



1988 THE YEAR IN PICTURES



Workers under attack and fighting back

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is tougher and stronger after the many battles of the last two years. This year we saw the bosses and the apartheid state turn their attack on COSATU to full blast. But the organisation has remained a strong movement in the face of repression and a united front in our struggle against apartheid and exploitation.

I COSATU iyalqina ngoqina emva kwamadabi amaninzi kuleminyaka mibini indlulileyo. Kulonyaka sibone abaqheshi kunye nelizwe localucalulo behlasela i COSATU, kodwa umbutho uye wahlala ulukhaba nomkhonto phanti kwencinizelo yocalucalulo kumzabalazo wethu.

Aabahlaseli abavela kwi zwe localucalulo kunye nabaqheshi babandakanya oku kwe COSATU.

Sesosa seo COSATU e hloiloeng ke bahiri le 'muso oa khethollo ke hobane e hanyetsa taolo le se bitsoang matla a bona holima maphelo a rona joaloka ha eka re likonyana. Ba re hlasela hobane rona le balekane ba demokrasi re kopanya limilieone tsa batho khahlano le khethollo le bonoamali.

Tihasele khahlano le federeishene e thatafalitse ho bopa letsolo le metso e matla.



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The attacks include:

- trying to crush our unity with other sectors through buying UDP as well as its youth and civic affiliates.
- burning of COSATU from taking up all campaigns outside the shop-floor.
- police disruption of shopstewards locals and regional councils.
- raids in our offices and re-location of documents etc.
- mysterious fires in union offices.
- the passing of the new labour law which viciously attacks the power of unions.
- mass dismissals, evictions and threats to sue for what bosses lose in strikes.
- the banning of the Anti-Apartheid Conference.

This repression followed the many anonymous attacks against us last year, including the bombing and the burning of offices.

But the bosses and the state are frustrated that this has not stopped the militancy of workers. COSATU is a powerful force in the huge industrial areas, where workers keep the wheels of the economy turning. Even if they ban the organisation, the spirit of progressive trade unions and worker militancy can never be rooted out.

The bosses and the apartheid state hate COSATU because we challenge their control and power over our lives. They act against us because, together with our democratic allies, we mobilise millions of people against apartheid.

Living wage

This campaign has become like a religion among COSATU and NUM workers. As mineworkers we know that without a living wage, we will never have a decent life. We will never break the chains of starvation and poverty. But the bosses are trying their best to bury this campaign. The attacks which started last year continued this year. They used dismissals - even in legal strikes - evictions and court cases against the unions. They united among themselves in this way they discourage some bosses in different sectors from paying higher wages. The unions can see that the bosses don't want to negotiate properly. In some sectors they offer even less than before because they are scared the campaign will grow into an even bigger challenge to bosses profit making.

However, the militancy of workers has not been dampened by these attacks. In fact it has grown as the year went on. Between June and August there were as many strikes as the whole

of the first half of the year. In these 3 months, 50 000 workdays were lost - and that is not counting political action.

And in many sectors worker militancy led to important victories. NUM won on pension benefits.

Labour Act

The campaign against the new labour law is not separate from the living wage campaign. The new law came after last year's living wage campaign. Bosses are happy that the new law, by attacking our right to strike, will lift the pressure on them.

The campaign against the Bill together with the crackdown on UDF and COSATU led to the Special National Congress of COSATU and allies. This was followed by the Three Day Protest Action (July 6, 7 and 8) that was one of the biggest stoppages in history.

The success of the action surprised the bosses and the state, the bosses wanted to talk. The state claimed there was still time to talk. However, 3 months of negotiation with the bosses organisation, SACCOLA, led nowhere. The new law was forced through on September 1 with the blessing of most bosses. SACCOLA refused to reject the bad clauses so that the talks could carry on.

In the last few weeks we have seen the bosses risk to use the new law. Many workers in different COSATU unions have faced interdicts which allow for lockouts and evictions. They have also threatened to take COSATU unions to court to make us pay for lost production.

How will we stop the bosses using this law to attack us? This is the question NUM must answer. COSATU will hold a huge mass summit meeting of workers to discuss this. This meeting will also discuss the need for one union federation in South Africa.

Unity

The Special National Congress called for all anti-apartheid organisations to come together in a big conference. The Anti-Apartheid conference was to discuss action against repression.

The conference was planned for mid-September. About 80 organisations were invited such as Idasa.

The mass saw that the conference would strengthen COSATU and its allies. Both and his allies would be further isolated with even less support. The conference was banned about 24 hours before the starting time.



NUM members arrive in Welkom on KwaZulu Day, 1 October



LEFT: General secretary RAMAPHOSA says union will resist attacks on our rights



NUM delegates at the Special Congress



ABOVE: Factory demonstrations against the Labour Bill
BELOW: Scene from an NUM play on safety



LEFT: Safety before profits



Members of the COSATU national executive at the Special Congress in May which decided to call an anti-apartheid conference, and three days of peaceful protest



BELOW: The United Democratic Front was banned in February