

FOSATU WORKER NEWS

Federation of South African Trade Unions



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THE settlement signed between the Chemical Workers Industrial Union and Sasol will surely go down as a milestone in South African labour history.

Not only has the union managed to get 70 percent of the 6 000 workers who were sacked for participating in the November stayaway taken back, it has also won new rights.

It is remarkable that CWIU even survived this attempt by a semi-state company to crush worker organisation, let alone come out of it with better worker rights.

Stewards recognised

The most important of these is the formal recognition of CWIU shop stewards who now have the right to represent workers and report back to them during working hours.

The shop stewards also have the right to hold a monthly caucus meeting during working hours and have access to telephones — an important right in plants the size of Sasol.

'Previously there was a lot of conflict in the Sasol plants between the elected worker representatives who were attempting to act like shop stewards and line management who were trying to stop them,' said CWIU general secretary, Rod Crompton.

The union has also been given 'unlimited' access to the Sasol hostels together with a full time office in the hostels. Before, the union only had an office for three days a week.

The settlement follows months of negotiations between CWIU and Sasol.

In order to get the com-

pany to the negotiating table to discuss the reinstatement of the 6 000 sacked workers, the union launched a national and international campaign.

All the unions involved in the present unity talks committed themselves to a national strike in solidarity with the Sasol workers.

And in the demonstrations against apartheid in the United States of America, one of the demands has been for the reinstatement of the Sasol workers. American unions have also taken up the issue individually.

On March 2 at a CWIU Congress, attended by all the union's shop stewards, it was decided to move the campaign on to a different footing by accepting the company's settlement offer.

'The settlement does not mean we have given up on the rest of the Sasol workers who have not been taken back,' said Rod Crompton.

'We have just decided to rather continue the campaign from within the plants,' he added.

'Management has agreed in principle to hire a further five percent and have said that the door is not closed on the other 25 percent,' he said.

Rebuilding organisation

At present, the union is concentrating on rebuilding worker organisation within the Sasol II and III plants.

A joint management/union negotiating committee has been established in order to negotiate other aspects of recognition which are not covered by the settlement agreement. And over the next week or two, union members will be put back on stop orders.



Over two hundred CWIU shop stewards attended the special congress called to discuss Sasol

A MILESTONE!

