

NUM NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1992



COAL WAGES DISPUTE SETTLED

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Chamber coal mines have settled the dispute over wages.

The settlement was reached after two meetings of a conciliation board.

The Chamber made a slight improvement on wage increases for settlement.

The wage settlement varies widely between the mining houses. Increases range from 7,5 percent to 15,1 percent.

Average wage increases are as follows:

Amcoal 13 percent
Trans-Natal: 12 percent
Douglas, Duiker: 11 percent
Goldfields: nine percent, and

JCI and Iscor's DNC: eight percent

Agreement was reached with all collieries to increase the bosses contributions to the provident fund by 1 percent and thus bring their total contributions to six percent.

Gold Fields will pay an extra one percent to the provident fund if workers also increase their contributions by one percent.

However GfSA will increase the holiday leave allowance by 2,5 percent.

New monthly minimum wages for black coal mineworkers range from R444 to R675.

The settlement affects nearly 88.000 workers.



Message from the heart: a worker at a report-back meeting expressing his feelings

Eskom negotiations reach deadlock

Wage negotiations between Eskom and unions have deadlocked as Eskom refuses to pay a living wage.

The Unions are demanding a guaranteed increase of 14,8 percent, while Eskom is offering 11 percent guaranteed minimum and 13 percent as a basic minimum.

The unions involved are: the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (NUMSA), and the Electrical Workers Union (EWU).

Presenting the low wage offer, an Eskom representative claimed that "our wages are far better than the average wages that are paid by other industries".

Eskom further argued that workers only need between

R800 and R1 000 per month to survive.

"These figures are in accordance with studies carried out by Unisa and the University of Port Elizabeth," the Eskom representative continued.

The unions rejected this argument. Rightly so, because these studies are not based on what the workers' needs are.

Their conclusions are based on racist prejudices. As most workers survive on the barest necessities, this is interpreted as normal.

No questions are asked about what do workers desire, but cannot afford because of the low wages they are paid.

An application for a conciliation board has been lodged, to try to resolve the dispute.

Workers make gains in RPM negotiations

The NUM has made substantial progress at this year's wage negotiations with Rustenburg Platinum Mines.

In a wage agreement signed on July 17 between the company and the NUM, important gains have been won on demands such as protective clothing, housing rent subsidy, shaft stewards training and paid leave for worker negotiators.

Wages

A minimum wage increase of R86 has been agreed to. A surface daily paid worker in job level 2 will now receive a minimum of R655 per month, from the old minimum of R569.

The highest increase is R236 per month for a job level 12 underground worker, who will now get R2 592.

Protective clothing

workers who require protective clothing for their work will be provided with free overalls and boots twice a year;

Housing rent subsidy

workers who live outside company premises will be paid an

additional R20 per month on the existing housing rent subsidy;

Shaft stewards training

shaft stewards are entitled to five days per annum to attend training on union courses. These days will be fully paid.

Negotiations leave

The company has agreed to pay shaft stewards who attend negotiations between the company and the union.

Other demands put by workers are still open for negotiation, and will be discussed outside of the wage negotiations forum.

These are:

- Hours of work;
- Running of hostels;
- Full-time shaft stewards;
- Arbitration procedures;
- After-hours training for workers;
- Safety training for shaft stewards and safety agreements; as well as
- Job security.

The implementation date for this agreement is July 1 this year.

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

MASS ACTION BY ESKOM WORKERS ON JUNE 29 HAS FORCED THE BOSSES TO AGREE TO A 'SUMMIT' WITH UNIONS TO DISCUSS WORKERS INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES.