



TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1988

DRASTIC CHANGES TO LABOUR RELATIONS ACT

The government are trying to clip the wings of the union movement. There is a Labour Relations Amendment Bill in Parliament at the moment. If this bill becomes law this year, the labour movement will be very weak.

WHAT DOES THIS LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL SAY?

EMPLOYERS CAN WORK WITH ANY UNION

Employers do not have to work with the representative union at a workplace. If there are 2 unions the employer can deal with the smaller union with no teeth if they want to.

So for example, if TGWU and UWUSA are in one workplace and UWUSA has very few members, the bosses can bargain with UWUSA and not TGWU. If we try to make the bosses deal with TGWU, the bosses can declare an unfair labour practice against the union.

NO SYMPATHY STRIKES

Sympathy strikes will be against the law. So for example: NUM have a strike. TGWU workers at Richards Bay Coal Terminal want to strike in sympathy. This will be against the law. Or if workers go on strike because a worker in the same workplace is dismissed, this will be against the law.

NO STRIKES OVER THE SAME ISSUE FOR 15 MONTHS

Workers cannot strike over the same issue for a period of 15 months. So, for example, if you have a strike over wages you cannot have another strike over wages for the next 15 months.

THE UNION MUST PAY FOR ILLEGAL STRIKES

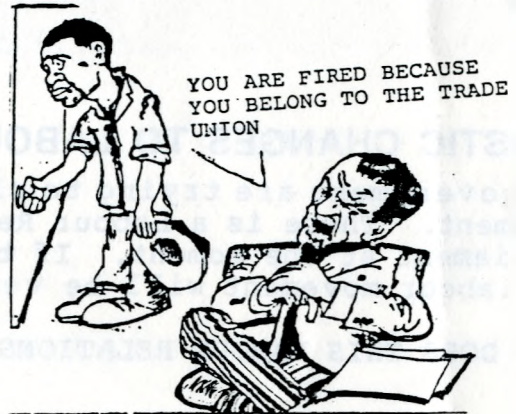
If workers go on an illegal strike the bosses can take the union to court for any loss in production. The union will have to pay out a lot of money and will go bankrupt very quickly. The bosses can also sue the union for losses for any stayaway action.



BOSSSES CAN DISMISS WITH NO PROBLEMS

In the first year of employment the bosses can dismiss a worker with no problems. The union cannot take the dismissal to court as an unfair labour practice.

RULES? WHAT RULES?



A NEW APPEAL COURT

The government will set up a new industrial appeal court. So if the union wins a case, the bosses can at once take this on appeal. This is a big waste of money and workers will have to wait a long time to maybe get justice.

WORKERS MUST STOP THIS LAW!

The government wants to destroy the unions. We must do something before this Bill becomes a law in June 1988. We must fight against this Bill with all our teeth.

Talk to other workers about the Bill, and discuss the Bill in the locals. Talk to the bosses and tell them that these laws will make things very bad for the employers. Workers will be less productive and more angry and militant if the new law comes in.

Plan protest action to stop this Bill before it is a law. We built the union movement over long and hard years we cannot let the government and bosses destroy it over night.

*** RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS**

* A recognition agreement was signed at the end of November with Premier Freight (Dawson Royle). We now hope to extend this agreement to other depots in Port Elizabeth, Durban and Cape Town.

TGWU signed a recognition agreement with Supervision Cleaning Services. The agreement covers the Vaal, Witwatersrand, and Port Elizabeth. The agreement will cover all Supervision workplaces in the country as soon as TGWU has a majority in these places. The agreement gives shop stewards 10 paid days a year for shop stewards training.

* We signed a recognition agreement with Unity Longhaults at the end of November in Cape Town. This is the first branch of the company to sign a recognition agreement.

* We also signed a recognition agreement with Jacaranda Transport in Bloemfontein. We now hope to extend this agreement to Welkom.

WAGE TALKS

* Previder Transport: Wage negotiations at Previder ended on 14 December. Drivers were getting R135 a week and now get R170; drivers assistants were getting R73 and now get R90; and workshop workers were getting R95 and now get R120.

* Grinrod Cotts: Workers at Grinrod in the Esatern Cape won a 13,5% overall increase. Drivers earning R149 a week now earn R185.71. Checkers earn R151.52 a week from R131, forklift drivers earn R144 from R127, and general workers earn R138.15 from R114.

Motorvia: Workers won a 19.5% across the board increase at Motorvia in the Eastern Cape. So a medium duty driver now earns R125 a week.

Highveld United: Bus drivers won an increase of R17 a week - drivers were earning R143 and now earn R160 a week. General workers got R13.50 increase, this is R103.50 from R90 a week. Workers also won an increase in their year end bonus.



STRIKES AND DISPUTES

* Fleetrent: On 14 December workers at the Isando depot of Fleetrent went on strike in protest against the dismissal of a worker. The bosses then dismissed the 48 striking workers. The company were clearly breaking the recognition agreement and a week later dismissed workers were reinstated.

SACD: In December workers in the Unpacks Department at SACD in Durban went on a 3 day strike. Workers were demanding the dismissal of a supervisor. Worker solidarity was very strong and 240 workers in all departments came out in support. SACD workers in Cape Town also had a work stoppage in solidarity. Management is now meeting with workers to talk about the problem.

* D.J. Boesman: This is a company in the Boland area of the Cape. The boss shouted at workers and told them to all leave. So 50 workers left for 6 days. The boss got a big fright, and he back paid drivers for the time they were on strike. COSATU is trying hard to organise the Boland, and TGWU is at the forefront of union organisation in the area.

Fidelity Guards: Keypoint workers at Fidelity Guards in Durban went on a 2 day strike in January. They were demanding the dismissal of a senior security officer and supervisor. Management suspended the supervisor and paid workers for the 2 days on strike.

MORE TGWU COMRADES DETAINED

There are 5 TGWU comrades in detention in Natal. 4 comrades are bus drivers in Kwa Zulu Transport in the Pietermaritzburg area.

The TGWU bus drivers at Kwa Zulu Transport have had a very hard time. On May 5 last year there was a stay-a-way against the whites only elections. TGWU bus drivers did not go to work. UWUSA (the Inkatha-linked union) members were angry. So they stoned buses, put drums across the road, and attacked TGWU bus drivers with pangas and guns.

Two drivers died, one driver was shot but lived, and another driver was declared unfit to work and is now on a pension. Another driver, Jeffrey Kheswa, was detained under Emergency Regulations and he is still in detention 9 months later.

There were also attempted attacks on Alfred Ndlovu, our Vice President and COSATU Southern Natal Regional Chair. In October, Ndlovu was detained and is now under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. Under Section 29 you cannot see a lawyer and you cannot have visits from your family.

Another Kwa Zulu Transport driver, Ndodo Ngubo, was detained on the same day as Ndlovu. Then in November, Jerry Vilikazi was detained. He is Vice Chair of Kwa Zulu Transport shop stewards committee. Security police took him off his bus. The police are holding both these comrades under the Emergency Regulations.

In Northern Natal our TGWU comrades are also under attack. In May last year someone fired shots into the house of Jerry Ntombela (a past TGWU President). Shots were also fired at our TGWU organiser, Nkosinathi Nhleko's house. Nhleko was detained in October and is being held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.



Police have also detained TGWU comrades in the Eastern Cape. In December, 2 shop stewards from Rhodes University were detained. In Port Elizabeth the chair of the TGWU local shop stewards council, and the chair of the University of Port Elizabeth shop steward council, Boy Sifane was detained. They are all held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

ORGANISER GOES ON OVERSEAS COURSE

Nomonde Mngumane, a TGWU Western Cape organiser, is going to England on a month long trade union course in February and March. She will study issues around preparing for wage negotiations, running union education courses, studying how a company operates and understanding company reports, and how to use a computer in union work.

