

THE HEALTH WORKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE HEALTH WORKERS ASSOCIATION

JUN 87



NATIONAL HEALTH WORKER UNION TO BE LAUNCHED



SOME of the striking workers outside the J G Strijdom Hospital yesterday.

Finally, the historic day for workers in the health and education sectors has arrived. Over the weekend of June 27th and 28th, 1987, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) will be launched.

This is in direct response to the call made by COSATU: "One Industry, One Union". Workers in the health and education sectors will be united from the Transvaal, Natal, Cape Province and Orange Free State.

HOSPITAL STRIKES.

Cape Province: In August 1984 workers at Groote Schuur hospital went on strike for 2 days over wages. On the first day, workers also occupied the Administration building for about one hour. This was the second recorded work stoppage at a hospital in the Western Cape, the first involving over 300 nurses at Somerset hospital in September 1976.

Natal: In February 1985, over 1,000 workers at Durban's King Edward VIII and Wentworth hospitals went on strike after rejecting a wage increase of R13.09 offered by the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA). The strike lasted for 1 week. The workers succeeded in getting up to R46.00 per month. The workers were organised by the Health and Allied Workers Union (HAWU).

Transvaal: In November 1985, after many months of representation by Bara workers for increased wages, anger over unfair dismissals and victimisation, about 900 non-classified workers (NCHW) went on

strike. At the same time about 900 student nurses also went on strike protesting against excessive restrictions in the nursing hour, victimisation by the matrons and demanding the recognition of IMA. The authorities responded by dismissing all the workers and the student nurses. The SADF was called in and occupied Bara. Scores of workers were arrested. Joint action by GAWU and IMA representing the workers and student nurses respectively, brought victory for the workers and student nurses. All were reinstated.

WHY IMA UNIONISES WORKERS INTO A TRADE UNION.

A trade union is a democratic organization of workers to protect the rights of workers and improve their conditions at work through collective bargaining. A union sometimes also provides a forum for workers to express their views on the problems of society. The union, therefore, serves mainly, the economic interests of the workers.

Non-classified health workers are often underpaid in comparison with other workers in industry. They are poorly organised and have been ignored by the strong industrial unions.

The IMA is not a trade union - but decided to organise NCHW into GAWU because of GAWU's willingness to organise workers in the health (traditionally a difficult area to organise) sector, GAWU's belief in

worker democracy and GAWU's position on the National Democratic Struggle.

In OFS, the IMA unionised workers into SANWU (S.A. Allied Workers Union) and NUM (National Union of Mineworkers).

In Natal, the Health Workers Organisation unionised workers into HAWU and in the Cape, Health Workers Society unionised workers into Health Workers Union.

NEHAWU/COSATU.

NEHAWU heralds a turning point in the struggle of health workers to further unite and strengthen themselves. Being a member of the COSATU family will strengthen the struggle of the workers generally.

The workers have shown tremendous courage and determination in the face of a hostile state sector. They have been victimised, insulted and threatened. Like other workers everywhere, workers in the health sector are experiencing their collective power. They are realising that an improvement in the quality of their lives will not depend on the goodwill of the "professionals" nor on the goodwill of the policy makers and management. It will mainly depend on the strength of their organisation, as one worker at Groote Schuur hospital said in 1984:

"In the workers struggle you learn a lot. You learn who your friends are and who your enemies are. Our struggle is simple. We are struggling for a better life for workers. We need all the workers at all the hospitals to stand together. If not today, then we must work, to make certain that it is tomorrow. But we will reach our goal."

There is a lot of work to be done and many obstacles to overcome. But there is no turning back.

Attend the NEHAWU Launch - Open Rally:
DATE: 28/6/87 (SUNDAY)
TIME: 12.00 noon.
VENUE: Great Hall - Wits University.

FREE TRANSPORT AVAILABLE.
CONTACT GAWU - Phone 337 8645/9
OR YOUR LOCAL SHOP STEW/MAD.

JUNE 26 AND THE FREEDOM CHARTER



JUNE 26 - THE STORY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER.

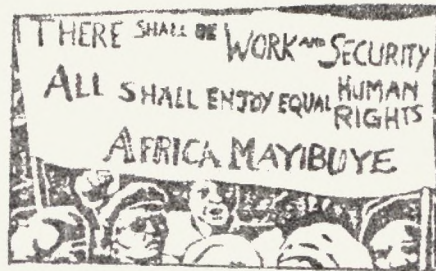
June 26 is a very important day in the lives of millions of freedom and peace loving South Africans. On this day in 1955, at Kliptown, 3000 delegates representing all population groups met to adopt the Freedom Charter. To this day, the Charter remains the minimum demands of the people for a free and democratic country.

THE DRAWING UP OF THE CHARTER: DEMOCRACY AT WORK.

The drawing up of the Charter was one of the most democratic process in the history of S.A. The idea was first suggested by Prof. Z. K. Mathews in 1952. The actual implementation began in 1954. Thousands of volunteers of the Congress Alliance (ANC, SACTU, SAIC, COD and the CPC) consulted millions of South Africans in generating demands for the Charter. The question was posed to the nation "If you could make the laws, what would you do?". For the first time South African Blacks were asked for their views. Workers, peasants, students, community members and church leaders of all races were consulted to determine the present demands of the Charter. These popular demands were adopted clause by clause, at the Congress of the People in Kliptown on June 26, 1955.

IMPORTANT CLAUSES OF THE CHARTER:

- * The People shall govern.
- * There shall be work and security for all.
- * The land shall be shared among those who work it.
- * The People shall share the country's wealth.
- * All national groups shall have equal rights.
- * The doors of learning and culture shall be open.
- * All shall enjoy equal human rights.



HEALTH CARE AND THE CHARTER:

On health, the F.C. says " A preventative health scheme shall be run by the State. Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children." These are just some of the demands of a health system which would be implemented by the people in a post apartheid society. As we can see, the Freedom Charter is a comprehensive document addressing important areas of politics, economics, education, housing and health.

COMMENT

With the failure of the homeland system and the Tri camera parliament, as a form of political participation of the vast majority of the Black population, a new form of a society must be realised. This vision is enshrined in the Charter, adopted in 1955 by the Congress Alliance. The Charter enjoys widespread support within the folds of the democratic movement. Only the demands of the Charter will satisfy the vast majority of the Black oppressed population in S.A.



THE CHARTER TODAY:

The majority of the organisations within the UDF have adopted the Charter. IWA, SANSCO, NIC, TIC, SAYCO etc all draw inspiration from the Charter. Recently, the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) with a membership of 370,000, has adopted the Charter. The newly formed metal Workers union and the Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) has also recently adopted the Charter.

CONCLUSION: The Freedom Charter is rapidly becoming the most widely supported document because of its broad principles and is beginning to effect demands at the level of worker, education and community struggles. The vast majority of the Black population of S.A. are demanding better working conditions, housing, education and political rights under the inspiration of the Freedom Charter.

LONG LIVE THE FREEDOM CHARTER.

LONG LIVE THE UDF & COSATU.

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NKOSI SIKELEL' I'AFRIKA

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika
Maluphakamis'u phondo lwayo
Yizwa imithandazo yethu
Nkosi sikelela
Thina lusapho lwayo

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika
Maluphakamis'u phondo lwayo
Yizwe imithandazo yethu
Nkosi sikelela
Thina lusapho lwayo

[Woza moya] Woza woza
[Woza moya] Woza woza
Woza moya oyingcwele

*[Come, Spirit, Come
Father, look on us and
bless your family]*

*[May it be so always
For ever and ever]*

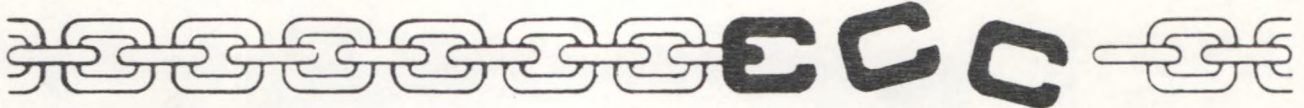
*[Lord, in your mercy
bless Africa
Lift up the horn of her
power and strength
In your love + kindness
hear our prayer]*

Nkosi sikelela
Thina lusapho lwayo

Morena boloka
Sechaba saheso
Ofedise dintoa lematsoenyeho

[Oseboloke] Oseboloke
[Oseboloke morena] Oseboloke
Sechaba saheso
Sechaba sa Afrika

Makube njalo
Makube njalo
Kude kube nguna phakade
Kude kube nguna phakade



End Conscription Campaign

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T O W H O M I T M A Y C O N C E R N

The Vukani Guards and Allied Workers Union, is a trade union established in terms of the Labour Relations Act. It has been organising workers in the security services industry for the past year and a half in Durban.

The plight of the watchmen in the security industry is a sorry one. These are some of the hardships they endure :-

- (a) the majority of them work night shift ;
- (b) they work for 12 hours in a stretch - 6pm to 6am the next morning ;
- (c) they are exposed to the weather and their lives are forever threatened ;
- (d) they are required to work Saturdays and Sundays as well ;
- (e) for a month they only receive R262 ! !

The workers at Deter Security have had a problem since July, 1986, in that whenever they are given a day off, R12,09 (daily wage) was deducted from their basic wage of R262,00 - this meant that they went home with wages well below the minimum subsistence level, which stands at approximately R450 per month for a family of four.

The union has attempted to resolve the dispute with Deter since July, 1986, until 31 May, 1987, when the workers felt that they had to approach the company themselves. When they did so their grievances fell on deaf ears and five of the workers were arrested by the South African Police after the company officials pointed them out.

Nevertheless, the union attempted to normalise the situation but on 5 June, 1987, the company dismissed 199 of the workers and a further 50 workers'

jobs are/.....

jobs are also in jeopardy. The union is still attempting to resolve the dispute but in the meantime the workers and their families are not only facing financial hardships but also a bitter winter ahead !!

Our appeal to you is for your assistance either :


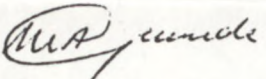

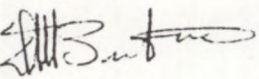
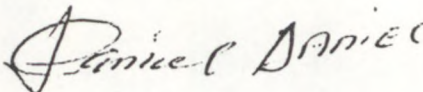
- (i) a donation; or
- (ii) food parcels

for the 250 workers to face the road ahead.

We thank you and would be more than willing to further inform you of this crisis.

Yours faithfully

WORKERS' COMMITTEE

1.  DENNIS
2.  ALLOIS
3.  GEORGE
4.  DANIEL
5.  DANIEL

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