

UNION WAGE POLICY

Gold 1990 wages settled

THE goal of the union wage policy is a living wage for all workers in the mining industry. Because mine wages are so low the union has adopted a three year plan to try and work towards a living wage.

The principles to guide our struggle which are applied in all negotiations:

- A NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE in the mining industry. The demand is for R600 for underground workers, and R543 for surface workers in Grade 1. Workers earning more must get a guaranteed wage increase.
- SAME JOB - SAME

PAY. Workers wages must be based on the job they do, not which mining house they work for or metal they mine.

- NARROW THE WAGE GAP between grades 1 and 8, and between wages paid to black workers and white workers by raising the wages of the lowest paid workers.
- FAIR WAGE STRUCTURE - There must be regular steps between wage grades.
- UNDERGROUND workers must get more than surface workers because of the danger of the work.
- INFLATION - All workers must get a proper increase above inflation which is 15%.
- INCREASES in rands not percentages.

AFTER tough wage negotiations with the Chamber of Mines over 1990 gold wages, workers at report-back meetings accepted the last offer.

In Grade 1 minimum increases ranged from R68 (17%) surface at Anglo and R77 (17%) underground to R61 (17%) surface and R71 (16.9%) underground at Genmin to R55 (17%) surface and R61

(17%) underground at Goldfields. No wage accepted was below 14.5% increase.

The lowest wage is R379 surface at Goldfields, and the highest wage R1456 for Grade 8 underground at Genmin.

A tough decision

WORKERS are not very happy about the low wage increase which ranges from 14.5% to 17% for gold.

But the decision for workers was if they chose to strike the bosses would use the strike as an excuse to retrench thousands.

The only way workers can push their wages up is becoming more strongly organised on all the mines.

ANGLO AMERICAN GOLD MINIMUM WAGES-1990

| SURFACE | | | | |
|-------------|------|------|---------------|------------|
| Grade | 1989 | 1990 | Rand Increase | % Increase |
| 1 | 399 | 467 | 68 | 17% |
| 2 | 450 | 525 | 75 | 16.6% |
| 3 | 519 | 603 | 84 | 16.2% |
| 4 | 597 | 692 | 95 | 15.9% |
| 5 | 682 | 788 | 106 | 15.5% |
| 6 | 803 | 925 | 122 | 15.2% |
| 7 | 943 | 1083 | 140 | 14.8% |
| 8 | 1096 | 1255 | 159 | 14.5% |
| UNDERGROUND | | | | |
| 1 | 455 | 532 | 77 | 17% |
| 2 | 520 | 606 | 86 | 16.6% |
| 3 | 595 | 691 | 96 | 16.2% |
| 4 | 687 | 796 | 109 | 15.9% |
| 5 | 783 | 916 | 123 | 15.5% |
| 6 | 913 | 1052 | 139 | 15.2% |
| 7 | 1050 | 1205 | 155 | 14.8% |
| 8 | 1222 | 1399 | 177 | 14.5% |

Low gold price should not mean jobs lost

THERE is much concern over threatened retrenchments in the gold mining industry.

The mine bosses are linking retrenchments to the low price that gold is getting on the markets overseas.

The worst retrenchments are planned at Anglo American's Freegold, where 7800 workers may lose their jobs. The jobs of another 500 workers at Stilfontein and 600 at Loraine are under threat.

The NUM has vowed it will explore all avenues to make sure workers are not dumped by the mine bosses without struggle.

It has called on the government to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate the running of the gold industry.

Huge profits

"Such a strategic industry should not be left under the control of people who are solely concerned with making huge profits", said the NUM press officer, Comrade Jerry Majatladi.

Anglo's Freegold as a whole is



not in crisis. Last year it made profits of R700 million.

Because it is the biggest mine in the country it has the capacity to protect its workers from changes in the gold price - for example by giving all workers an extra three weeks leave.

But instead the bosses have chosen to protect themselves and their share holders so that their profits do not drop.

Gold is the most important product of the mining industry as it provides foreign exchange for the economy and jobs for

thousands. But the mining of gold also means low wages, dangerous working conditions and repression.

The price of gold swings up and down throughout the year. Although it has dropped to about \$350 dollars per ounce, economists says this will not last and gold will rise.

Gold should be shared

The union says because gold is so important in the South African economy, workers should not be fired and shafts closed as a reflex action each time the price of gold drops.

The main concern of the mining houses is for their own growth and profits. Under the rule of mining houses there will be no changes in the repressive structure of the mining industry.

The union says we must find another way forward - such as nationalisation by the people of the mines. If SA needs foreign exchange, mining must be done in fair and humane conditions.