is increasing. There security police never interfered in the planning. The mass meeting and planning meetings took place without any problems. But now the the cops are being dragged into the situation. Now there are regular roadblocks. And a planned sit-in had to be called off after security police came to the office and made threats against the organisers. But the campaign will continue until the apartheid signs come down.

There are many lessons from Carletonville. This struggle shows:

- That the working class has massive "consumer power".
- That the working class provides the money to run South Africa's cities and towns.
- How COSATU Locals can help build community campaigns.
- How local struggles can advance the united front of the mass democratic movement.
- How to draw in sectors outside the mass democratic movement (e.g. traders and taxis) through concrete campaigns and struggles.
- How we can overcome repression if campaigns are rooted among the masses.



This is how the Conservative Party saw the boycott in Carletonville.

Every worker a COSATU member!

REGIONS

Taxi Drivers Are Workers Too

T&GWU is involved in the first ever union dispute between taxi drivers and taxi owners. This is the first time that drivers for black taxi owners have been unionised. Since late last year, T&GWU has signed up about 450 taxi drivers in the Vaal area.

The owners (Vaal Taxi Owners Association) have now agreed to negotiate, but only after pressure from the Local. When bosses first heard that the union was organising, they dismissed some of the workers. T&GWU wrote to them but the Association did not reply. The Vereeniging Local discussed the matter. Affiliates started to talk about the possibility of taking action in solidarity with dismissed drivers. The Western Transvaal Regional Congress in February agreed to support the struggle of the drivers. At the meeting, drivers decided that they would take action if the issue was not resolved.

The taxi owners then realised "the issue was not as light as they thought," says Comrade Vavi, COSATU's Regional Secretary. "Up to then they thought if there was a strike, they would just drive themselves or get other drivers. They contacted the Region's office indicating that they want negotiations with T&GWU. They said they wanted to avoid a strike or boycott, as this was black on black conflict," he said.

T&GWU and the taxi owners are now having talks. They will be discussing the issues raised by T&GWU. These include:

- The reinstatement of dismissed workers and negotiations on conditions of employment
- Long hours of work
- Pressure on drivers to reach certain targets
- Insurance, medical aid, UIF and other benefits.

NUM might move from percentage wage demands

The NUM may be having another look at the way it makes wage demands. This comes out of a workshop on wage demands in the Lydenburg region of NUM. 40 comrades from 11 branches attended the workshop. The workshop looked at last year's demand of 40 percent. Comrades were asked if they thought this would be a good demand for this year as well.

First they wrote up all the minimum wages in the region on the wall.

Mine:	CMI	TUBATSE	WINTERVLD U/ground	LAVINO U/ground	VERREF	MONTROSE U/ground	CULLINAN MINERALS	DILOKONG U/ground	HEMCO ANDALUSITE
Minimum:	R679	R625	R448	R415	R405	R367	R310	R295	R160

Then they added on 40 percent to see how much money it would be at the different mines.

Mine:	CMI	TUBATSE	WINTERVLD U/ground	LAVINO U/ground	VERREF	MONTROSE U/ground	CULLINAN MINERALS	DILOKONG U/ground	HEMCO ANDALUSITE
40%	R272	R250	R179	R166	R162	R147	R121	R118	R64

After group discussion, the workshop agreed that the demand for a percentage increase is not so good because:

1. Many workers do not understand percentages.
2. Workers with higher wages get a higher increase, while low paid workers get very little money.
3. The percentage demand can divide workers. If settlement is reached at 20 percent, this will not be acceptable to the lowest paid workers.



Cape Oil workers return to work after a lunchtime demonstration against the LRA.

Every COSATU member an organiser!