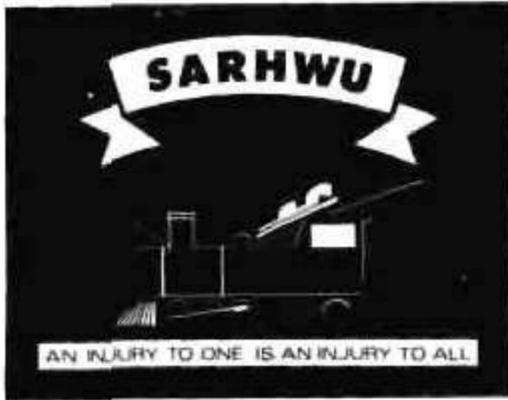


Under vicious attack

Privatisation: Botha listens to the bosses



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OUR COMRADES
BROUGHT DOWN!



WE WILL COME
TO SALUTE OUR
COMRADES
FOR FREEDOM!

Wage freeze

mines and shops.

Already workers have seen how viciously bosses have been resisting our living wage demands — with mass dismissals, lock-outs, court actions to sue unions, victimisation of shop stewards and retrenchments.

This year, with Botha's example to follow, workers can expect the bosses to also try and keep wages much lower than price increases.

COSATU has resolved to struggle for a decent living wage for all workers; to

fight to make sure that every time there is a price increase our wages are automatically increased and to demand that the bosses open their accounts and books to committees of workers if they say they can't pay a living wage so we can see how the wealth we have produced has been wasted.

COSATU's living wage campaign is our answer to Botha and the bosses' freeze on wages — we reject the wage freeze and demand a living wage for all workers.

FOR a long time, the bosses have been saying to Botha: "Cut public sector jobs, wages and benefits and privatise and deregulate the economy. This is the only way to solve the crisis."

Zac de Beer, a director of Anglo American and a leader of the bosses' Progressive Federal Party, said recently: "The remedy for our economic illness is free enterprise, achieved through deregulation, privatisation and reduced government spending."

He also said there should be no minimum wages and bosses should be able to pay workers what they liked.

Botha listened to the bosses. First he cut back on jobs. Hundreds and thousands of workers have been

dismissed or retrenched or have left their jobs without being replaced in SATS, the Post Office and other public/state sectors.

Then Botha attacked workers' benefits. Last year the public sector bonus — a 13th cheque — was taken away. All workers — including the white workers — were very angry when Botha said they must tighten their belts, while the bosses and the politicians in parliament got big fat cheques for oppressing and exploiting us.

This was one of the things that led to the militant strikes in the railways, post offices and hospitals last year.

This year Botha has carried

out the last of his instructions from the bosses. He has said there will be no wage increases for public sector workers this year (wage freeze). And he has promised the bosses that he will sell off (privatise) to the bosses most of the wealth that is presently owned by the state in the name of the people.

When the bosses talk about "economic illness" they are saying that their capitalist system is sick because it is not making enough profits for them. And the only cure they can offer for the sickness is to attack workers — to make workers pay for their crisis by making more workers unemployed and making employed workers get no benefits and no increases.

To make matters worse, they want to sell the wealth that actually belongs to the people — even if we don't control it now — to the bosses.

Botha's policies of mass unemployment, wage freezes, privatisation and deregulation are no different from his policies of bannings, restrictions, mass detentions without trial, states of emergency and more and more repression. They are all attacks on the organisations of the working people.

They are all designed to create a climate of political stability so that the bosses can suck as much profits as they want from us without any resistance. They are all in the interests of the employers and against the workers.

Privatisation — what it does

BOTHA has said that state-owned companies are going to be privatised. He says they will be more efficient if the bosses run them than if the government runs them.

The state/public sector provides services like health care, pensions, transport, housing, rubbish removal, road maintenance, TV, radio, telephones, postal services and electricity.

Top of the list for privatisation are Eskom (employing 60,000 workers) and Alusaf in Richards Bay.

Then Iscor, Foskor, the post office and telephones, Mosgas, what's left of SASOL, parts of SATS and the municipalities and hospitals.

This means that companies that are owned by the state in the name of the people — even though they are controlled and run by the government — are going to be sold cheap to the employers.

They will change from being owned by the public (public sector) to being

owned by individual private businesses (private sector). Any profits they make in future will go to these businesses — today these profits go to the state. If a workers' government took over tomorrow, these profits would be used by the government to benefit the workers.

The state-owned public sector has been built up by the taxes of ordinary people — especially the workers of the country. Now Botha says these companies — which the workers have paid

for — must be sold to the bosses.

COSATU demands — along with millions of others who support the Freedom Charter — that the wealth of the country must be restored to the people. By privatising Botha is taking the wealth that should belong to the people — and is giving it to a handful of bosses.

What will this mean? It means that the huge state industries will become the property of the big monopolies which already dominate and control our country.

They will raise the prices of these services — like electricity, postage and transport — because there is no competition or government regulations to stop them. They will retrench thousands of workers to improve productivity because the bosses have always complained that there is "sheltered employment" in the public sector.

They will force wages down to increase profitability. They will create many different types of work contracts — like subcontracting, short-term contracts, home working, part-time work and more casuals — which will make union organising more difficult.

Privatisation will make the monopoly bosses richer and the workers poorer. It will mean higher prices, fewer jobs and lower wages.

COSATU rejects privatisation. Workers' solution to the economic crisis is to nationalise the big monopolies under the control of workers so that the wealth we produce can be used to improve the lives of the working people. (Info from LRS).

