

Job racism is alive and well on the mines

JOB reservation and racism continues on the mines.

Last year the concept of scheduled and non-scheduled person (or white and black) were removed from the law.

The government and mines boasted about the changes in the law. There was no longer racism or job reservation on the mines, they said, and black mineworkers could now get blasting certificates or become engine drivers.

But black mineworkers are still being blocked from taking up these positions. The latest idea seems to be that education qualifications (a Std 8 for blasting certificate and a Std 7 for on-setters) should be the criteria.

In the past, white miners or on-setters or locomotive drivers did not need these education qualifications.

Experience not school

The NUM is arguing that it is skills, training and experience that should be the criteria for the job, and not formal education.

Black mineworkers may be fully capable of doing the job but have poor education qualifications because of apartheid, poverty or coming from the rural areas.

The NUM is represented on three government advisory committees which are making recommendations about the qualifications needed by workers who want to get blasting, loco-driving and onsetter's certi-

icates.

In the past these certificates were reserved for white workers and no specific education qualifications were necessary.

The other groups sitting on the advisory committees are the Chamber, the GME's department, Iscor, the Department of Manpower, the Mineworkers Union and the Underground Officials Association.

All of these groups want to set high education qualifications for the certificates.

All are looking at standard 8, except the Chamber who is prepared to accept standard 6 with three years experience.

The NUM has on the other hand argued for experience, competence and training with no specified formal education

criteria.

We have been saying that teamleaders should be able to become miners, onsetter's assistants and bellringers should be able to become onsetters, and underground loco-drivers should be able to get certificates to drive the big locos on surface.

The others say that workers will not be able to do these jobs without a lot of schooling.

In the meantime, the Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology has changed the law so that miners need standard 8 and onsetters need standard 7.

But he has also said that the committees should continue to look at ways in which the education qualifications can be lowered.

The NUM has done some re-

search on the training of workers in the mining industry and in other industries. The research supports the argument that workers should be judged on their ability to do a job and not on the amount of formal schooling which they have had.

The research means that all jobs will need to be analysed so that the skills needed for them are known.

Workers can then do the job if they have the skills or ability to do the training courses. In this way schooling levels will not matter too much.

The NUM is trying to publicise its findings.

• The racist Mine Workers Union (MWU) has refused to train blacks for certificates.

Fake pamphlets try to confuse workers

THOUSANDS of smear or fake pamphlets being distributed to try and confuse workers.

The aim of smear pamphlets is to discredit organisations and divide workers by making false statements about trade unions or progressive organisations.

We know who produces these pamphlets. They are the "dirty tricks" departments of the government, and sometimes mine management.

The aim is to stop the organisation of the working class by confusing and dividing workers.

Look the same

Smear pamphlets come in many different forms. Often they look just like the pamphlets or posters from the union - they use the same logos and design.

Sometimes they will pretend to come from a group of discontented workers within the union. SA Trade Union Monthly Titbits makes up scandalous stories about trade union leaders.

The pamphlets are often very sophisticated, and mix truth and lies so it is difficult to tell the difference.

The message of smear pamphlets is always similar. That is how we can recognise them. Their themes are corruption and misuse of workers money, bad behaviour by worker officials, discontent among workers at union leadership and factionalism.

NUM a target

Recently NUM has been a target of these "dirty tricks" pamphlets.

Anti-union pamphlets have been found at many gold mines and collieries.

The best known example is the "SA Trade Union Monthly Titbits". At mines where the pamphlets have been distributed they have been found between once a month and every three

other pamphlets are found in rooms on tables after work. We are encourage by the compound management and the indunas to read these. They are linked to the 'Department of Communications' in the hostel."

Update is a publication produced by the collective bar-

1989". It accused NUM officials of spending the workers' money on private parties and entertainment. Clearly this is untrue.

Then it says that NUM workers "declared a dispute" with "NUM executives" and presented the facts to COSATU. Once again this is pure nonsense.

Smear pamphlets twist the truth and use union language. The real NUM Update of November explained the workers dispute with Eskom. The real Update says:

"Eskom also had lawyers to help them. Their main lawyer drove a black BMW sportscar that costs over R100 000. He told the arbitrators that "there is not one single lawyer who has come along and said: "The general workers and I are dissatisfied with Eskom's package, with Eskom's pay".

"Eskom also has a real concern for its fat-cat lawyer. It paid this lawyer more than R5 000 per day to convince the arbitrators that general workers on R612 per month get a living wage."

The false Update says: "NUM executives had their lawyers to help them. Their main lawyer drove a black BMW sportscar that cost over R100 000."

"He told COSATU that: "There is not one single worker who has come along and said: "I am dissatisfied with the general workers and their demands".

On some mines smear pamphlets are being distributed. If workers find any examples they must go straight to management to complain.



Examples of Monthly Titbits.

But management is also distributing anti-union material.

On 12 December the management of Kinross mines distributed hundreds of pamphlets urging NUM members to resign from the union because NUM had increased its member fees from R1 to R2.

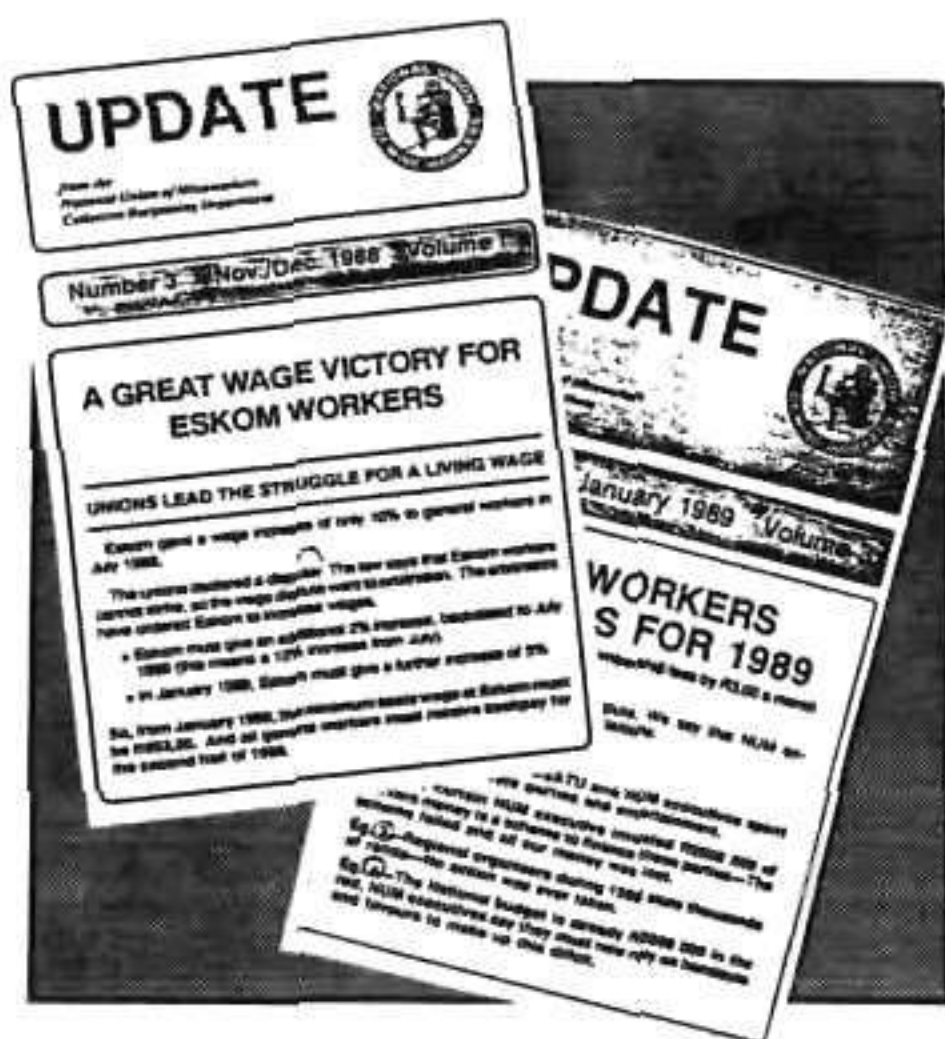
Anti-union pamphlets

NUM had to go to court to have this declared an unfair labour practise. Kinross mine had to withdraw their anti-union pamphlets.

The distribution of anti-union material is part of a broad strategy by the Chamber of Mines and its member mines to persuade organised workers to resign their NUM membership.

COSATU and other unions have also been the target of smear pamphlets.

The government and bosses will use many methods to divide the workers and weaken organisation. Smear pamphlets are one such example.



Left :The real NUM UPDATE. Right: The fake smear Update.

months.

Pamphlets have been found in workers rooms which had been distributed while they were underground, in dining halls, at the gates to compounds and married quarters, at welfare offices, at taxi ranks and at concession stores.

One worker said: "Titbits and

gaining department of NUM. It is distributed to union officials and shaft stewards to aid them in negotiations.

The real Update of Nov/Dec 1988 was headed "A great victory for Eskom workers".

The false Update was headed "NUM Workers demands for