

NUMSA



National Auto Shop Stewards Council Update



DEFIANCE FOR CONTROL

National Mass Action by Auto Workers



DEFIANCE FOR CONTROL

During July and August this year, the united mass action of 25 000 auto workers forced the bosses to negotiate nationally. Large demonstrations of workers demanding national negotiations marched and toyi-toyed through the plants. But auto workers also gave their bosses another strong message.

United and strong, marching with large banners and replica AKs, workers were unbanning the ANC and flying high the red flag. Workers demanded the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners. They said all hangings and political trials must stop. Workers demonstrated against the LRA and all other apartheid laws.

Workers wanted their bosses to be clear. The bosses must know that the mass defiance campaign in the factory is part of the struggle of the oppressed and exploited masses. When we are demanding better working conditions today, when we are unbanning our organisations through mass action today, we are demanding at one and the same time, control over every aspect of our lives in the factory and in the townships where we live. Our struggle for freedom is one struggle.

Workers know their enemies

The readiness of workers to take up a militant defiance campaign scared many auto bosses. It is easy for the bosses to think that they can offer workers a few cents more during negotiations. And that workers will then be satisfied and for-

get that they are the very same bosses who continue to exploit. That the millions who are the workers' brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers, continue to be unemployed because of the system of the bosses.

The bosses fool themselves and think that a few cents will make workers forget that they live in matchbox houses. That their children don't get decent education. And that their bosses are the people who are getting richer because of apartheid laws. But workers do not forget who their enemies are. Workers are not confused by bosses who talk today in Lusaka. And tomorrow, these very bosses refuse to recognise that the ANC is also in the factory. Then they call the police to stop the "illegal activities" of workers.

Together with 230 000 NUMSA members nationally, auto workers wanted their bosses to know: Today workers are struggling for national negotiations and better working conditions. But this struggle is not only a struggle for a few cents more. Workers know the struggle for a living wage cannot be separated from the struggle for a united democratic South Africa, free from exploitation and oppression. And workers are ready to take this struggle forward.

The bosses are scared

Bosses all over the country put on a brave face for the outside world. They pretended not to hear the strong voice of united auto workers. All over the country bosses ran to the newspapers to deny that any demonstrations were happening in the plants. Some bosses tried to give the impression that mass demonstrations were "low-key affairs". The bosses of Delta ran to the newspapers in Port Elizabeth to say that the demonstration there was the work of a few "intimidators" who now have been fired.

But inside the plants the bosses were worried and scared. All over the country frightened bosses ran to their lawyers to use the LRA to attack the workers in their plants. They sent many telexes to the NUMSA offices. They wanted NUMSA to stop the workers. But the message to the bosses was very clear. If you want to sort out your problems, talk to the workers in your factory. NUMSA is not in the offices. NUMSA is in the factories. NUMSA is not its officials. NUMSA is 230 000 workers in the factories, steel mills, workshops and garages. Talk to the workers.

Samcor on the march

At Samcor the bosses called the shop stewards. They gave them written warnings and threatened to fire them. But the attacks of the Samcor bosses built a stronger unity amongst the 3500 workers at Samcor. Demonstrations intensified. The workers said the bosses must take our demand for a living wage and national negotiations seriously. For many years we earned the lowest wages in the industry. The bosses said the actions of workers were illegal. They used the new LRA and locked out all the workers.

But this did not stop the workers determination to struggle. In defiance of the LRA, workers at Samcor in Port Elizabeth took action in solidarity with their comrades in Pretoria. They said: Unity is our weapon. An injury to one is an injury to all. The solidarity of Samcor workers in Port Elizabeth strengthened the action of comrades in Pretoria. Through united mass action, Samcor workers forced the company to lift the lock out and accept their conditions. The company was forced to reinstate all workers without victimisation. Samcor workers forced their bosses to negotiate nationally. The unity of Samcor workers forced their bosses to increase their offer to come in line with other auto companies nationally.

Workers Solidarity Builds Workers Power

The giant factories of Volkswagen and Goodyear stand side by side in Durban Road in Uitenhage. Workers at Volkswagen have lived and worked side by side with workers from Goodyear for more than forty years.

When the house of Goodyear striker, Cde Joe Sopotela, was fire-bombed this year, he ran to his neighbour, a shop steward from Volkswagen, for help. Workers from Goodyear and Volkswagen have stood together in times of trouble.

When Goodyear workers went on strike for a living wage in 1988 and 17 strikers were fired, workers at Volkswagen supported them in action. They refused to handle Goodyear tyres. Workers at Goodyear and Volkswagen have stood together in struggle.

This unity of auto and tyre workers is no accident. Workers at Goodyear and workers at Volkswagen are also comrades in the same union. Through strong organisation in NUMSA, workers nationally have built unity and solidarity in the struggle against oppression and exploitation. And so Goodyear shop

stewards brought their problems to the National Auto Shop Stewards Council.

They explained: In their hunger for more profits the Goodyear bosses sold the company to Consol. They did not even speak to us, the Goodyear workers, about this decision. They decided everything in a secret meeting with Consol. The Goodyear bosses have lived in luxury for forty years on the profits made by us, the Goodyear workers. But overnight they left us, those very same workers, with nothing but uncertainty about the future.

But the bosses will not kill the fighting spirit of Goodyear workers. 1200 Goodyear workers voted to go on strike in defence of their demands for a fair disinvestment procedure. We demand that the bosses pay us out for the profits they received from our labour. We demand that the bosses cut all ties with apartheid South Africa.

Comrades, we can see that this strike will take a long time. We need your support. We have suffered vicious attacks. We have been locked-out and fired by the company, while we are on a

legal strike. The house of the chief shop steward at Goodyear, Cde Joe Sopotela, was firebombed. And his 24 year-old brother, Andile, died in this cowardly attack. The bosses have printed many lies about the strike in newspapers. They have tried many ways to break our unity. But we have remained strong.

Now is the time to extend that unity. Our work in the factories are linked. The tyres we build at Goodyear, are fitted on cars you build at Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, Nissan, Toyota, Samcor and BMW. Let us build the unity of tyre and auto workers. Let us build the unity of the oppressed and exploited masses.

The National Auto Shop Stewards Council said: As workers we all face the same attacks. We are fighting the same battle. We are all fighting against the system of the bosses. Even our bosses are closely linked. Samcor bosses are part of Anglo American. And Consol bosses are part of Anglo through Anglovaal. Let us support our comrades in their struggle. All auto workers must know about the brave struggle of

Goodyear workers, which is now ten weeks old.

All over the country auto workers built solidarity in action with their comrades at Goodyear. At Nissan in Pretoria and Volkswagen in Uitenhage, workers refused to handle Goodyear tyres. At MBSA in East London, workers collected Goodyear tyres and set them alight. They demanded that the company buy tyres from other bosses. Workers resolved to donate part of their wages every week to support the Goodyear strikers.

The solidarity of auto workers strengthened the struggle of Goodyear workers. The refusal of auto workers to handle Goodyear tyres brought pressure on the bosses. Workers solidarity built the power to cut off a significant part of the market for Goodyear tyres. Monetary support for Goodyear strikers has helped Goodyear families to remain strong in this struggle. Auto workers solidarity builds the power of Goodyear strikers to continue their struggle until victory.



National Mass Action by Auto Workers

Defiance at MBSA

At MBSA workers were on the march from H-plant to F-site from F-site to freedom. They were carrying banners in green, black and gold. They were flying the colours of their organisations. They were wearing stickers and raising posters saying: Crush the LRA! Release Mandela!

The MBSA bosses called the shop stewards. They wanted to discuss the large in-plant demonstrations. They said: These demonstrations are causing many problems. They are intimidating people. And we are losing production.

But MBSA shop stewards have a long experience of the tricks of management. And they also know their plans. The shop stewards said: We have no objection to discuss the workers demands with you. But let us first finish all outstanding cases. There is the dismissal of Cde Jimmy... And the MBSA bosses had to talk according to workers priorities and not according to the bosses laws of more production and profits.

Mass action at VWSA

At Volkswagen (VWSA), workers carrying the banners of their organisations marched through the plant. Workers met in their thousands at their usual place on the grass. They demanded a report back from their shop stewards and delegates to the National Auto Shop Steward Council.

The VWSA bosses wrote a letter to the shop stewards asking them to make sure that these "in-plant rallies" stop or are "more controlled". The bosses said the actions of VWSA workers will result in confrontation and are clearly illegal. The bosses felt that they would not be able to stop "the authorities", should they wish to act against NUMSA members.

VWSA workers say that the VW Public Affairs Department

filmed the demonstrations and that the company's plant protection people were giving access to the security police hiding in VW overalls and VW cars. During this time, the shop stewards co-ordinator at VWSA, Cde John Gomomo, received death threats from a person/ persons called the Wit Wolf II.

But VWSA workers were not intimidated. They continued with their demonstrations. They said, this struggle is the reality of our lives in the factory and in the townships where we live. Our strongest weapon is our unity. We will continue to challenge the bosses who make their profits out of our exploitation. We will continue to demand our freedom. We will continue to demand control over our lives in the factory and in the townships where we live. We want a united democratic South Africa free from exploitation and oppression.

Toyi-toyi at Toyota

The Toyota bosses never dreamed to see the day when 3600 workers at Toyota in Durban would toyi-toyi and march in support of their demands for national negotiations and a living wage. Even during these big demonstrations in the plant, the arrogant bosses of Toyota did not want to believe the workers were serious.

In their secret meetings the Toyota bosses made plans to stop the action of the workers. They said "their company" is special and they did not want "their workers" to have bad discipline and poor efficiency like the workers in the Eastern Cape. The bosses said that they will not be threatened and will deal with any disruption or industrial action, even if it meant dismissing their entire workforce.

When shop stewards gave the first report back on the national negotiations, the workers saw that the Toyota bosses

were playing around. And they were angry. They said, this is the time for tools down. Soon the company was running to court to use the new LRA against the workers. The court said the workers must return to work and stop all industrial action or they will be fired.

But the workers said: We do not recognise Botha's LRA. We know the LRA is part of an attack by the government and the bosses to stop us as workers from growing stronger. We will defy the court order. We refuse to accept that we are fired. We will go back to work if the company shows that it is serious about national negotiations.

The bosses used all the weapons they have. They ran to the newspapers. Radio Zulu broadcasted every day that Toyota workers were fired and that the company was employing new recruits. The bosses even set up recruitment stations close to the gates to show everyone that they wanted to hire new workers.

But the workers were not fooled. They did not go back to work. Toyota workers in Johannesburg defied the LRA and started a sit-in-strike in solidarity with their comrades in Durban. The bosses fired all 400 workers and called the police to evict workers from the company premises.

Toyota workers remained united and strong. They said: We are still workers at Toyota. We will return to work if the Toyota bosses negotiate nationally. They must consider our demands for a living wage seriously. All Toyota workers must be re-instated with full benefits. And Toyota workers won their victory. The bosses had to come and sit down at the negotiating table in Port Elizabeth. The power of workers unity forced the Toyota bosses to bring their offer on minimum conditions of employment in line with all other auto companies. The arrogant bosses of Toyota had to listen to the united voice of the workers.

VICTORY! VICTORY! VICTORY!

Auto Workers

on the

MARCH

1989 is the year of unity in action for auto workers. The united action of 25 000 auto workers have forced the arrogant auto bosses nationally to the negotiating table. Auto workers have built a co-ordinated mass-based campaign for a living wage. This is a major victory for workers in their struggle against exploitation and oppression.

The National Auto Shop Stewards Council said: Auto workers are marching in the fore-front of the living wage campaign of NUMSA and COSATU. This means that auto workers have a big responsibility. As a sector, auto workers are the highest paid workers in the country. We have won the struggle for national bargaining. We have won through united action a minimum wage of R5.50 in the industry. In some factories this means an increase of R1.00 on the minimum rate. We have won a general increase for all workers in grades 1 - 6 of R1.00. This is a victory.

But our living wage struggle is not about money alone. Our struggle is not a struggle for a few cents, a few crumbs from the table of the capitalists. Our struggle is a struggle for control over every aspect of our lives in the factory and in the areas where we live. This is a political struggle. This is a class struggle. This is the struggle for socialism. This is the struggle that we must build and take forward. Let us build on the slogan of our National Congress in May this year.

Forward to working class democracy! Unite! Mobilise for socialism!

MINIMUM CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE AUTO INDUSTRY

<div>1. WAGES:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum rate of R5.50 back-dated to 1 July 1989A general increase of:<table><tr><td>Grades</td><td>1 - 6</td><td>=</td><td>R1.00</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>7a</td><td>=</td><td>R1.20</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>7b</td><td>=</td><td>R1.40</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>8</td><td>=</td><td>R1.60</td></tr></table></div>	Grades	1 - 6	=	R1.00		7a	=	R1.20		7b	=	R1.40		8	=	R1.60	<div>6. ANNUAL LEAVE</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">15 days</div>
Grades	1 - 6	=	R1.00														
	7a	=	R1.20														
	7b	=	R1.40														
	8	=	R1.60														
<div>2. HOURS:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">40 Hours week without loss of pay</div>	<div>7. HOLIDAYS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">21 March1 May16 June paid holidays</div>																
<div>3. OVERTIME:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">10 Hours voluntary overtimeOvertime rates 1 1/2 times; double time : Sundays</div>	<div>8. SERVICE LEAVE</div> <div><table><tr><td>2 - 3 yrs</td><td>=</td><td>1 day</td></tr><tr><td>3 - 4 yrs</td><td>=</td><td>2 days</td></tr><tr><td>4 - 5 yrs</td><td>=</td><td>3 days</td></tr><tr><td>5 - 10 yrs</td><td>=</td><td>4 days</td></tr><tr><td>10+ yrs</td><td>=</td><td>6 days</td></tr></table></div>	2 - 3 yrs	=	1 day	3 - 4 yrs	=	2 days	4 - 5 yrs	=	3 days	5 - 10 yrs	=	4 days	10+ yrs	=	6 days	
2 - 3 yrs	=	1 day															
3 - 4 yrs	=	2 days															
4 - 5 yrs	=	3 days															
5 - 10 yrs	=	4 days															
10+ yrs	=	6 days															
<div>4. SHORT TIME:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum of 4 hours pay</div>	<div>9. PARENTAL RIGHTS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">6 Months unpaid maternity leavePension & Medical aid first 3 months</div>																
<div>5. RETRENCHMENT PAY:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">0 - 2 yrs = 20 days2 - 4 yrs = 40 days4 - 6 yrs = 60 days6 - 8 yrs = 80 days8 - 10 yrs = 100 days10+ yrs = 120 daysTEMPORARY LAY-OFF0 - 2yrs = 45 hrs2 - 5 yrs = 54 hrs5 - 10 yrs = 72 hrs10+ yrs = 100 hrs</div>	<div>10. YEAR-END BONUS</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Equal to 4 weeks pay</div>																
	<div>11. TRAINING</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Equal and Increased vocational training for women and youth.</div>																

National Bargaining Committee



Through the National Auto Shop Stewards Council and the National Bargaining Committee, auto workers at Delta, Samcor, BMW, Nissan, Mercedes, Volkswagen and Toyota had direct participation and control over every stage of the negotiations. This has meant that the bosses propaganda during this campaign never confused workers. 25 000 Workers had weekly direct report backs. Workers could adapt their fighting tactics to fit every situation. They could give new mandates.

The fighting principle of worker control and democracy has built and strengthened the living wage campaign of auto workers. Mobilise! Organise! Forward to Victory!