TRANSPORT – PRIVATE – LABOUR

1995

Queues as taxi strike continues

Police reported long queues of commuters waiting to get to work from Soweto this morning in the wake of yesterday's decision by the Soweto Taxi Services (STS) to go out on strike.

Many passengers were left stranded yesterday.

"There has been no violence today but police are on standby," said SAPS spokesman Colonel Joseph Ngobeni.

There was chaos yesterday when commuters were left standing along the Old Potchefstroom Road between Chiawelo and Protea as STS drivers voted to strike until the taxi violence, which has claimed at least 69 lives, has been stopped.

The STS accused police of doing nothing to halt the killing of taxi owners. (333)

It warned yesterday that an all-out taxi war was imminent, accusing the rival Soweto Taxi Association (STA) of commandeering ranks and mounting roadblocks to take passengers from STS taxis.

"We were forcibly removed from taxis going into Johannesburg and our driver was beaten up and money taken from him," said a Soweto woman.

An STS spokesman said STA drivers had attacked STS offices in Chiawelo, but police prevented a bloody confrontation.

He said STA drivers, mainly hostel dwellers, had been blocking roads, forcing passengers out of STS taxis and robbing drivers of their takings.

While he was speaking, gunshots were heard in the background and he claimed an STS member had been shot.

STS members said the problem had been reported to police and the Gauteng department of safety and security.

"It looks as if the police and Jessie Duarte (MEC for safety and security) will give this problem priority only when there is bloodshed," said an STS driver.

Some accused police of taking bribes from the STA to destroy police dockets.

No comment was available from the STA. — Sapa.

Star 24/11/95

Soweto taxi strike cripples commuters

Star 25/1/95

About 500 drivers who belong to the Soweto Taxi Services (STS) continued their strike today, inconveniencing many Soweto commuters.

Yesterday police reported that vehicles were stoned at Midway Station in Soweto. Police spokesman Colonel Joseph Ngobeni said it was quiet in Soweto today.

Commuters have been hard hit by the strike which began on Monday. Many have had to wait in long queues to get to and from Johannesburg in taxis still operating.

An STS spokesman said the strike, called in protest against taxi violence and conflicts with the rival Soweto Taxi Association, would continue until the Gauteng government's transport department addressed their grievances.

A forum established yesterday to devise a way to end the taxi route dispute is due to meet today. It was initiated by the Southern African Black Taxi Association (Sabta).

Sabta conflict resolution manager Knox Matjila said rival taxi associations were not in the forum. They would be consulted after a programme to end the dispute had been drafted. — Staff Reporter

(333)

No guarantees for taxi commuters

(333) STAR 28/11/95

THE provincial government could not guarantee the safety of commuters on taxis between Soweto and Johannesburg, Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte (right) said yesterday.

Thousands of commuters were stranded and at least two taxis damaged in violence between rival Soweto taxi operators this week. Duarte said in a statement she had deployed extra policemen at ranks in the township and along major routes.

"The Internal Stability Unit and the Uniform Branch are setting up roadblocks and patrolling ranks to try and curb the violence. Because we cannot guarantee the safety of passengers using vehicles ... it may be wiser at this stage for commuters to find alternative transport." — Reuter.

Secrecy Bill opposed

Sowetan 2/2/95

NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisations yesterday strongly objected to a provision in the Bill on the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation that allows proceedings of the planned Truth Commission's committee on amnesty to be held *in camera*.

At a news conference in Johannesburg, several NGOs threatened to withdraw their support for the commission if the Bill became law.

The NGOs argued that if the amnesty hearings were held *in camera*, it would hamper chances for reconciliation and national unity.

Lawyers for Human Rights litigation director Mr Ahmed Motala said: "We are opposed to the secrecy issue.

"We are saying amnesty should not be held in secret. It should be open."

LHR former national director Mr Brian Currin said if the Bill became law the NGOs would have to reconsider their position. "But I don't think the NGOs want to act irresponsibly," he said.

"It is of paramount concern to the human rights community that — despite the Government's promises of transparency and accountability — the proceedings of the committee of the Truth Commission which will be hearing applications for amnesty is entirely secret," the NGOs said in a statement.

Violates the rights

"Secrecy is the enemy of the truth. "We are of the opinion that the secrecy of the proceedings is contrary to various provisions in the Bill of Rights in our constitution and violates the rights of victims and survivors."

Justice Minister Mr Dullah Omar yesterday said the provision for *in-camera* amnesty hearings by the Truth Commission might be unconstitutional.

> **'Secrecy is the enemy of the truth'**

Addressing a parliamentary committee on justice, Omar said the intention of allowing *in-camera* hearings was to encourage individuals to speak out, rather than to encourage secrecy.

"If reconciliation and unity is the primary purpose of the Truth Commission, that would not be achieved unless victims and survivors knew the truth and forgive the perpetrators," the NGOs said. — *Sapa*.

PIC: JOE MOLEPE

Taximen on rampage

(333)

Sowetan 2/2/95

By Glenn McKenzie

HUNDREDS of angry taxi drivers demonstrated in Benoni yesterday after a driver was allegedly assaulted by senior members of his own taxi association.

Taxi driver Mr Solomon Pitso, who sported cuts on his face and body, claimed he was assaulted by executive members of the Benoni Taxi Association after he refused to pay a weekly R10 fee to the association.

Pitso and other drivers retaliated by blocking streets with their minibuses and chasing BTA executive members away from their offices.

Police were only able to calm the angry drivers after warning that their taxis would be towed away and confiscated.

Earlier, angry protesters chased a white plainclothes policeman, whom they accused of protecting BTA executive members.

ALFRED DUNHILL

THE

ALFRED DUNHILL

Strike may be solved today

(333)

Sowetan 28/2/95

A SENIOR Durban Transport official said he hoped the bus drivers' work stoppage, which left about 100 000 commuters stranded yesterday morning, would be resolved today.

Durban Transport operations manager Mr Ricky Cunningham said about 400 drivers, responsible for nearly 250 buses (about a third of the city's total), had embarked on a work stoppage at the weekend. Areas affected included the Bluff, Wentworth, Prospecton and Umlazi.

Cunningham said the cost in lost fares alone would be about R200 000 a day. Added to this was the incalculable loss in terms of employees and students who could not make it to work and school. "We are attempting to reconcile the situation. It's difficult to say when the services will be returned. I'd like to see it resolved by tomorrow," said Cunningham.

He said the striking drivers were protesting against the suspension of a colleague because of ticket irregularities. — Sapa.

Fruit exports disrupted by walkout at harbour firm

(333)

Labour Reporter

THREE ships chartered by Unifruco to take local fruit overseas are lying idle in Cape Town harbour due to a work stoppage at International Harbour Services.

International Harbour Services is a Unifruco subsidiary.

A spokesman for the workers said today that about 600 workers — members of the Transport and General Workers Union — had agreed to down tools in support of demands relating to wages and permanent employment.

The ships were bound for Britain and the Far East and unless the workers' demands were met speedily, fruit could start to rot, the spokesman said. ARG 7/3/95

Unifruco spokesman Fred Meintjies confirmed the work stoppage but denied that fruit was in danger of rotting.

Fruit could be kept "for months" in cold-storage.

Although the loading of three ships had been delayed, this did not represent a major disruption of the export programme.

"Stock levels in the overseas markets are sufficient to supply all customers for the forseeable future," said Mr Meintjies.

If the disruption continued, "alternative measures" would be taken to supply the export markets. Mr Meintjies did not want to expand on what these measures entailed.

Union representatives were locked in a meeting with International Harbour Services management and Mr Meintjies was confident the problem would be resolved soon.

Taxi protest turns violent

(333)

OWN CORRESPONDENT

CT 10/3/95

DURBAN: Protesting taxi drivers blockaded main roads leading to the city centre here for the second day yesterday, stoned buses and set fire to another after forcing passengers to alight.

Thousands of commuters were held up by the blockade. All roads leading to the airport were also blockaded causing some people to miss their flights.

Durban Transport buses in Umlazi were stoned and a bus was set on fire and burnt out.

BD 17/3/95

Registration requested

THE Turning Wheel Workers' Union applied for registration in February to operate in the goods transportation and storage industry in SA (333)

The Transport and General Workers' Union said yesterday it was disturbed that an organisation that had been around for such a short time claimed to have national representivity

REPORTS: Business Day Reporters, Sapa-Reuter.

THE CAPE

Picture: ANDREW INGRAM, The Argus.

TAXI PROTEST: Members of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) protest in front of parliament demanding the immediate release of Victor Sam, one of their leaders.

(333)

Taxi protesters blockade parliament entrance

ARG 4/4/95

ROGER FRIEDMAN
Labour Reporter

ABOUT 100 Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association taxis blockaded the main entrance to parliament today to demand the arrest of opponents and the release from jail of Cata's alleged strongman Victor Sam.

The taxis briefly snarled up the Roeland-Plein Street intersection before moving off. The occupants — about 300 people — returned to the gates of parliament on foot.

As they toyi-toyied outside, a Cata delegation was taken inside by Enver Daniels, special adviser to Justice Minister Dullah Omar, to discuss their demands.

Police with riot shields formed a line across the gates as the toyi-toying carried on.

Cata, which was embroiled in a bloody conflict with the Congress of Democratic Taxi Organisations (Codeta) from which it split late last year, is understood to be the predominant township taxi organisation at present.

Cata deputy-chairman Steven Williams said today that the association was mystified about why there had so far been no arrests over the Khayelitsha Stadium massacre in October, in which 10 people were killed and 17 injured.

Most of the victims were Cata members.

Williams said it appeared the police and judiciary ignored crimes allegedly committed by other, ANC-supporting, groups.

Cata was also demanding the release of its alleged strongman Mr Sam, whose protracted bail application was refused earlier this year.

Mr Sam had various charges against him, including murder, withdrawn by the Supreme Court in February, but faces unrelated charges, including murder, arising from last year's taxi conflict.

Half of company's fleet stranded as strike bites

■ LABOUR REPORTER (333)

About 600 employees of the liquids transport company, Tanker Services, in depots across the country have gone on strike after wage negotiations broke down, leaving almost half the company's fleet stranded.

Company official Phil Erasmus said yesterday workers had embarked on the strike on Friday after negotiations, which started last year and were supposed to be effected in January, failed to reach agreement.

The union is demanding a 15% across-the-board increase while the company has offered 13,5%.

Erasmus said the company had made plans to maintain essential services and 52% of the fleet was running. He said, however, that many clients had been inconvenienced by the strike.

Transport and General Workers' Union national co-ordinator Abner Ramokgolo said the workers, including drivers and general staff, had vowed they would not return to work until the union's demands had been met.

An employee at the company's Germiston depot said yesterday it was disgraceful that management would not improve its offer by 1,5%.

Erasmus noted that this was the first strike at the company in 34 years. He said Tanker Services drivers were far better off in terms of wages than others in the industry, adding that, if he paid industry rates, he would save R6-million on wages.

Star 9/5/95

Strike link as 'scab' driver is shot dead

The Argus Correspondent

DURBAN. — A tanker driver employed as a "scab" was shot dead at Umlaas Road by gunmen acting in apparent support of the striking workers of a company engaged in heavy transport. (333)

Gunmen also opened fire on two other tankers belonging to the company on the N3 north of Maritzburg yesterday. ARG 11/5/95

Police believe the shootings are linked to a strike of drivers employed by Tanker Services.

A police spokesman said the body of a scab driver was found in a tanker on the N3 near the South Coast turnoff at 10pm yesterday.

He said the shooting followed incidents involving two of the company's tankers travelling between Maritzburg and Estcourt.

In the first incident a tanker was fired on from the side of the road. Neither the driver nor his assistant was injured.

The second shooting on that stretch of road also involved a vehicle of Tanker Services.

The tanker and an unidentified driver were fired upon from the side of the road. The driver, who did not stop his tanker, was not injured.

Striking Tanker Services worker killed by truck

BD 19/5/95 (333)

Renee Grawitzky

A WORKER was killed this week during a wage strike by 600 members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) at Tanker Services in Germiston.

TGWU spokesman Malcom Ray said the worker was run over and killed by a truck driven by a white subcontractor, who had been employed during the two-week strike.

Tanker Services MD Derrick West said the incident had been taken up by the SA Police Services, who had laid a charge of culpable homicide against the subcontractor.

Workers had fired shots at the subcontractor as he drove off from the accident, and he could lay charges of attempted murder, West said.

Ray said the union held the company responsible for the death as they had hired scab labour, contrary to the request of the union. The union regarded legal strike action as an extension of collective bargaining.

West said strike rules were in place. The rules had mainly been adhered to, except for the KwaZulu/Natal area.

The strike arose over a dispute about wages. The union was demanding a 15% across the board increase, whilethe company was offering 13,5% or 12,5% if they went on strike.

Meetings were held yesterday and would remume today in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

This announcement appears as a matter of record only

May 1995

Standard Bank

The Standard Bank of South Africa Limited
Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa

US-$ 130,000,000
Revolving Credit Facility

Arrangers and Senior Lead-Managers

COMMERZBANK AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT

THE SANWA BANK, LIMITED

Lead-Manager

Tensions simmer at Alusaf's site

Nicola Jenvey

BD 19/5/95

DURBAN — Construction workers were back on site at the Alusaf Hillside Smelter yesterday and a meeting between community representatives, Alusaf and local police was scheduled for this morning following violent incidents last week.

Alusaf Richards Bay spokesman Lorraine Lennon said yesterday violence had flared again, despite commitments by community and traditional leaders, workers' representatives and management to end it. A Tuesday meeting with local chiefs and the Richards Bay mayor was supposed to normalise actvities.

"Despite efforts made by workers' representatives party to the agreement, a small element among the 5 300 construction workers on site could not be controlled," police advisor Sipho Lekele said.

Lennon said Alusaf had been forced to request full-time law enforcement last Thursday "to ensure the safety of workers and contractors' personnel".

The Work Seekers' Committee, an organisation of unemployed Richards Bay residents, were upset employment would be reduced once construction was completed, to about 1 500 jobs.

Genmin spokesman Tom Ferreira said 1 100 were on Alusaf's payroll. The remainder were contractors.

The 350 positions needed at the new plant were filled from the Richards Bay and KwaZulu/Natal area.

Lennon said the disruptions were unlikely to delay the scheduled June 14 start-up.

Strike strands 200 000 commuters

DURBAN. — Up to 200 000 commuters were stranded today after about 300 white train drivers refused to work in protest against employer's affirmative action policies, a Spoornet official said. (176)

"At the moment 300 drivers are involved. (333) (264)

"They are not happy with the affirmative action policy we are following.

"Between 100 000 to 200 000 commuters are affected," said Spoornet official Peter Mitchell.

He said negotiations were taking place: "They have not given us details yet of what they are not happy with."

Mr Mitchell said there were no commuter trains running from Kelso on the south coast up to Durban. ARG 23/6/95

Townships around the city were also affected, he said.

The strike started at 2 am this morning, he added. — Reuter.

CP 16/7/95

Metro to train blacks for passenger trains

By BENISON MAKELE (333)

THERE are no black passenger train drivers in the country but they could be on their way!

Senior Manager of Metro Train Services Charles Erasmus told City Press this week that Metro was "very aware" of the situation and was planning to change the present situation through implementing an "affirmative action programme".

He said that Metro Rail was still part of Spoornet but was "busy negotiating with all stakeholders to wean itself away from Spoornet".

"Metro will then train its own black drivers in line with its affirmative action policies," he said.

Erasmus noted that there were already Metro goods trains driven by black drivers.

"It's not because black people cannot drive passenger trains ... they have not been trained to do so and that's why we will be addressing this in the near future."

STAND-OFF: Captain Johan Conradie tries to get Turning Wheels Workers' Union striker Mr Nico du Toit, in the black-and-red top, to hand over seized trucks. *PICTURE: ALAN TAYLOR*

Police called in as fired truckers defy orders

CT 5/9/95 (333)

STAFF REPORTER

POLICE defused a stand-off between a national transport company and dismissed truckers who refused to hand back 12 vehicles yesterday.

The truckers, members of the Turning Wheels Workers' Union, went on strike yesterday after months of wage negotiations with Mainline Carriers ended in deadlock.

They were dismissed after Mainline warned that their strike was illegal and called on them to return to work.

The truckers parked the vehicles at the Goodwood Showgrounds and said they were waiting for colleagues who were driving trucks to the city from Beaufort West.

Police became involved when Mainline laid a complaint that two of the trucks had been hijacked by Turning Wheels members.

Mainline managing director Mr Chris Baddeley said the "average" salary of drivers was R6 500 a month. The strikers said drivers earned R1 226 and their assistants less than R800.

The drivers refused a request by police negotiator Captain Johan Conradie to hand back the vehicles. Relief drivers, under armed police guard, removed the trucks.

Trucks block Free State road

(333) (~~276~~) (~~152~~) STAR 5/9/95

Striking truck drivers this morning blockaded a main road in the Free State to support demands for higher pay and other grievances.

Police spokesman Col Johann Fouche said that about 40 trucks had blockaded the N3 at Balmoral, about 20km from Harrismith.

He said police and traffic officials were at the scene trying to negotiate an end to the labour protest and open the road to traffic.

There were no immediate reports of trouble.

The protest was mounted by members of the Turning Wheels Workers' Union.

The organisation's general secretary Richard Madime told Sapa the drivers pulled the trucks onto the road at about 5.30am this morning in order to highlight their demands.

He said the demonstration was being conducted by Main Line Carriers' drivers, who are in a dispute with management over wages as well as over other demands. – Sapa.

Maharaj slams truck drivers' road blockade

Star 6/9/95 (333)

Traffic on the N3 highway near Harrismith in the Free State was moving freely by late yesterday afternoon after 14 lorries blocking the road were towed away.

More than 300 drivers from the Turning Wheels Workers' Union blockaded the highway with their lorries for most of the day, but drove off when police started removing their vehicles. There were no arrests.

Ninety lorries were still to be removed, police spokesman Johlene van der Merwe said.

The situation was calm, but she warned that police would again remove lorries if drivers resorted to similar action today.

The blockade started at about 5.30am, making it impossible for traffic to pass. The drivers are demanding higher pay and the reinstatement of 75 Mainline Carriers drivers fired on Monday for striking in protest against the firm's offer to increase salaries by between 10 and 13%.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj supported the police action and said the workers were abusing their right to protest. "Instead of engaging with their employers and protesting in a peaceful manner at their places of employment, these blockades are directed against the State and the public who use the roads." – Sapa.

Gloves off as Govt clamps down on road blockade protest action

(333) Star 13/9/95

Mmabatho – Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the nine provincial transport MECs yesterday resolved not to enter into discussions with any party responsible for a road blockade while the blockade was in place.

At a workshop in Mmabatho, North West, the Ministerial Conference of Ministers of Transport (Mincom) called on all authorities to take the same position, saying road blockades were an abuse of the right to protest.

Regardless of who was responsible or what issues or demands were raised, government would immediately implement the following policies at future road blockade situations:

- No negotiations while the blockade is in place;
- Police should immediately remove the blockade;
- The persons or groups responsible for the blockade must be arrested and/or prosecuted;
- Law enforcement agencies must do whatever necessary to keep the affected area free of obstruction.

Mincom said it supported the right to collective bargaining, but this right should not interfere with the rights of other South Africans. – Sapa.

Blockading truckers face 'firm action'

ARG 13/9/95

Staff Reporter and Sapa

NATIONAL Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the nine provincial transport ministers have resolved to take firm action against truckers who set up road blockades.

In future there will be no negotiations while roads are blockaded. Police will be asked to immediately remove any obstructions, the Ministerial Conference of Ministers of Transport decided yesterday.

The conference said it supported the right to collective bargaining, but blockades were an abuse of the right to protest.

Meanwhile, the Turning Wheels Workers Union — responsible for major freeway blockades, has condemned the joint police-army breakup of a road blockade on the N2 outside Colesberg this week.

The union's national organiser, Ben Petersen, slammed Mr Maharaj for refusing to meet workers for discussions.

"We call on the Road Freight Association and Mr Maharaj to meet us as a matter of national urgency," he said. (333)

Truck drivers still defiant

(333) ARG 14/9/95

Staff Reporter

THE Turning Wheel Workers' Union today vowed it would not be "sidetracked by enemy agents or the authorities".

This was seen as a thinly veiled threat that the union would not adhere to transport minister Mac Maharaj's appeal for no more freeway blockades.

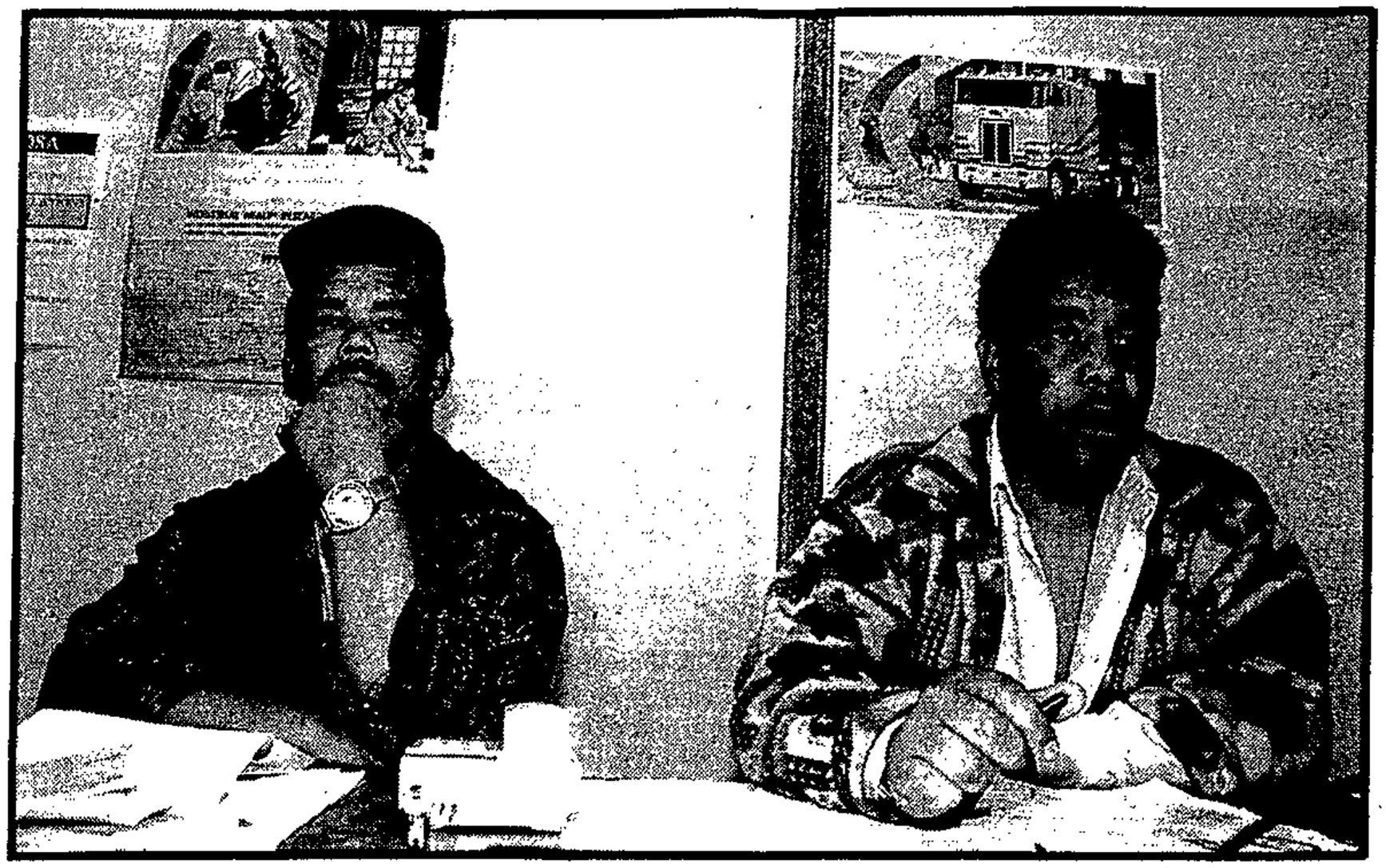
The union is in a wage dispute with Mainline Carriers which has led to the dismissal of about 100 workers.

"There is a groundswell of anger among the workers," said national organiser Ben Petersen.

"What form it will take I don't know, but the workers are determined to do anything in their power."

Mr Maharaj and the nine provincial transport ministers warned the union this week that police had been instructed to use as much force as necessary to prevent road blockades.

Mr Petersen said this was tantamount to a denial of freedom of expression.



Picture: ANDREW INGRAM, The Argus.

WHEELS LOCKED: Ben Petersen, right, the national co-ordinator of the Turning Wheels Workers' Union, says truckers will never be intimidated by threats or sidetracked by authorities or "enemy agents". On the left is John van Wyk, one of the union's senior shopstewards at Mainline Carriers. ARG 15/9/95 (333)

Truckers turn to Mandela

Staff Reporter and Sapa

THE Turning Wheels Workers' Union want an urgent audience with President Nelson Mandela to resolve what it calls a looming national crisis in the trucking industry.

And the union has warned it will carry out its "programme of action" in response to the dismissal of about 100 workers by transport company Mainline Carriers — whatever Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj says.

The union has staged two national highway blockades in the last two weeks to try to pressurise the company to accept its wage demands and reinstate the dismissed workers.

Mr Maharaj and the country's nine regional transport ministers this week responded to the blockades by calling on the police to use whatever force was necessary to prevent any further freeway disruptions.

At a media conference yesterday, national co-ordinator Ben Petersen said of Monday's Colesberg blockade: "The democratic right of workers to assemble and discuss peacefully was met by threats of bloodshed."

Mr Petersen said police told him in Colesberg that they had been ordered by Mr Maharaj and National Commissioner George Fivaz to "use any necessary force, including shooting.

"They said if anyone died, the blood would be on the hands of the Turning Wheels Workers' Union."

Mr Petersen said the workers would not be intimidated by these threats.

"We are determined we will not be sidetracked by enemy agents or the authorities. We will get justice and respect for drivers," he said.

"If Mainline Carriers don't settle with us we will call on all truckers in the industry to come out in solidarity."

● Meanwhile, Mr Petersen refused to discuss an apparent breakdown in the union.

Acting general secretary Richard Madime claimed on Wednesday that Mr Petersen had been dismissed on Tuesday as he had "completely misused" his position within the union.

But Derek Organsie, regional chairman for the Western Cape, hotly denied Mr Madime's claims, saying Mr Madime had been suspended from his position pending the outcome of a TWWU disciplinary hearing today.

All Mr Petersen would say yesterday was: "My position remains unaltered — I am not prepared to discuss it. The workers have taken a position on it nationally. A disciplinary hearing for a top-ranking person will be held."

Now go in peace . . .

(333)

CP 17/9/95

By JEFFERSON LENGANE

NOW that the train violence has subsided, those who helped to contain it have been given a handshake – retrenchment without benefits.

Several of the 350 guards retrenched by their companies after Transnet no longer needed their services sustained injuries during their employment and have not been compensated. Some are maimed for life.

"This is crazy," said Maria Mokhele of her retrenchment. "Some of the people we arrested for train violence have their cases still pending. We have to travel to and from court on our own steam."

The guards, who were seconded to Transnet by various security companies, were shocked to receive impersonal letters from their companies advising them of their dismissal.

Transnet terminated their services because of the decline in train violence.

ROBERT MMAKO . . . A bullet went right through his body.

WEXEN HELE . . . Struck by three bullets in an attack on a train.

MARIA MOKHELE . . . Was shot in the hand by another guard.

Robert Mmako was shot in the body during Chris Hani's funeral in 1993 when Merafe Hostel dwellers went on the rampage. The bullet entered his chest and went out through the back.

Wexen Hele was struck by three bullets. He narrowly missed death when hostel dwellers attacked a train at Kliptown station.

Mokhele (36), a mother of three, sustained hand injuries when she was shot by a colleague during a "game". She was based at Merafe in Soweto.

None of them were compensated, and they are now unemployed.

While the violence was raging, some of their colleagues died in the crossfire, and there was no help with burial costs, said Mmako.

■ Transnet's manager of industrial relations, Con Jooste, said Transnet was not directly involved with the retrenchments. The guards had been employees of contracted companies, he said.

UNIVERSIT

Now go in peace

(333)

CP 17/9/95

By JEFFERSON LENGANE

NOW that the train violence has subsided, those who helped to contain it have been given a handshake – retrenchment without benefits.

Several of the 350 guards retrenched by their companies after Transnet no longer needed their services sustained injuries during their employment and have not been compensated. Some are maimed for life.

"This is crazy," said Maria Mokhele of her retrenchment. "Some of the people we arrested for train violence have their cases still pending. We have to travel to and from court on our own steam."

The guards, who were seconded to Transnet by various security companies, were shocked to receive impersonal letters from their companies advising them of their dismissal.

Transnet terminated their services because of the decline in train violence.

ROBERT MMAKO ... A bullet went right through his body.

WEXEN HELE ... Struck by three bullets in an attack on a train.

MARIA MOKHELE ... Was shot in the hand by another guard.

Robert Mmako was shot in the body during Chris Hani's funeral in 1993 when Merafe Hostel dwellers went on the rampage. The bullet entered his chest and went out through the back.

Wexen Hele was struck by three bullets. He narrowly missed death when hostel dwellers attacked a train at Kliptown station.

Mokhele (36), a mother of three, sustained hand injuries when she was shot by a colleague during a "game". She was based at Merafe in Soweto.

None of them were compensated, and they are now unemployed.

While the violence was raging, some of their colleagues died in the crossfire, and there was no help with burial costs, said Mmako.

■ Transnet's manager of industrial relations, Con Jooste, said Transnet was not directly involved with the retrenchments. The guards had been employees of contracted companies, he said.

200 000 held up by strikers

(333)

STAFF REPORTER

CT 20/9/96

A WILD cat strike by city train drivers during rush hour yesterday afternoon delayed some 200 000 commuters — who were forced to wait for over an hour for their trains.

The strikers were demanding the re-instatement of a driver who was fired after a disciplinary inquiry yesterday afternoon, Metro operating manager Mr Louis Holtzhausen said last night.

All lines out of the Cape Town station were affected.

A striking driver said the man had been dismissed after a derailing in a yard in Paarden Eiland. He said the drivers felt this was unfair: "We are humans, not machines."

Metro manager Mr André Harrison said he hoped trains would be running today, but could not guarantee they would be on time.

● Golden Arrow buses will recognise Metro tickets today, should train services continue to be affected.

LONG DELAYS: Some 200 000 commuters were forced to wait for hours for their trains yesterday, after train drivers went on a wild cat strike at rush hour, to demand the reinstatement of a driver who was dismissed. At 8pm school children and business people were still waiting to go home. *PICTURE: NIC BOTHMA*

Peninsula train chaos

(333) ARG 20/9/95

ESANN de KOCK
and TASLIMA VILJOEN
Staff Reporters

THERE was chaos at railway stations again today as thousands of rush-hour commuters were stranded when a strike by train drivers entered its second day.

About half the scheduled trains were running today.

The strike began yesterday in support of a sacked driver who was involved in a derailment at the Paarden Eiland railyard, a Metro spokesman said.

Many commuters got home late as most of Cape Metro's 187 drivers went on strike yesterday in support of their colleague.

Today, only 60 were still on strike, a spokesman for Cape Metro said. They had not acted through their union, the South African Footplate Union.

The strikers met local Metro manager Andre Harrison this morning. The outcome was not immediately known.

Train tickets were accepted as valid on Golden Arrow buses today.

The Metro spokesman said there was a 50 percent train service today.

Frustrated commuters stood on platforms as trains, packed to capacity, sped past stations where they usually stopped.

In some cases where trains could not stop because there were too many commuters on platforms, they halted between stations, where passengers jumped off.

This happened between Heideveld and Bonteheuwel this morning, said Majorie van Rooyen, whose husband climbed on to the railway line.

Mrs Van Rooyen said she and her husband had boarded an "incredibly full" train at Mitchell's Plain station at 6.40am.

"It was chaotic. The train couldn't stop at stations because they were packed.

"When it stopped between Heideveld and Bonteheuwel, people just poured out of the windows and doors to get off as close to their workplaces as possible."

Taxis and buses were packed this

PANDEMONIUM: Thousands of confused commuters, above, scrummed for a place on the platform as the strike crippled the suburban train service. Frustrated people stood on platforms as trains, packed to capacity, sped past stations where they usually stopped. In some cases where trains couldn't stop at stations because too many commuters were waiting on the platform, they halted between stations to allow passengers to jump out on to the

This happened between Heideveld and Bonteheuwel this morning, said Majorie van Rooyen, whose husband climbed on to the railway line.

Mrs Van Rooyen said she and her husband had boarded an "incredibly full" train at Mitchell's Plain station at 6.40am.

"It was chaotic. The train couldn't stop at stations because they were packed.

"When it stopped between Heideveld and Bonteheuwel, people just poured out of the windows and doors to get off as close to their workplaces as possible."

Taxis and buses were packed this morning as many people used alternative transport.

Golden Arrow buses on the Wynberg-Retreat-Claremont line were substantially fuller this morning, bus company spokewoman Jeanne Welsh said.

"There was a much bigger demand on that bus line, especially between 6.30am and 8am.

"We had to put on an additional four or five buses to cope."

Other buses were very full, she said, but the existing service coped well.

Cape Town traffic chief Wouter Smit said his department had noticed an increase in the volume of cars on the road this morning, but no problems were experienced.

Trains on the the Cape Flats, Simon's Town, Wellington and Bellville lines were affected by the strike.

Cape Town station was much quieter than usual today with only a trickle of hurried, irritable commuters.

At the start of the strike yesterday afternoon, there was chaos at the station, as people ran up and down platforms to find a train to catch.

No announcements were made to tell commuters what was happening. Many drivers who had completed their shifts were also unaware of the strike.

Commuters were puzzled, then angry. Maureen De Toit said: "I have been waiting for over an hour and not heard anything. It really inconveniences me because my husband is waiting for me and does not know about the situation."

Sonja Lotter said: "I don't know what's happening. I've been running from platform to platform to get a train but none of them are moving."

At 5.30pm platforms for the Cape Flats lines were jam-packed.

A woman said she was upset because she would be late fetching her children from nursery school.

Many commuters said they would have to take a taxi or else they wouldn't get home at all.

scrummed for a place on the platform as the strike crippled the suburban train service. Frustrated people stood on platforms as trains, packed to capacity, sped past stations where they usually stopped. In some cases where trains couldn't stop at stations because too many commuters were waiting on the platform, they halted between stations to allow passengers to jump out on to the rails. Pictures: DOUG PITHEY, The Argus.

TAXI ALTERNATIVE: Long queues, right, formed at the Cape Town taxi rank after commuters gave up on train transport.

Partly cloudy and mild.

Mob brothers talk with det

Management, drivers agree

(333)

STAFF REPORTER

CT 14/11/95

GOLDEN ARROW bus drivers and members of the company's management have formed an action committee to address the grievances of drivers at Mitchells Plain Town Centre terminus.

The move follows a weekend incident in which a driver was stabbed in the hand after he damaged a hawker's stall.

A group of drivers blockaded the Philippi bus terminus yesterday morning to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with conditions there. They claimed it was becoming "overcrowded" with hawkers" and they were concerned about their safety, Golden Arrow spokeswoman Ms Jeanne Welsh said.

Drivers ended the blockade after talks with management.

Gauteng medical waste disposal sites sought

BD 4/10/95

Michael Moon

DEMAND for the disposal of medical waste in Gauteng has doubled in the past four months, and urgent discussions are taking place between government and waste management companies to seek solutions to the problem.

The water affairs department has issued an emergency permit to the Eastern Services Council to use its Platkop landfill site for the disposal of an excess of 80 tons of medical waste.

Disposal company Waste-tech said yesterday that in May it had handled 100 tons of medical waste at its Rietfontein incineration facility. It had been expected to climb to 200 tons for the month of August.

Other commercial disposal companies had reported similar increases in demand.

Waste-tech MD Ken Bromfield said it seemed publicity accorded the medical waste issue earlier this year, when Waste-tech was barred — then unbarred — from burning or dumping hospital waste, had alerted the health care sector to availability of services.

Bromfield also believed that the controversy had prompted some local authorities to crack down on hospitals illegally dumping on municipal tips.

This was an encouraging development, because most medical waste produced in the province (estimated at 345 tons a month) was now being handled legally. However, existing commercial incineration facilities could not cope.

Waste-tech and others were currently investigating new waste sites.

The deadline for public input for the environmental impact assessment for the new incineration site is October 20. Waste-tech said that only a handful of submissions had been received so far.

Barnato Exploration Limited

(Incorporated in the Republic of South Africa)
Registration No. 88/03756/06

Truck drivers given say at talks for first time

333

Renee Grawitzky

BD 4/10/95

ABOUT 40 000 truck drivers and their assistants will be party to central level negotiations in the goods transport industry for the first time when wage negotiations start on Friday.

These negotiations come one year after the Turning Wheel International Workers' Movement claimed responsibility for the Mooi River truck drivers' blockade, where workers demanded among other issues the establishment of a national forum for negotiations.

One of the reasons for the delay in starting negotiations was the failure of the Turning Wheel Workers' Union and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union to commit themselves to observer status at the negotiations because they had not complied with the requirements for registration with the labour department and the industrial council. It is understood that if these unions were observers, they would have to commit themselves to the outcome of the negotiations even though they were not party to them.

Ben Petersen of the Turning Wheel Workers' Union said the union had received notification of its registration and would be taking part in the negotiations. He said the union — with an estimated membership of 13 000 — was an important player in the industry and there could be "severe repercussions" if the outcome of negotiations did not have "our blessing".

An agreement was reached by six of the seven unions, excluding Turning Wheel, operating in the sector, and three employer organisations representing 1 000 employers, to begin central level negotiations even though the national industrial council had not yet been registered.

Dock stoppage continues: Worker complains of abuse

(333)

ESTELLE RANDALL
Labour Reporter

ARG 2/12/95

WORKERS at Cape Town's docks continued their stoppage for the second day, but Portnet said that it had not caused any major disruption.

The break bulk terminals were 55 percent operational and and the container terminal, marine service and cartage service were fully operational. Four vessels would be delayed.

Members of the South African Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwu) stopped work on Thursday to protest against Portnet's alleged insensitive handling of a worker's complaint of physical and mental abuse by three of her colleagues.

Sarhwu is demanding that a joint union/management inquiry, as initially agreed, continue and that three managers involved in instituting a disciplinary hearing be removed from their posts.

The union's Western Cape regional organiser, Johan Beaurain, said the case involved four union members, the alleged complainant, Bonny Tafeni, and three colleagues against whom Portnet management had instituted disciplinary procedures.

Ms Tafeni had experienced health problems and turned to a social worker, a colleague in the training department and one who was training as a traditional healer.

During the consultations with her colleagues she injured herself.

An investigation into the matter had been unilaterally ended by management and instead a disciplinary hearing was held.

The inquiry was to have produced recommendations on Portnet's approach to the use of traditional healers.

Talks between the union and management are continuing.

TRANSPORT - PRIVATE - LABOUR

1996 - 98

Food manufacturing behind PPI rise

CT (BR) 12/1/96

STAFF WRITER

Johannesburg — South Africa's producer price inflation rate increased marginally to 8,3 percent for the 12 months to November from 8,2 percent in October, the Central Statistical Service said yesterday.

The increase came in the wake of a sharp 1,5 percent month-on-month rise in food at the manufactured level. Food at the agricultural level declined by 0,7 percent.

The local component of the producer price index (PPI) rose by 0,3 percentage points month-on-month, while the imported component was flat.

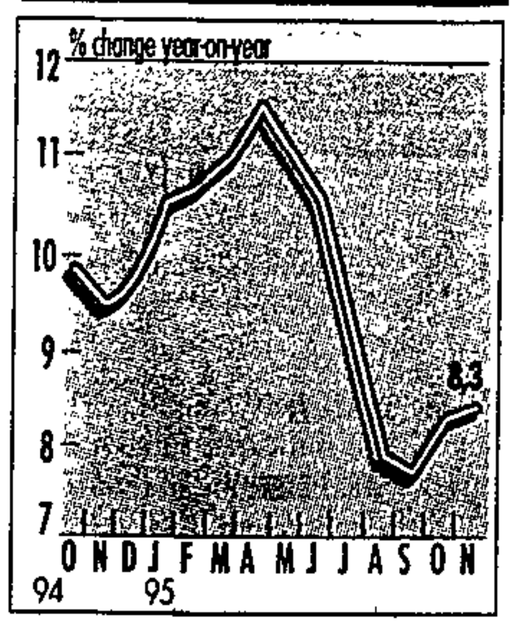
The subdivision of the PPI shows that for the 12 months to November last year the increase in prices of locally produced commodities was 9,0 percent, while the rise in the prices of imported goods was 5,5 percent, the reason for the hike in the total index being contained to 8,3 percent. This was, however, the second consecutive monthly rise. The PPI was 7,6 percent for the year to September.

On the basis of the rise in the PPI, some upturn in the consumer price index (CPI) can be expected when the December figure is released later this month.

But economists generally are confident that the annual rise in the CPI for this year will be less than 10 percent. Some forecasts range as low as 8 percent, although an accelerating trend in the closing months is also widely expected.

Standard Bank yesterday forecast that producer inflation would average 9,5 percent last year and between 7,0 percent and 7,5 percent this year.

Producer Price Index



WHAT'S THE SCORE? *Enoch Godongwana, the general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA, takes a break during yesterday's talks with the government on privatisation*

PHOTO: JOHN WOODROOF

Strike delays protest

(333)

FROM SAPA

CT (BR) 12/1/96

Johannesburg — A march by post and telecommunications employees protesting against proposals to privatise state assets was delayed by a Putco bus drivers' strike in Johannesburg yesterday morning, a union official said.

Ali Kubayi, the Witwatersrand secretary of the Post and Telecommunication Workers' Association (Potwa), said the marchers had planned to hand a memorandum to Gauteng's premier, Tokyo Sexwale. However, they were waiting for members of the association from Soweto who did not have transport to the city.

About 500 Potwa members toyi-toyied and waved placards outside the union's headquarters in the city centre.

Ian Goldin offered top job at DBSA

CT (BR) 12/1/96

BY DUMA GQUBULE

Johannesburg — The Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) has offered the position of chief executive Ian Goldin, a senior economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London.

The post was widely expected to be given to a black candidate after a palace revolt by black professionals at the bank almost two years ago.

Sources within the bank said yesterday that the board had decided to offer the job to Goldin after the last-minute withdrawal of Timothy Thahane, a Lesotho national and vice-president of the World Bank.

The Development Bank chairman, Wiseman Nkuhlu, last night confirmed that the board had met on Tuesday to discuss the appointment of an acting chief executive for the bank as negotiations with Goldin were taking longer than hoped.

The DBSA is a quasi-government agency that provides finance for development in southern Africa. It has played a key role in the development of the RDP.

Black DBSA managers said yesterday that the bank had gone out of its way to look for a suitable black candidate. They were prepared to give Goldin a chance because of his widespread international experience.

"After all, our demand is that development must reach the people on the [illegible]. It does not follow that this will not [illegible] the person is appointed," a source said.

Goldin, 40, left South Africa in 1978 and has worked as an economist at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank. He has worked at the EBRD for the past eight months.

WHAT'S THE SCORE? *Enoch Godongwana, the general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA, takes a break during yesterday's talks with the government on privatisation*

PHOTO: JOHN WOODROOF

Strike delays protest

(333)

FROM SAPA

CT (BR) 12/1/96

Johannesburg — A march by post and telecommunications employees protesting against proposals to privatise state assets was delayed by a Putco bus drivers' strike in Johannesburg yesterday morning, a union official said.

Ali Kubayi, the Witwatersrand secretary of the Post and Telecommunication Workers' Association (Potwa), said the marchers had planned to hand a memorandum to Gauteng's premier, Tokyo Sexwale. However, they were waiting for members of the association from Soweto who did not have transport to the city.

About 500 Potwa members toyi-toyied and waved placards outside the union's headquarters in the city centre.

Putco strike ends after driver is reinstated

BD 12/1/96 (333)

Theo Rawana

THE strike by 900 Soweto bus drivers was suspended yesterday afternoon after Putco management agreed to conditionally reinstate a sacked worker and lift the suspension on another, the Transport and General Workers' Union said yesterday.

Union general secretary Randall Howard said the strike, which had left thousands of commuters stranded in the morning, was to back these demands after the driver had been fired after being involved in an accident.

Management had acceded to the demands, pending procedural appeals which would be heard this morning.

"We agreed to suspend the action so as to address the services to the community," Howard said.

Management had also agreed to the holding of a ballot at Putco's two greater Soweto depots in Dobsonville, with a view to union recognition.

Howard stressed that the action was suspended pending the success of today's hearings. He said it was agreed there should be no loss of wages to the workers. However, management had made it clear that in future the principle of no-work-no-pay would apply.

The question of poor labour relations between the union and management was referred to a joint committee comprised of management and the union.

Putco MD Mike Olden said about 500 buses operating from the two greater Soweto depots were rendered idle by the strike.

Howard had earlier said management was refusing to recognise his union as the majority union in Soweto, showing preference for the rival Transport and Allied Workers' Union.

Sapa reports that thousands of commuters were left stranded in the morning when the drivers went on strike.

All bus services in greater Soweto, Alberton, Palm Ridge, Eden Park, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Midrand had been affected by the strike action, assistant manager Mutu Manana said.

Bus services in southern areas such as Ennerdale, Lance, Evaton and Palm Springs were not affected, Manana said.

Bus drivers go on strike

Sowetan 12/1/96 (333)

By Themba Sepotokele and Wilson Ramothata

THOUSANDS of commuters in some parts of Gauteng were left stranded yesterday when Putco bus drivers embarked on a strike in protest against claims of unfair dismissal of six drivers.

Commuters in areas such as Lenasia, Soweto and Ennerdale used alternative transport to take them to and from work because of the strike called by Transport and General Workers Union.

TGWU spokesman Mr Elliot Sithole said six drivers were dismissed over the period of three months for collisions beyond their control.

Putco's director, Mr Fred Stamp, could not say how many buses were grounded but was confident that the matter would be resolved.

Late yesterday buses blockaded the entrance to Putco's New Canada depot while union officials and management were locked in a meeting.

Meanwhile, general-secretary of Cosatu Mr Sam Shilowa told members of Post and Telecommunications Workers Allied Union that the 24 hour national strike would continue next Tuesday even if the Government agreed to halt privatisation.

Potwa marched on the Gauteng legislature in Johannesburg yesterday

Putco bus drivers' strike ends

Star 12/1/96 (333)

A Putco bus drivers' strike which left thousands of commuters stranded in Johannesburg yesterday has ended with Putco management and the Transport and General Workers' Union agreeing to discuss disciplinary procedures in a joint committee.

Putco also agreed to review the cases of two union members facing disciplinary hearings after being involved in accidents.

Normal services will resume today.

An estimated 40 000 commuters – many of them schoolchildren – were left stranded in Gauteng by the strike at the Putco depot in Soweto.

"It's been a disastrous day," said Putco's assistant manager in Soweto, Muntu Manana yesterday afternoon. "The taxis just aren't coping with the extra passengers. Some people are trying to use the trains, but many of them rely on Putco buses to get there in the first place."

All bus services in Greater Soweto, Alberton, Palm Ridge, Eden Park, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Midrand, as well as all school services, were affected.

Services not affected were those in southern areas such as Ennerdale, Lance, Evaton and Palm Springs.

"The drivers picketed and blockaded the exit gate," said Manana, adding the strike action over the high bus accident rate and "other small issues" had started at midnight.

Striking workers prevented drivers belonging to the Transport and Allied Workers Union from carrying out their normal duties.– Staff Reporter and Sapa.

Foreign pilots take over local cockpits

ST 28/1/96 (333)

By ROGER MAKINGS

A CRITICAL shortage of pilots may force South African airlines to recruit foreign crews to meet the expected doubling of international tourists over the next two years and an increasing local demand.

SA Airlink, an independent domestic airline, recently employed two pilots from Britain, and could employ more. Two others, Comair and SA Express, have said they would have no hesitation in doing the same if they needed to.

State airline SAA agrees the shortage is critical — in the next 10 years more than 50 percent of its complement of more than 600 pilots will retire.

SAA needs 120 pilots over the next two years to meet international expansion plans and to crew nine aircraft which it has on order, says the chief executive flight operations, Captain Peter Cooke.

He says the airline is not growing fast enough to handle domestic growth.

Don Wallace, chief operating officer for SA Express, said this week: "We lost 20 percent of our crews to SAA in 1995. There is a constant shortage of pilots and we are struggling to meet our schedules. There is ample opportunity for expansion of our domestic network, which we may not be able to undertake because we don't have enough crews."

He said SA Express, which started with 10 Canadian pilots, supported the recruitment of trained foreign pilots.

Rodger Forster, joint chief executive of SA Airlink, said his airline had just hired two British pilots after losing crews to SAA. Marginal operators were finding it difficult to carry a recent 30 percent boost in pilots' salaries, he said.

And pilots are enticed from the smaller carriers partly by better salaries.

"The wage bill is hurting us," said Mr Forster. "Airline captains are the highest paid professional group in the world."

A captain of a jumbo jet earns more than R300 000 a year and SAA is going to have to raise salaries in April after awarding its crews "a substantial increase" earlier last year to put them on a par with overseas carriers.

Last month SAA lost two Airbus A320 co-pilots to a Far Eastern carrier offering US$15 000 (R56 000) a month, tax free, plus accommodation.

"But with recent increases we believe we have stemmed the flow of our pilots to foreign operators," says Captain Cooke.

A major problem is that SAA's traditional source of supply, the SA Air Force, has virtually dried up.

Captain Cooke supported calls by SA Airlink and SA Express for a multimillion-rand aviation college.

The Airline Pilots' Association of SA said this week it would not object to the recruitment of foreign pilots providing jobs were advertised locally, standards were maintained and that it was done on a short-term basis. The association would seek meetings with operators to find alternatives to employing foreign crews.

40 000 stranded by strike

Star 11/2/96

An estimated 40 000 commuters – many of them schoolchildren – were left stranded in Gauteng early today when members of the Transport and General Workers Union went on strike at the Putco depot in Soweto.

"It's been a disastrous day," said Putco's assistant manager in Soweto, Muntu Manana. "The taxis just aren't coping with the extra passengers. Some people are trying to use the trains, but many of them rely on Putco buses to get there in the first place.

"I wouldn't say people are crowding outside our offices in angry mobs. We went out on the air last night warning people that there would be a strike, and so many of them tried to make alternative arrangements.

"Many schoolchildren will not be able to get to school because Putco buses run to designated suburbs in Johannesburg where other forms of transport do not go," he said.

All bus services in Greater Soweto, Alberton, Palm Ridge, Eden Park, Roodepoort, Krugersdorp and Midrand, as well as all school services, have been affected by the strike.

~~270~~ 333

Services not affected were those in southern areas such as Ennerdale, Lance, Evaton and Palm Springs.

"The drivers are picketing and have blockaded the exit gate," Manana said, adding that the strike over the high bus accident rate had started at midnight.

Drivers belonging to the Transport and Allied Workers Union were being prevented from leaving the premises and carrying out their normal duties by striking workers. – Staff Reporter and Sapa.

INSIDE LABOUR

Trade union movement has a lot to learn

CT (BR) 23/2/96 (333)

TERRY BELL

When John van Wyk and 58 others have their day in the industrial court in Cape Town in coming weeks, it will signal the end of a brief but tumultuous chapter in South African labour history. It will not close the book on the conditions and circumstances which gave rise to considerable turmoil in the trucking industry over the past 18 months.

All 59 are long-distance truck drivers claiming wrongful dismissal from Mainline Carriers. The merits and details of the case cannot, for legal reasons, be commented on.

But these are not really the pertinent issues for those outside the immediate process. Nor is whether they win or lose, although this will obviously have an affect.

What should be of immediate interest throughout the labour movement, and to all those concerned with labour relations, is the fact that every one of the complainants is a trade unionist — yet no trade union is involved. All were former members of the Transport and General Workers Union, of which Van Wyk was a senior shop steward.

All became disgruntled with the lack of service they received from the union and the conditions under which they worked. All became members of the Turning Wheel Workers Union, founded during the dramatic blockade of the Mooi River toll plaza in KwaZulu Natal in August 1994.

The subsequent blockades saw troops of the newly democratised government used for the first time against trade unionists. Agitators and hidden hands were seen to be behind the emergence of what promised to be a highly militant union in a very strategic sector.

Yet the blockades — copies of the actions of French farmers, as seen on television — and the formation of the Turning Wheels Workers Union were perhaps as close to spontaneous as any such actions ever can be. All the drivers needed were strongly felt grievances and a proposal which could be capitalised on.

Richard Madine, a self-professed socialist and member of the Worker's List Party, whose early political life had been with the Independent Socialist Movement on the East Rand, was the man who seized the moment. A former Transport and General Workers Union shop steward who had harboured the notion of an independent truckers union, he signed up hundreds of protesting drivers.

Madine then announced the formation of the Turning Wheels Workers Union. In a gesture of solidarity, the Worker's List Party provided office space in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Fellow Worker's List Party member and former Metalworker's Union shop steward Ben Petersen was appointed national organiser in Cape Town. The peripatetic Madine, contactable through one of three cellphone numbers, was general secretary. The entire organisation, Madine announced, was being set up on the run. Initially it grew quite rapidly, then almost as dramatically, the Turning Wheels Union began to collapse late last year.

Again there were accompanying blockades and clashes with the police — against an acrimonious fall-out between Madine and Petersen.

Last week Petersen, in a letter to the 59 former Turning Wheels Workers Union members, announced that he had become a born-again Christian and had "resigned from the union", which had, certainly in the western Cape, ceased to exist. Madine, either in Johannesburg or Durban, continued to claim that the Turning Wheels Workers Union was growing.

"But it's all over," says Van Wyk. "We all have lessons to learn and we had better learn them because nothing basically has changed."

In short, the factors which gave rise to the anger and militancy are still in place, as are those which triggered the later organisational collapse of the new union.

☐ *Terry Bell's labour column will appear every Friday*

Metrorail to appoint black train drivers

Star 5/3/96 (333)

By Mandla Mthembu

For the first time, Metrorail Services is embarking on a national drive of appointing black train drivers.

The process follows an agreement, reached with the SA Footplate Staff Association last year, stating that potential drivers will no longer be required to have at least two years' goods train driving experience.

The association spokesman Chris de Vos said the agreement was in no way compromising the safety of commuters, adding promotion opportunities for all staff members were being created.

Metrorail chief executive officer Mafika Mkhwanazi said the training and experience of drivers would still be equivalent to the two years' goods train driving experience.

"This represents a breakthrough on our part as previously we did not have black train drivers, despite the fact that the majority of our commuters are black," added Mkhwanazi. About 180 drivers in training will be recruited in two phases.

The drivers would be classified into three categories depending on their experience.

The first category will comprise experienced goods train drivers who would undergo a six-week training course in commuter train driving. The second and third categories will comprise train assistants who have already passed the driver's test or have at least two years' working experience on goods trains, but have not had the chance to drive (commuter) trains. Metrorail senior manager Charles Erasmus said the completion of the training would be based on the competency level of trainees.

Tow truckers blockade N1

ARG 6/3/96 (333)

ESANN de KOCK and LINDSAY BARNES
Staff Reporters

RUSH hour traffic was held up for more than 90 minutes this morning when about 40 tow-truck drivers demanding the right to listen to police radio frequencies staged a blockade on the N1 between Goodwood and Maitland.

Negotiations were held between the tow-truckers and police to end the protest.

Tow-truck drivers belonging to the newly formed Cape Town Towing Association regrouped in the N1 City parking lot to discuss their demands with police.

The blockade caused pandemonium from 7 am when the tow-trucks jammed all city-bound lanes and traffic was re-directed by the traffic department on to Frans Conradie Drive.

Irate nurses headed for Groote Schuur pleaded to be let through saying their jobs entailed saving people's lives, but they were ignored by the protesters.

The only vehicle allowed to pass was that carrying a German woman tourist desperate to reach the airport in time to catch her plane. She was also ignored at first but her tears finally melted resistance and she was let through.

While some motorists slept in their cars until the road unjammed, businessmen used their cellphones to conduct business. At one stage, a group of angry motorists attempted to pick up one of the tow trucks and remove it, but failed to move the heavy vehicle.

The drivers were protesting against efforts by the police to confiscate their scanner radios, which they use illegally to monitor police and ambulance broadcasts so they can reach accident scenes promptly.

One of the protesters said that two weeks ago police had put out false accident reports and those trucks that responded had their scanners confiscated. These drivers then alerted others to the trap.

The tow-truckers trapped in this way had to appear in court and were fined between R500 and R2 000.

"Most of us are family members and we need the scanners to make a living," he said. "It's a messy situation because the police will never legalise our having the scanners."

The tow-truck drivers were demanding the legalisation of scanners or failing this, a radio control room of their own which could tip them off when accidents happen, said Frans Conradie, a committee member of their association.

A police spokesman said their demands would be taken to higher authorities and further talks would be held later.

"They would like to know when and where accidents happen but at this stage scanners are illegal," he said.

It was against the law for a member of the public to own a scanner, said police spokesman Wicus Holtzhausen.

"If you have a scanner it means you can listen in to police radios and any criminal can access that information.

"You can imagine that someone like a bank robber at the scene of the crime can listen in and pick up when the police are coming, which way they are coming and what they are going to do. That's why we cannot allow people to listen in," he said.

"We don't want to hide anything, but you must understand that if the tow-truck drivers are allowed to connect to police radios, so could a criminal."

Captain Holtzhausen slated the method the drivers used to draw attention to their demands and said they had put people's lives at risk by preventing doctors and nurses from getting to work.

"I can't understand why something like this can't be discussed in a meeting. Why must they involve doctors, nurses, lawyers and people trying to get to work?"

Meanwhile, the tow-truckers are also threatening to block De Waal Drive, the N2 and other major Cape Town routes later this week unless their demands are met.

The tow-trucks, belonging to about 15 companies from all over the Western Cape, began their one-hour blockade soon after 7 am during the morning rush hour, causing maximum inconvenience to city-bound motorists. The drivers dispersed about 8.50 am.

An organiser of the protest who did not want to be named, said tow-truck drivers wanted the right to use the scanner radios to deliver their "vital public service".

"We have petitioned the Western Cape minister of transport (Leonard Ramatlakane) and the police commissioner, but have had no response from them. We even invited them to a meeting to explain their position, but they failed to turn up."

● See page 19

Picture: OBED ZILWA, The Argus

BACKLOG: Traffic stretches for kilometres behind the protesting tow-truckers. After an hour and a half, with fears mounting after irate motorists would turn round and head the wrong way up the freeway into oncoming traffic, the drivers agreed to regroup elsewhere to negotiate with police.

Authorities call off hunt for tow-truck scanners

ARG 7/3/96 (333)

Staff Reporter

THE Department of Post and Telecommunications has agreed to call off its hunt for illegal radio scanners among the tow-truck fraternity after a meeting with the Cape Towing Association (CTA).

Yesterday's wildcat protest by angry tow-truck drivers who blocked the N1 near Parow in rush-hour traffic has been condemned by the CTA as a "hothead" reaction to the problem.

The department met representatives of the CTA and it has agreed to give the association time to "get its house in order", said CTA chairman Neil Billman.

The protest has also been condemned by Western Cape Minister of Transport and Public Works Leonard Ramatlakane who issued a warning that blockades of that sort were not acceptable.

The tow-truckers demanded the right to listen to police radio frequencies to get news of road accidents.

"They will not be tolerated at all," Mr Ramatlakane said.

There would not be any negotiations while blockades were in place, he said.

He called on members of the association to follow appropriate channels.

Meanwhile, Mr Billson said the CTA had not given its blessing to the protest yesterday and the situation had got out of hand.

Taxis block off streets

BD 17/10/96 (333)

PROTESTING taxi operators brought traffic to a standstill, threatened to petrol bomb Joubert Park post office and to take Telkom employees hostage if their telephone lines were not restored in Johannesburg's Joubert Park by yesterday evening.

More than 60 meter taxis from Maxi Taxi blocked streets at Joubert Park post office after Telkom technicians refused to work overtime and restore lines.

A Maxi Taxi manager said the decision to block traffic at the post office was taken after futile attempts to have lines restored.

She said when the drivers tried to contact Telkom, they were told the public relations officer was out of town and would be back only on October 28.

Telkom and post office employees at Joubert Park could not leave the premises because all the exit passages were blocked.

Tension was defused after the chief technician said he was sending technicians immediately to restore the lines.

The drivers gave Telkom an ultimatum: restore the lines or they would return and block the streets. — Sapa.

Truckers to strike if deadlock is not broken

BD 14/11/96 (333)

Renée Grawitzky

ROAD freight employers have warned that a threatened strike by 35 000 truck drivers could have disastrous consequences as its effect would be felt on all sectors of the economy.

This emerged after seven transport unions and employers party to the industrial council for motor transport undertaking, met to break the deadlock and the continuing wage dispute.

Employers indicated that the exploratory meeting had been constructive. However, a union source said there had been insufficient movement to avert a strike.

Transport and General Workers Union organiser Thulani Dlamini said employers had tabled an unmandated offer which would be confirmed in writing tomorrow. Dlamini said a settlement could only be achieved if employers improved the revised offer by 2% to 3%. In the interim, balloting of members would continue and planned to be concluded by tomorrow.

If no further movement was made, the unions intended notifying employers on Monday of their intention to start a national strike on Wednesday.

Dlamini denied rumours that a work to rule action would occur instead of a national strike.

Unions were demanding increases ranging from between 14% to 20% while employers had offered increases between 9% and 13%.

Minimum wages for drivers of heavy vehicles currently range from between R1 500 to R1 700 a month with general workers earning about R1 300 a month.

A spokesman for the Road Freight Employer Association, Nico Badenhorst said last night that the council covered in excess of 44 000 workers and 450 employers who operated 35 000 trucks countrywide.

A potential strike could have dire consequences for the economy as the trucks transported goods ranging from perishables and fuel to goods supplied to the manufacturing industries.

Thousands of truckers gathered at Johannesburg's Library Gardens yesterday to press for their demands for a 12,5 percent pay increase. The countrywide strike involves 23 000 truck drivers from several trade unions. See Page 28.

PIC: JOE MOLEFE

36 000 trucks now idle

Sowetan 21/11/96 (333)

Sowetan Correspondent

THOUSANDS of truck drivers went on strike throughout South Africa today in spite of new talks to settle their wage dispute.

The strike, which could cause widespread disruption of deliveries of fuel and other vital commodities, affects up to 36 000 trucks owned by 450 companies.

The unions undertook not to block roads during the strike and police have warned they will take firm action against anyone breaking the law.

The unions want a 12,5 percent wage increase, a subsistence allowance of R31,50 a month, a minimum shift allowance of R15, paid maternity leave with the guarantee of returning to their jobs and a 13th cheque phased in over two years. Employers have offered a 10 percent wage increase.

Road Freight Employers Association spokesman Mr Nico Badenhorst said he was confident that the dispute could be resolved at further talks and the unions are hoping the dispute will be settled within the next three days.

Mr Thulani Dlamini, national organiser for the Transport and General Workers' Union and spokesman for the unions involved in the dispute, said employers had on Tuesday night tried to "confuse workers" by telling them the dispute had been resolved.

In Cape Town workers yesterday gathered at Keizergracht near the city centre; in Johannesburg at Library Gardens; in Durban at Albert Park; and in Pretoria at the Union Buildings.

If the strike continues it could seriously disrupt road transportation of chemical waste, fuel, money from automatic banking machines and courier mail.

(333)

Truckers' strike gets into gear, but few disruptions are reported as bosses and unions hold negotiations

Star 21/11/96

By Priscilla Singh and Goba Ndhlovu

The countrywide strike by truckers has caused some disruptions in parts of Gauteng, while negotiations between seven trade unions and company bosses go ahead.

As the strike went into its first day yesterday, major retail stores in cities throughout the country have not reported any disruptions, but business expressed fears that the strike could spread.

Workers are demanding a 14% across-the-board increase and an additional 15% for minimums which include a R15-a-day shift allowance. They have also threatened to picket trucking companies if their demands are not met.

Police in the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal said there were no disruptions yesterday, only marches by small groups of drivers.

However, during a march in Johannesburg yesterday, a few of the truck drivers intimidated strike-breakers and threatened to set the trucks alight.

Outside the The Star premises in President Street, a driver from Long Distance Transport arrived with a delivery of paper reels and was pulled out of his truck and threatened with a bushknife by one of the strikers.

The driver had been recruited by the Link truck rental agency to ensure there were no disruptions to its schedules.

He was manhandled and kicked by about six men and managed to escape from the clutches of the angry union members when they threatened to chop him up if he went back into his truck.

Another driver, recruited in Durban, was also harassed near The Star building by a group of union members shortly after his arrival in the city centre.

Business has warned that millions of rand could be lost daily if the strike continues.

SA Chamber of Business spokesman Peggy Drotsky said the strike had begun at a time when Christmas shopping was in full swing and shop shelves were emptying at a rapid rate.

However, major chain stores said the strike had not yet affected them.

Pick 'n Pay spokesman Gail Schoeman said its trucks were running as normal. "So far we have received no report of lateness and our trucks have been in and out without a problem," Schoeman said.

OK Bazaars also reported a normal business day. The company's truck-tracking official, Sylvester Bunu, said he had not experienced any problems with deliveries.

Truck strike over, deal to be signed

Star 22/11/96

The agreement ending the truckers' national strike is expected to be signed this afternoon in Johannesburg after the dispute was resolved in principle by arbitration yesterday.

Transport and General Workers' Union co-ordinator Thulani Dlamini said after a deal was made with employers that the seven unions and the Road Freight Employers' Association would first consult their constituencies about details of the agreement to obtain a mandate for signing.

"I am, however, confident the strike will be over this afternoon. The agreement was fair and balanced and both parties appeared to be happy with it," he said.

The agreement was facilitated by the presence at the talks of members of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The successful meeting was initially held in an atmosphere of acrimony, following a breakdown in talks on Wednesday night.

Before yesterday's talks, about 3 000 workers, who had marched through Johannesburg, mandated representatives to return to the table with their original 14% across-the-board demand.

During a mass rally in Johannesburg's city centre scuffles broke out between traffic officers and police on the one side, and the truckers on the other. The fighting began when a traffic officer began ticketing workers' cars which had been parked illegally on the pavements. But peace was restored quickly, before anyone was injured.

There were also minor traffic disruptionsin Johannesburg when workers marched to Braamfontein. – Staff Reporters.

Truckers' dispute comes an to end

STRIKING truck drivers and employers reached agreement last night on their wage dispute after extensive mediation, and a potentially disruptive strike is likely to be called off once the agreement is signed today.

Mr Thulani Dlamini, national coordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, the largest union involved in the talks, confirmed that an agreement had been reached but could not divulge any details.

He said the seven unions involved, and the employers, would have to go back to their respective constituencies with details of the agreement, including the wage increases agreed, to obtain a mandate to sign the agreement.

Once this was obtained – and he was confident both parties' constituencies would oblige – the agreement would be signed.

This would probably take place at 2pm in Johannesburg today.

"The agreement is very fair and balanced and none of the parties are likely to reject it," Dlamini said.

The agreement was facilitated by the presence at the talks of members of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Mr Gavin Hartford, the senior commissioner who chaired the talks, could not be reached last night to confirm the agreement.

Employers and union leaders resumed mediation talks yesterday after an all-night session broke down early yesterday morning.

Workers had insisted on an across-the-board 14 percent wage increase. – *Sapa.*

Sowetan 22/11/96

Angry commuters torch five buses while drivers strike

Star 24/4/97 (333)

Damage estimated at R1,4-million was caused by angry commuters who torched five North West Star buses while bus drivers were on strike.

The commuters set fire to the buses when they had to find alternative transport from Pretoria to Hammanskraal due to the dispute on Tuesday between workers and management at the North West Star bus service.

Workers at North West Star's Babelegi depot resumed work at 9.30pm on Tuesday night after an interim agreement was reached with management.

Bus services ran normally yesterday as union officials continued their negotiations with management.

In addition to the five buses that were set alight, another 10 were damaged when they were pelted with stones by angry commuters.

Damage was estimated at R1,4-million, North West Star Bus Service spokesman Johan Stegmann said. The dispute between the parties concerned certain company fringe benefits.

"A case of public violence is being investigated. Police are looking for leads," police spokesman Captain Garwin Geldenhuys said. – Own Correspondent.

Wildcat strike knocks out city buses

ARG 17/5/97 (333)

SHARKEY ISAACS AND JOHAN SCHRONEN
STAFF REPORTER

A work stoppage by Peninsula busdrivers brought Golden Arrow Bus Services to a halt yesterday.

Bus commuters trying to get home had to use minibus taxis as the wildcat stoppage by Peninsula busdrivers took effect.

The stoppage, in defiance of a court ruling forbidding any strike action, began at 10am and continued for the rest of the day.

At Golden Arrow's depot in Woodstock several buses stood parked behind locked gates. The drivers would not discuss the strike with the press.

Golden Arrow's general manager, Hannes Grebe, said in a statement: "The South African Bus Employers Association (SABEA) has been negotiating in the National Bargaining Council with the unions on a new wage.

"We apologise to the thousands of bus users who will be affected by the (strike) action and to all those who will be affected by the ensuing disruption."

He said the company had negotiated an agreement with Metro Rail to enable bus passengers to use their clipcards on suburban trains yesterday during the strike.

ROY WIGLEY

Stranded: commuters on the Main road in Salt River wait in vain for buses to arrive.

Truck drivers stage protest on highway

Star 15/8/97 (333)

By Gasant Abarder

About 16 tow-truck drivers staged a mini-protest on the R24 highway near Essexwold, East Rand, yesterday, causing a backup of traffic as far back as the Geldenhuys interchange.

According to one truck driver, who did not want to be named, the protest followed a long-standing feud between the Germiston traffic department and private Germiston tow-truckers for the right to tow vehicles.

The department uses its own contractors to tow wrecks.

The commotion started at 10:30am, about 2km from the N3 offramp, when an accident occurred on the highway. A traffic officer arrived, and found a breakdown-truck driver trying to tow the wreck.

The officer prevented him from doing so and, after an argument, he eventually charged and arrested the man. The driver resisted arrest and the officer called for backup.

Meanwhile, backup for the driver had shown up at the scene. About 15 breakdown drivers assisted the arrested driver to remove a set of handcuffs. In protest at not being able to tow the wreck, the drivers lined their trucks up on the right lane of the highway.

C Sybersman, assistant chief of the Germiston traffic department, said the drivers' actions had caused serious traffic congestion. In addition, the highway led to the airport, which meant people on their way there might have missed their flights.

"We will never allow any public person or groups to block our roads for any reason in Greater Germiston," Sybersman said.

The drivers were given a verbal warning, but all of them were arrested after they had repeatedly refused to move their trucks. The traffic department's contracted breakdown service then started towing away the private company's 16 or so trucks. An officer took photographs of all the trucks.

The reason the driver had not been allowed to tow the wreck was that the department had its own contracted breakdown service, working on a specific roster, an officer said.

He said any breakdown company had been free to apply for the contract, on condition that they met certain requirements set by the traffic department.

Buses block Johannesburg roads

Star 27/8/97 (333)

By Gill Gifford
Crime Reporter

Disgruntled Putco bus drivers closed several main routes into western Johannesburg today by blockading roads with their buses shortly after midnight.

Traffic on Lower Main Reef Road was disrupted when 18 buses were parked in the road near Dobsonville, Roodepoort. Police and traffic officials worked through the night to move the buses as most of them had slashed tyres. The buses had to be hot-wired and moved on to a centre island.

A second blockade was set up in Noordgesig, Soweto, and a third at the Diepkloof on-ramp to the Soweto Highway.

Putco Limited managing director Michael Oldhan said the action was "a power situation in which workers are showing support of unions involved in arbitration concerning staff restructuring" at the company.

He said all blockades were apparently cleared before peak-hour traffic could be disrupted.

Rudi Rossouw, manager of Putco's Greater Soweto strategic business unit, said the possible retrenchment of 62 workers might have triggered the action, but the reasons for the drivers' protest was still unclear.

West Rand police spokesman Sergeant Herman Esterhuizen said police and traffic officials were called out in the early hours of the morning after hearing traffic lanes on Main Reef Road were blocked by the buses.

He said no dockets had been opened.

None of the drivers were at the scenes of the blockade early today, while Putco management tried to determine exactly who the culprits were.

Protesting bus drivers block main city routes

(333)

By Gill Gifford
Crime Reporter

Star 28/8/97

A two-day arbitration hearing, which began yesterday as disgruntled Putco bus drivers blockaded several main routes around Johannesburg with their buses, is expected to end today without further incidents.

Rudi Rossouw, manager of Putco's Greater Soweto strategic business unit, said staff were locked in arbitration-related meetings for most of yesterday and hoped to resolve the dispute peacefully today.

Drivers caused slight traffic disruptions when 18 buses blocked Lower Main Reef Road. A second blockade was set up in Noordgesig, Soweto, and a third at the Diepkloof onramp to the Soweto highway.

Putco managing director Michael Oldham said the blockades were the result of a power struggle "in which workers showed their support of unions involved in arbitration concerning staff restructuring" at the company.

Rossouw said the possible retrenchment of 62 workers may have triggered the action, but internal investigations were under way.

Black pilots waiting for opportunities

Sowetan 20/11/97

By Saint Molakeng

THE 10 Gauteng blacks who qualified as private pilots in June this year have so far waited in vain for opportunities that will enable them to work as commercial pilots.

Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale initiated the project which saw the aspirants trained by the National Airways Corporation. The project was under the auspices of the Sky is the Limit Trust, chaired by Mr Tefo Raditapole.

The young men and their families were ecstatic at having qualified in aviation, a career which apartheid had rendered inaccessible to blacks.

But the youngsters, from Soweto, Randfontein, and other areas, can work for remuneration only when they complete further studies.

Raditapole said yesterday that attempts had been made to have the pilots placed with local and foreign airlines, as well as with the South African Air Force for further training.

Told that the youths were anxious to get further training, Raditapole pointed out: "Strictly speaking, we do not have an obligation to train them.

"But I will discuss it with Sexwale."

Preferring anonymity, a source within the premier's office said: "The premier has already approached a number of companies about this but we cannot pin them down to timeframes. But by February next year, something will be accomplished."

One of the pilots, Mr Nephtal Thobela (22), said wistfully: "I can't wait to be a working pilot."

Trains returning to normal as strike ends

Star 5/2/98 (333)

STAFF REPORTER

Train services throughout Johannesburg were expected to resume by noon today after a wildcat strike during peak hours left thousands of commuters stranded last night.

Metrorail spokesman Annemarie Strydom said express trains were operating as normal on the Soweto, Pretoria/Germiston and Vereeniging to Germiston route over Meyerton, while a shuttle service is operating on the smaller routes and stopping at all stations.

She said all services were expected to be operating as normal by noon.

"Many of our drivers worked overtime last night to ensure that there were some trains running, and supervisory personnel occupied the important signal control points which were left unmanned by the strikers," she said.

"Because of the disruption many trains were backed up in shunting yards," said Strydom. She was unsure why some people stayed overnight at Johannesburg station because every effort was made to ensure there were trains operating.

Talks between the union and management were called off at 10pm last night and an agreement was only reached when discussions resumed this morning.

Hundreds of commuters had to squeeze themselves into packed trains while others were left stranded during yesterday's afternoon rush hour after train control officers went on strike following a dispute over wages with management. PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

Thousands stranded by strike

Sowetan 5/2/98

By Muzi Mkhwanazi and Sapa

THOUSANDS of train commuters were stranded as train control officers went on a wildcat strike during the afternoon rush hour yesterday.

The officers went on strike soon after wage negotiations between their unions and Metrorail reached a deadlock at 4pm yesterday.

Thousands of people were seen standing in long queues at various Johannesburg taxi ranks. The situation was apparently exacerbated by the fact that thousands of pupils, who had come from the townships to take part in a march, had swarmed the city railway stations.

A regular commuter, Ms Jabulile Mabaso, said she was angry at Metrorail upon learning she would have to find another means to get home.

"I used my last money to buy a train ticket hoping I would be ferried home as usual, only to be informed that trains were not operating.

"How are we supposed to go home now? Why did they not provide us with alternative transport? We bought tickets and it is their responsibility to keep their side of the bargain," she said.

Another disgruntled commuter, Mr John Dlamini, said he was patient and understood the daily problems of trains running behind schedule. But he never expected to be told that trains would not operate at all.

"The train service in the country has gone from bad to worse. In the past commuters would have been informed about such an incident."

Metrorail spokesperson Mrs Bintu Petsana confirmed that trains from the whole of Johannesburg to surrounding areas were not operating. She attributed the problem to the strike by train control officers. "We were not aware that the workers were going to embark on a strike. They never indicated during the wage negotiations that they

Hundreds of commuters had to squeeze themselves into packed trains while others were left stranded during yesterday's afternoon rush hour after train control officers went on strike following a dispute over wages with management. PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

Thousands stranded by strike

By Muzi Mkhwanazi and Sapa

THOUSANDS of train commuters were stranded as train control officers went on a wildcat strike during the afternoon rush hour yesterday.

The officers went on strike soon after wage negotiations between their unions and Metrorail reached a deadlock at 4pm yesterday.

Thousands of people were seen standing in long queues at various Johannesburg taxi ranks. The situation was apparently exacerbated by the fact that thousands of pupils, who had come from the townships to take part in a march, had swarmed the city railway stations.

A regular commuter, Ms Jabulile Mabaso, said she was angry at Metrorail upon learning she would have to find another means to get home.

"I used my last money to buy a train ticket hoping I would be ferried home as usual, only to be informed that trains were not operating.

"How are we supposed to go home now? Why did they not provide us with alternative transport? We bought tickets and it is their responsibility to keep their side of the bargain," she said.

Another disgruntled commuter, Mr John Dlamini, said he was patient and understood the daily problems of trains running behind schedule. But he never expected to be told that trains would not operate at all.

"The train service in the country has gone from bad to worse. In the past commuters would have been informed about such an incident."

Metrorail spokesperson Mrs Bintu Petsana confirmed that trains from the whole of Johannesburg to surrounding areas were not operating. She attributed the problem to the strike by train control officers. "We were not aware that the workers were going to embark on a strike. They never indicated during the wage negotiations that they

LABOUR CT (BR) 16/2/98 (333)

Metrorail strikers go back to work

Striking Metrorail train control officers agreed to go back to work yesterday pending a resolution of the industrial dispute by the Transnet Industrial Council, said the South African Railworkers' Union (Sarwu). The workers had gone on an illegal strike on Wednesday while the union was still negotiating with management over leave allocation.

Barnabas Wondo, Sarwu's Southern Transvaal regional vice-chairman, said he expected the passenger train service to be 80 percent operational by yesterday evening. Wondo said the workers, who were currently working the whole calendar month without rest unless they applied for leave, were demanding at least one weekend off a month. — *Frank Nxumalo, Johannesburg*

Security, road freight, motor ferry unions threaten wage strike

(333) BD 9/2/98

Pearl Sebolao

TRADE unions in the security, road freight and motor ferry industries announced at the weekend they would embark on a nationwide strike if the stalemate in wage negotiations with employers was not resolved. Balloting of members had begun.

Transport and General Workers' Union president John Dube said the decision to strike and embark on go-slows followed a deadlock in wage negotiations between unions and the Security Service Employers' Association and Road Freight Employers' Association.

Dube warned that the strike would have major implications for financial institutions and other related sectors as the unions' members included the cash-in-transit sector.

Thulani Dlamini, a union representative in the road freight industry, said the dispute over wages and conditions of employment was unnecessary.

"This industry was a top earner last year, with an improvement in profit of a whopping 47%. So they cannot argue that they would not be able to afford reasonable increases," Dlamini said. Workers are demanding a 12% across-the-board wage increase, establishment of an industry provident fund with an equal contribution of 6%, and a 13th cheque equivalent to 75% of salary.

Nico Badenhorst, road freight employers' labour relations director, said the package demanded by the unions reflected in some instances demands for increases of about 50% and 80%.

The employers' wage offer of a 10% increase was above inflation in many respects, Badenhorst said

Badenhorst believed the dispute could be resolved through negotiations. "We believe the unions' demand for a union-controlled provident fund is hampering the negotiation of a settlement on other issues," he said.

The demand, which was contrary to provisions of the national bargaining council constitution, had been referred to arbitration.

Security industry chief negotiator Don Masterson said: "A meeting has been arranged with some of the trade unions for Monday night, so that we can have further talks" and perhaps avert a strike.

Hauliers and security guards threaten to strike

(333)

Impasse in negotiations over wages and provident fund

Star 11/2/98

By Xolisa Vapi

Nationwide industrial action is looming in the road freight and security industries after trade unions and management reached an impasse on wage and provident fund negotiations.

More than 50 000 workers from seven trade unions under the auspices of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TNG), who believe that the Road Freight Employers' Association (RFEA) and security companies have failed to meet their core demands, began a strike ballot at the weekend for industrial action in two weeks' time.

TNG deputy national co-ordinator Abner Ramakgolo said this week that provisional ballot results had shown a thumbs-up for protected strike action from workers.

Ramakgolo said they would serve 48-hours notice on employers later this week.

The workers' demands include a union-controlled provident fund and the amendment of a clause encapsulated in the National Bargaining Council's (NBC) constitution, which prevents union members from establishing their own fund.

Stalemate could be solved by negotiation

"We are convinced that the employers cannot offer anything as long as the provident fund issue is not resolved. Workers have adopted a policy position that TNG should have its own fund which will benefit them and ensure that the union is surviving," Ramakgolo said.

But RFEA director of labour relations Nico Badenhorst believes the existing stalemate could be resolved through negotiations without going on strike.

"We believe the unions' demands regarding a union-controlled provident fund is hampering the process of negotiating a settlement on other issues.

"The provident fund demand is contrary to the provisions of the NBC constitution to which the seven trade unions are signatories," Badenhorst said.

20 000 truckers vote to strike over pensions

Sowetan 13/2/98 (333)

By Abdul Milazi

ABOUT 20 000 truck drivers will embark on a national strike next week in a move that threatens to bring business to its knees.

Transport and General Workers Union (T&G) president June Dube said they had no option but to ballot for a strike when employers refused to accede to workers' wage and conditions of service demands after five months of negotiations.

Dube said the major stumbling block was the issue of transferring the control of the road freight industry's provident fund to workers. "Workers want to have control over their money and employers are not willing to accept that."

He said attempts at mediation and arbitration by the the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) failed to resolve the dispute.

"We decided to ballot our members last week and the majority voted in favour of a strike."

The Road Freight Employers Association (RFEA) said: "We still believe that the existing dispute can be resolved through negotiation."

RFEA director of labour relations Nico Badenhorst said: "We believe that the unions' demand for a union-controlled provident fund is hampering the progress of negotiating a settlement on other issues."

The two parties have been negotiating since last September but have not made any progress on other demands since deadlocking on who should control the provident fund.

Dube said T&G and six other unions had not placed any other demands on the negotiating table.

Badenhorst said the provident fund demand was contrary to the provisions of the National Bargaining Council constitution to which the seven unions were signatories.

A national strike by truckers in 1994 almost brought the economy to a standstill until Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and Labour Minister Tito Mboweni intervened to resolve the causes.

Motor Transport Workers' Union supporters protested outside the Johannesburg central prison on Friday. Picture:TYRONE ARTHUR

Cash-in-transit guards plan strike

(333) B 16/2/98

Dustin Chick

THE Motor Transport Workers' Union, which represents cash-in-transit guards and employees, planned to start a country-wide strike as soon as this week, deputy general secretary Emily Fourie, said at the weekend.

Fourie said the union rejected poor working conditions and "arrogance" from management.

Fidelity Guards cash-in-transit CE Pieter Bezuidenhout said the union's action was taken without fully informing the company.

He said a meeting was arranged with the union, which was cancelled after it introduced new conditions.

Bezuidenhout said he was not prepared to fight with the union in the media.

Bezuidenhout claimed the union represented less than 30% of the firm's employees.

He said Fidelity Guards was part of the industry's bargaining council and complied with the Labour Relations Act.

Truckers strike – but W Cape is not affected

(333)

SHARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

ARG 16/3/98

Transport unions claimed up to 100% support in most parts of the country for the strike by road and freight industry workers today, but Western Cape operators said the local effect was "not noticeable".

The strike was called by eight unions, including the Transport and General Workers' Union whose national co-ordinator Thulani Dlamini warned the strike would be open-ended and workers would not return until agreement was reached.

"This is a legal strike after negotiations on wages and working conditions broke down," he said.

"I have been up since 4am with telephone calls coming from all over and I would say the strike is at least 80% to 100% effective in Gauteng and most other areas."

He emphasised that employers could not afford not to meet workers' demands and avoid things getting "ugly".

The last time transport workers went on strike there were huge delivery delays and chaos on major roads when drivers blockaded highways with their trucks.

In the Western Cape, heavy haulage operators described the strike as "negligible in comparison to the normal daily rate of absenteeism", and one company reported a full turnout today.

Gary Ristow, regional director of Long Distance Transport, reported a 100% turnout today, with all outgoing regional trucks on the road. But he added: "It may be too early to say. The strike has probably not reached us yet."

To page 2

W Cape truckers keep going

ARG 16/3/98

(333)

From page 1

Meanwhile, road and freight industry workers were due to meet in Johannesburg today after their failure last week to reach agreement with employers. Emily Fourie, spokeswoman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union, said air freight, oil tankers and the delivery of furniture, clothes and fresh and frozen food might be affected.

Unions involved in the strike would approach the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. "The gap between workers' demand and the employers' offer is not very wide. I'm confident their differences will be resolved quickly," she said.

Nico Badenhorst, spokesman for the employers' association, said he believed this year's offer was "one of the highest in the country".

Transport strike 'may cost millions'

BD 17/3/98 (333) (152)

Pearl Sebolao and Dustin Chick

UP TO half of the 40 000 transport industry workers started a nationwide strike yesterday, sparking fears that major sectors of the economy could be hit if it was not resolved soon.

Sources said it was too early to assess the impact of the strike on other industries. About 90% of companies relied on road transport to distribute their products and a protracted strike was expected to costs millions of rands.

Talks on wages and subsistence allowances between the Road Freight Employers' Association and unions broke down last week, and seven unions said they would strike.

Professional Transport Workers' Union spokesman Emily Fourie said there was no great discrepancy between what the workers demanded and what the employers were offering. "On average it was a difference of about R10," she said.

Fourie said the unions were prepared to settle for a R40 increase on the subsistence allowance instead of the R50 they were demanding, provided that "the other issues are resolved".

The unions are also demanding the inclusion of "additional categories" of workers, such as office workers, into the transport bargaining council. The Labour Court ruled on Friday that they could strike over this matter.

The association's labour relations director Nico Badenhorst said the employers' final offer to the unions was "generous". Increases ranged from 11,5% to 18% for minimum wages, and an increase on actual wages of 10,5%.

Fourie said the Commission For Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) had contacted both parties to set up a meeting to try to resolve the dispute. This could take place today or tomorrow. Badenhorst said the association was not opposed to the CCMA's intervention.

In Johannesburg about 3 000 striking workers gathered at the Workers' Library in Newtown where union leaders addressed them. En route to the library two truck drivers were attacked in an attempt to force them to join the strike. Workers also attacked trucks parked near the Market Theatre with sticks and metal poles.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesman Thulani Dlamini appealed for calm, saying some workers were not notified of the strike on time.

Striking workers will today march to the offices of the National Bargaining Council for the road freight industry in Braamfontein. Dlamini said workers would also start gathering in other major cities.

Dlamini said numerous meetings with employers had failed to resolve the issue. The unions gave employers a week's notice that the strike would start yesterday, but nothing was done to avert it.

□ Reuter reports that the transport sector could face further disruptions on Thursday if a deadlock in wage talks in the bus sector is not resolved. More than 20 000 workers employed by 18 companies plan to strike.

The SA Bus Employers' Association said a strike might lead to further job losses in an industry already struggling for financial survival.

City bus strike looms

75 000 commuters may be stranded

(333) ARG 17/3/98

About 75 000 Cape Town bus commuters could be stranded on Thursday when four regional trade unions join a national strike by bus service staff.

Golden Arrow, Cape Town's main commuter bus company, is expected to come to a standstill.

Commuters have been given 48 hours notice of an "open-ended" strike by the Western Cape Omnibus Salaried Staff Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union.

Golden Arrow, which transports at least 75 000 round-trip commuters a day, is the only service in Cape Town likely to be affected.

Others employ drivers on contract.

But many people living in outlying areas where there is no train service, such as Atlantis, rely on Golden Arrow buses to get to and from work.

SHARKEY ISAACS

TRANSPORT REPORTER

Golden Arrow spokeswoman Jeanne Welsh said the unions had told the company they planned to stop work from 3am on Thursday, but talks were under way in a bid to avert the strike.

The company would hold an urgent meeting today to discuss contingency plans.

The strike is the first since the establishment of the bargaining council for the road passenger industry three years ago.

Discussions deadlocked last week and the unions gave member companies of the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) notice of their intention to strike.

Sabea president Barry Gie said the association was disappointed that unions had decided on strike action in spite of concerted efforts by employers to negotiate an acceptable settlement on wage increases.

A spokesman for the Western Cape Omnibus Salaried Staff Union said: "The strike will not be one-day event. It will continue until a solution is reached."

Workers say bosses are offering workers a 6,5% increase against their 10,5% demand.

Mr Gie said Sabea had offered a "package" settlement of about 7,5%, but workers were maintaining their demand for 10,5% and adjustments to employee benefits.

Sabea had given labour representatives audited information about the aggregate financial status of Sabea companies.

"It was made clear at the start of negotiations at the national bargaining forum in January that Sabea members had collectively suffered increasing losses over the past three years. The combined losses for the past financial year were in excess of R76-million, with more than 1 000 employees retrenched."

Mr Gie said Sabea had indicated it wished to continue negotiations, but labour representatives had recommended their members embark on industrial action.

Sabea had "tried everything" but labour had rejected the offers and arbitration.

"It is extremely disappointing that labour has totally ignored the realities facing the bus passenger transport industry and are, by their actions, undermining an already precarious situation and further endangering employment within the industry," said Mr Gie.

Truck dispute threatens city booze supplies

(333) ARG 17/2/98

THABO MABASO
BUSINESS REPORTER

Capetonians could soon be without beer or wine if the strike by truck drivers continues, a company affected by the industrial action warned today.

Robert Zijp, Norman's Transport Lines Bellville branch manager, said his trucks transported large quantities of beer and wine bottles for companies such as South African Breweries. "All our trucks are in the yard. The strike is affecting the industry very badly. Of my 65 drivers, only four are working," said Mr Zijp.

Truck drivers went on strike yesterday after the breakdown in wage talks between seven employee unions and the Road Freight Employers' Association on Friday.

The unions want an increase of R40 a week for workers who earn an average of R323 a week. Employers are offering R35.

They are also demanding a weekly R50 subsistence allowance and three meals for drivers when they are away from their home depots. Employers are offering a weekly allowance of R35.

Thulani Dlamini, Transport and General Workers' Union national organiser and chief spokesman for the seven unions, said 40 000 drivers throughout the country had heeded the call to strike.

In the Western Cape, 12 000 workers stopped work.

■ Sapa reports that thousands of strikers met outside the Workers' Library in central Johannesburg today ahead of a march to the road freight bargaining council to hand in a list of demands.

The strikers were disciplined today, but yesterday some drivers working in the city centre were pulled from their trucks.

Dock workers march to Portnet

OBED ZILWA

Strike: South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union members march today to Portnet headquarters to state their grievances

300 deliver petition

ED WEST (333)
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

About 300 South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union members marched to Portnet headquarters today with a letter of grievances, claiming abuse of safety and health laws in the harbour.

A shop steward, who did not wish to be named, said Portnet management was not following standard labour grievance procedures, and that health and safety measures had broken down in the harbour.

Portnet human resources spokesman Steve Matlow said Portnet did not wish to comment on the protest. He said harbour activities had not been affected as most strikers had returned to work by 9.30am.

But the shop steward said: "Management has changed the main agreement to suit themselves. Grievance procedures have been ignored.

"About 12 workers were fired because of absenteeism in December. We did not come to work on public holidays because they did not want to pay us double for overtime, as is required by the new labour law."

Four harbour workers had been injured in the past week alone, the shop steward said.

"Our accident record is horrendous, and safety regulations are being violated every day.

"There is a 12-month backlog of accidents in the container terminal still be be investigated.

"One worker burst his liver on Saturday after driving into the back of a trailer because it had no tail lights. The union has been complaining to Portnet management for the past two years about the poor visibility of the bathtub trailers.

"Portnet has also stopped providing safety boots and rain suits."

He also claimed there was "a ghost in the port" to blame for cranes dropping their loads "all the time".

Meanwhile Portnet is withdrawing a national bonus scheme at the end of the month – a move it is feared could cause more unrest.

This scheme amounts to about R500 a month, a substantial sum for a labourer in the Cape Town harbour earning between R1 500 and R1 600 a month.

ARG 17/3/98

ROCK, DON'T ROLL *An angry member of the Transport and General Workers' Union hurls a rock at a truck driver in the Johannesburg CBD who did not support the call of seven transport unions to a strike which started yesterday* PHOTO: JOHN WOODROOF

Transport strike may cost up to R160m

CT (BR) 17/3/98 (333)

FRANK NXUMALO
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — South Africa's transport industry may lose up to R160 million worth of business a week if the strike started by truckers yesterday continues, according to union estimates.

Unions and industry representatives differed widely on estimates of the disruption caused.

Sources close to the industry, who described the situation as "serious", conceded that at least 30 percent of the day's operations had been hit by the strike. Unions, however, said that for "obvious reasons" employers would not admit to an "80 percent to 90 percent disruption in terms of productivity".

The latter estimate amounts to about R160 million, based on 80 percent of the R200 million weekly average of the industry's annual turnover of R11 billion. The 30 percent estimate would yield a weekly loss of R60 million.

The seven striking unions include the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Professional Transport Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the Turning Wheels' Workers' Union, the South African Transport Workers' Union and the Motor Transport Association.

Thulani Dlamini, the spokesman for the unions, predicted a 100 percent disruption this morning as the strike, which has been marred by some violence, gathers momentum.

A parallel Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration mediation meeting — the first since the parties deadlocked on Friday — is also scheduled for today.

In Johannesburg, about 20 000 workers are expected to march to the industry's national bargaining council in Braamfontein to hand in a memorandum of their demands.

The unions threatened to picket companies that employed scab labour and would not rule out the possibility of blockading freeways and byways if their demands were not met.

Bus men may join striking truckers

(333) Star 17/3/98

New march in city today: 'no blockades', but industry could lose R160-m a week

By Melanie-Ann Feris and Xolisa Vapi

Bus drivers are expected to join truckers this week in the national strike which, it is feared, could cost the transport industry R160-million a week until resolved.

The striking truckers assembled in the Johannesburg city centre today for a march to employer offices, raising fears of renewed violence between striking truckers and scab drivers. Striking drivers yesterday attacked at least two trucks in the city centre.

Transport and General Workers' Union national organiser Thulani Dlamini vowed that today's march in the city centre would be peaceful, but warned that employers using scab labour would be targeted for picketing.

The striking truckers are expected to be joined by bus drivers in two days' time.

The truckers were expected to assemble at the Library Gardens in the city before marching to the National Bargaining Council offices in Braamfontein to hand over a memorandum to the Road Freight Employers' Union. Police will monitor the march closely.

The organisers of the strike today dismissed reports that truckers were planning blockades of major roads. Striking truckers had handed their vehicles to their employers, and it would therefore be impossible.

Yesterday, only a small percentage of the more than 26 000 truckers and their assistants registered in Johannesburg attended the rally. The strike got off to a slow start in other parts of the country too.

Sapa reports that strikers met in Vereeniging, Pretoria and Cape Town, while there were unconfirmed mass gatherings in the Eastern Cape and northern KwaZulu Natal.

The industrial action is poised to peak on Thursday when more than 20 000 bus company employees embark on a strike in major centres around the country. The bus drivers are demanding a 10,5% increase and the employers are offering them 7,5%.

▶ More reports
Page 6 and Business Report

Truckers march in Durban over wages

Sowetan 19/3/98

MORE than 1 000 striking truck drivers and their assistants marched to the Bargaining Council's Durban offices in St Georges Street yesterday to hand over a memorandum. (333)

The march was part of a national strike which started on Monday after a deadlock in wage talks between seven transport workers' unions and the Road Freight Employers' Association in the Bargaining Council last Friday.

Meetings were also held in Johannesburg this week to try to resolve the strike that is spreading throughout the country. Yesterday the striking truckers gathered at Curries Fountain Stadium from where they marched to the offices.

Handing a memorandum to a council official, Transport and General Workers' Union provincial spokesman Themba Xulu said they wanted employers to attend to their demands as a matter of urgency. – *Sapa*.

Truckers take to Jo'burg streets

Sowetan 17/3/98 (333)

By Sello Seripe

TRAFFIC came to a standstill in central Johannesburg when hundreds of truck drivers from various freight companies took to the streets on the first day of a national strike over pay demands yesterday.

There was slow traffic movement in the streets around Library Gardens where the workers had gathered and some of the strikers toyi-toyied in the streets.

Light delivery trucks were stopped by some of the strikers and their crews forced to join the strike.

Sowetan witnessed a crew from Vaughan Johnson's Wine and Spirits being dragged from their light delivery truck and forced to take part.

Strike meetings were also held in Vereeniging, Pretoria and Cape Town. There were reports of meetings in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The striking workers are members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), Transport and Allied Workers' Union, Professional Transport Workers' Union, Turning Wheel Workers' Union of South Africa, Transport and Workers' Union and the Motor Transport Workers' Union.

The strike follows deadlock reached in November wage negotiations between the unions and the Road Freight Employers' Association (RFEA).

The workers are demanding varied increases for different categories of workers. TGWU national organiser for road freight and maritime sector Mr Thulani Dlamini said the unions were demanding:

- R40 a week across the board increase for grade 1 employees (general workers), against R35 offered by employers;
- R60 across the board increase for grade 4 and 5 employees (long distance drivers). The union said employers were offering R50 to grade 4 employees and R55 to grade 5 employees. The workers view this as an attempt to divide workers;
- Workers are also demanding a subsistence allowance of R50, while employers are offering R35,60.

Dlamini said no agreement was reached at a meeting between the unions and the RFEA held last Friday.

RFEA director for labour relations Mr Nico Badenhorst said yesterday that he was unsure when the next meeting between the parties would be held.

Badenhorst said employers were offering R54 a week for grade 4 and 5 employees, and not R50 and R55 for the two grades as reported by the unions.

He said 30 percent of the industry was affected by the action even though other companies had made contingency plans.

mands were rife.

No civil action against Mufamadi yet

SAFETY and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi had by yesterday not received notice that he was to be sued after two police officers allegedly stole R2,1m from a German businessman.

A police spokesman said the two officers, Louis de Jager and Jan Myburgh, had since been suspended from the police pending the outcome of a theft trial.

They allegedly went on a spending spree with cash belonging to Jurgen Harksen, who is wanted in his home country on tax evasion and fraud charges involving more than R980m.

International news agencies earlier reported that the trustees of Harksen's estate on Monday announced their intention to sue Mufamadi.

Council responds to ultimatum

THE Butterworth town council responded to an ultimatum from Eastern Cape local government MEC Smuts Ngonyama to step aside and allow its affairs to be taken over by the province, Ngonyama's spokesman Litha Twaku said yesterday.

Twaku said Ngonyama was considering the council's response, which reportedly asked for clarity on the functions to be assumed by government administrators, and would decide soon on the next step.

The ultimatum — the first of its kind in SA — is based on section 139 of the constitution stipulating a province can intervene if a municipality fails to or is unable to fulfil its executive obligations.

Cape DP councillor Belinda Walker

BUSINESS Day incorrectly referred to Cape Town Democratic Party councillor as Melanie Walker in yesterday's newspaper. She is in fact Belinda Walker. We apologise for the error.

REPORTS: Business Day Reporters, Sapa.

New law 'will enhance financial management'

BD 18/3/98

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — The introduction of a single law this year to replace the 10 exchequer acts at national and provincial level would enhance the system of financial management in the country, state expenditure director-general Cassiem Gassiep said yesterday.

Gassiep was speaking after his appearance at Parliament's portfolio committee on finance to discuss the 1998/99 budget.

The bill being drafted, called the Treasury Control Bill, would allow the national treasury to have greater influence over provincial treasuries in regard to their performance. There would also be a greater sharing of information, Gassiep said.

The proposed legislation would implement section 216 of the Constitution, which authorises the national treasury to lay down standards, rules and regulations on accounting and financial reporting for provincial treasuries. In terms of the interim constitution, each province was independent and the power of the national treasury to perform an oversight function was constrained, Gassiep said.

Drastic changes were envisaged, including the introduction of Draconian penalties if budgets were exceeded, he told the finance committee.

Care had to be taken, however, not to discourage people from spending what was necessary. "There is quite a debate going on as to the level of punishment which would be suitable," Gassiep said.

There would probably be a range of penalties, from minor to the more serious, depending on the level of overexpenditure and its character, he said.

Nols du Plessis, chief director of planning in state expenditure, who is involved in drafting the legislation, said the basic principle was that an appropriation was an act of Parliament and overexpenditure a breach of the law. However, enforcement was a key issue.

"You can add all those penalties, but if you don't enforce them, they are not worth the paper they are written on. Under the current Exchequer Act overexpenditures can be recovered from those responsible. But in fact it is very difficult to do this when the amounts involve total millions of rands," he said.

Among the questions being examined by the drafters were what to do if overexpenditure was to the benefit of government, and who would be the judge of what was to government's advantage.

Numsa highlights toll of public service retrenchments

BD 18/3/98

Reneé Grawitzky

The first round of retrenchments in the public service would affect 20 000 people in the Eastern Cape, 15 000 in the Northern Province and a further 20 000 in the other provinces, Peter Dantjie, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) said yesterday.

At the start of Numsa's national bargaining conference in Johannesburg, Dantjie said the retrenchments were "a possible area" of disagreement with the African National Congress. He also said that 114 345 jobs were lost in the engineering sector since 1990.

Delegates from the union's Wits central west region have called for a moratorium on job cuts in the public service between now and the presidential job summit meeting later this year.

Eastern Cape delegates have proposed a campaign against retrenchments and are demanding government review its trade policy and tariff reductions.

Numsa general secretary Mbuyiselo Ngwenda said discussions had been held with Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin to highlight the effect on local industries of the continued reduction in tariffs. Numsa did not get a sense of the trade ministry's willingness to review the tariff-reduction programme, he said.

Delegates are to use the conference to frame an approach to the presidential job summit and to approve labour's employment strategy.

In submissions to the conference, all Numsa's regions believed that job creation could not be achieved within the framework of the growth, employment and redistribution strategy.

Ngwenda said some controversial issues to be debated included training and wages. Delegates would have to decide whether negotiations would focus on principles underpinning training or whether to continue demanding 200 paid hours for training a year.

Unions meet employers

Pearl Sebolao

EMPLOYERS and trade unions participating in a national transport strike were due to meet for talks under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) today, in the hope of ending the dispute.

Professional Transport Workers' Union spokesman Emily Fourie said that two senior CCMA commissioners from Durban and Cape Town had already been approached to mediate.

The strike is expected to intensify, with about 20 000 bus drivers joining the truckers.

The bus drivers are demanding a 10,5% increase while employers are offering 7,5%.

BD 18/3/98

Cry truckers hurt in attack by strikers

Marches and violence around country as mood turns ugly

ARGT 18/3/98 (333)

THE STAR

Thin blue line: police monitor striking truckers outside Neslpruit in Mpumalanga

SHARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

Violence in the freight and transport industry continued in Cape Town today when striking drivers attacked four "strike-breakers" with iron-rods and pieces of wood after dragging them from the cabs of two delivery vehicles in Salt River's main road.

Police said the strikers dragged Mogamat Toyer Barker, Stanley Volkwyn, Deon Manches and an unidentified man from the trucks' cabs after surrounding and stoning the vehicles. Both trucks were severely damaged.

The injured men were taken to Groote Schuur Hospital. The attack happened about 9.30am outside a building housing trade unions at the intersection of Victoria Road and Durham Avenue.

Yesterday a freight company deliveryman was injured and his lorry damaged when a crowd of striking truck drivers surrounded his vehicle in central Cape Town and attacked him.

Rudy Duncan of Hellman International Forwarders was hit on the head by a brick in front of a fabric shop in Sir Lowry Road where he had stopped to deliver goods.

Mr Duncan and two colleagues fled into the shop and assistants closed the doors.

The crowd, shouting to their victims that they should have joined the strike, banged and pulled on the shop door but could not get in. They left before police arrived.

Mr Duncan was taken to hospital, where his condition was described as stable.

Police hunting the attackers questioned people in the area soon after the incident to establish whether the group had been waiting for potential strike-breakers. No one seemed to have noticed the attackers until they pounced.

Truck drivers went on strike this week after a breakdown in wage talks between seven unions and the Road Freight Employers' Association

The strike is expected to cripple the road freight industry for the week if talks between the driver unions and Road Freight Employers' Union are unsuccessful.

The attack on Mr Duncan yesterday was among a series reported nationwide as the strike by transport workers turned militant, resulting in a blockade near Nelspruit, marches and attacks on non-striking workers.

From Johannesburg, the Cape Argus Correspondent reports that thousands of strikers staged marches in big towns to press home their demands for wage increases.

Union leaders estimate that about 40 000 truckers are on strike around the country.

The strike is expected to spread further today when supervisors, clerks and data-capturers at transport companies join the action.

In the most serious strike-related disruption so far, about 400 drivers blockaded the N4 highway near Nelspruit yesterday, forcing motorists to take alternative routes.

The industrial action is expected to reach its peak tomorrow when more than 20 000 bus company employees join the truck drivers.

A conciliation session headed by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration was to start later today.

OBED ZILWA

Hard knock: policeman Marius Kruger examines one of two trucks attacked in Salt River

Golden Arrow lockout plan

SHARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

Golden Arrow, Cape Town's main commuter bus service, will lock out staff if last-ditch efforts fail to avert a strike starting at 3am tomorrow.

General manager Hannes Grebe said this was "in the interests of the safety of the company's own staff".

"This means only people who are not part of the bargaining unit will be allowed on company property for the duration of the strike."

The company had a responsibility to protect staff, property and vehicles.

He also announced several contingency plans for about 75 000 bus commuters tomorrow if the strike goes ahead.

These include an arrangement with Metrorail to honour bus clipcards on trains for the duration of the strike. A similar deal has been made with taxi associations in Atlantis, where there is no train service.

A spokesman for the Western Cape Omnibus and Salary Staff Union said: "We deplore the staff lockout step announced by Golden Arrow. The strike will not be a one-day event. It will continue until a solution is reached."

Bus strike may halt services

CT 18/3/98 (333) (270)

ERIC NTABAZALILA

CITY bus commuters should brace themselves for a strike by Golden Arrow employees. The action is likely to continue for days if a solution is not found soon.

Labour representatives in the company yesterday gave notice of the workers' intention to embark on a strike with effect from 3am tomorrow.

Ms Jeanne Welsh, Golden Arrow public relations officer, said the company regretted that labour representatives had decided to take such action despite efforts by company representatives at national level to find a mutually acceptable solution to the workers' demands.

Welsh said the company wished to apologise to commuters who would be inconvenienced by the strike.

Golden Arrow had put contingency arrangements in place to counter the inconvenience. These included arrangements with Metrorail to honour bus clipcards on trains for the duration of the action. Other arrangements had been made with taxi organisations to carry passengers from outlying areas such as Atlantis, where buses are the only public transport.

Welsh said the company advised commuters to board taxis from those areas where taxi owners had agreed to honour clipcards.

She said despite these arrangements employer representatives would continue their efforts to avert the strike and talks between the parties would continue today.

However, should the talks fail, the company would not run any bus service because of the large numbers of employees involved in the strike.

"In the interest of staff safety, Golden Arrow has decided to impose a lockout for the duration of the strike," she added.

"It is regrettable that some loyal staff members who would have liked to continue working will not be able to do so, but the company has a responsibility to protect its people, property and vehicles," she said.

● In Johannesburg yesterday, police fired birdshot to disperse striking transport workers who stoned a non-striking truck driver, Sapa reports.

The driver was slightly injured when all his truck windows were smashed.

Star 18/3/98

Talks put brakes on truckers' strike

(333)

By Mbangwa Xaba and Chriswell Ngwelo

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration said yesterday that striking transport workers and the transport companies had accepted an offer by the CCMA to conciliate in the nationwide dispute over pay.

The process is due to start this afternoon.

The strike by transport workers spiralled earlier yesterday, resulting in a blockade near Nelspruit and attacks on non-striking workers in other parts of the country.

Thousands of strikers staged marches in several towns to press home their demands for wage increases. Union leaders estimate that about 40 000 workers are on strike around the country.

In the most serious strike-related disruption so far, about 400 truck drivers blockaded the N4 highway near Nelspruit, forcing motorists to take alternative routes. The blockade ended at about 6pm when the truckers dispersed and several trucks were towed away by the police.

In central Johannesburg, police fired birdshot to disperse striking transport workers who attacked a non-striking truck driver with bricks, stones and other objects.

The driver, who was slightly injured when his truck's windows were smashed at the corner of Jeppe and West streets, was rescued by police. They moved the man into an armoured vehicle as angry workers threw missiles at police.

The truckers are demanding a R40 increase in the grade 1 category, while employers are offering R35; R60 for grades 4 and 5, while employers are offering R55; and a subsistence increase of R50 a night for long-distance drivers while employers are offering R36,50.

The industrial action is expected to reach its peak tomorrow, when more than 20 000 employees of private bus company join the truck drivers. Metropolitan bus services in Johannesburg will not be affected.

Nico Badenhorst, the Road Freight Employers Association's industrial relations director, said strikes were expected all over SA and could bring the country to a halt and damage the economy.

Metro bus drivers not involved in strike

The Johannesburg Metropolitan Bus Service will not be affected by the threatened bus drivers' strike.

Spokesman Jenny Solomons said some drivers would attend a memorial service for a former trade union organiser tomorrow but metro drivers would not join the strike as they belong to a different union.

Private bus companies will be severely affected, but union officials today expressed optimism that the strike could be averted. About 3,2 million passengers use private bus services every day.

Bus drivers are demanding a 10,5% increase, employers are offering 7,5%. Other demands include changes in night shift allowances, tool allowances and provident fund contributions by the employers.

Thys Heyns, vice-chairman of the South African Bus Employers Association, said employers hoped they could reach a settlement.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mbengeni Mphatha said: "We are very keen to have settlement on this matter and are hopeful an agreement can be reached today." – Staff Reporter

► Reports and picture ... Page 3

The long haul ... truck driver Simon Khumalo's job takes him away from his family for lengthy periods, and the threat of hijacking is a constant concern.

Low pay, days away from home, that's the life of a trucker

(333)

By Melanie-Ann Feris

Simon Khumalo hates his job. A long-distance truck driver for a Johannesburg company, he spends hours on the road, sees his family once a month if he is lucky and knows the possibility of being hijacked is a constant threat.

Ironically, being a driver is something he has always wanted to do.

Khumalo was forced to stop studying in Grade 7 because his parents could no longer afford to send him to school. After two years of unemployment, he secured a job as a winch driver for a mining company in KwaZulu Natal.

A salary of R80 a month and constant fear while working underground eventually forced him to leave.

"When I left that job I decided to get my driver's licence. I took all my money and went to a driving school. It was difficult and it took four or five times before I got my licence," he said.

Khumalo was confident he would soon find a job. But his hopes were dashed as company after company turned him away because of his lack of experience.

He eventually found work as a taxi driver in Soweto and his salary increased to R150 a week. After five years as a taxi driver, and later a bus driver, he secured a job as a long-distance driver.

His days are spent driving long distances, transporting goods ranging from cigarettes to chemicals. He says he takes a few hours' rest in his truck where and whenever he can.

For this he receives a salary of R450 a week – hardly enough to feed, clothe and house his wife and five children.

"My family need me and they love me, but I only see them once a month ... maybe even once every two months. I don't want any of my sons to be drivers, it is a no-good job."

Khumalo is one of thousands of drivers around the country who are striking to force their bosses to pay higher annual increases this year.

Truckers become violent

Sowetan 18/3/98

(333)

By Sello Seripe

THE strike by truck drivers is gradually turning ugly, with incidents of assault and the intimidation of non-striking drivers occurring.

This is despite assurances and calls for discipline by the Gauteng leadership of the seven unions whose members are involved in the strike.

The workers, mostly long-distance drivers, are demanding better wages. Commuters could find themselves stranded after bus drivers affiliated to the unions threatened to join the strike.

After yesterday's presentation of a memorandum by the unions' leadership to the Bargaining Council for the Road Freight Industry in Braamfontein, the city-bound marchers hauled the driver of an unmarked white light delivery van from his vehicle and assaulted him with sticks.

The incident occurred at the corner of De Korte and Bertha streets in Braamfontein when about 10 000 strikers made their way to the city. The man managed to escape.

Marshals were greatly outnumbered, resulting in unguarded marchers intimidating and even assaulting non-striking truck drivers.

Windows shattered

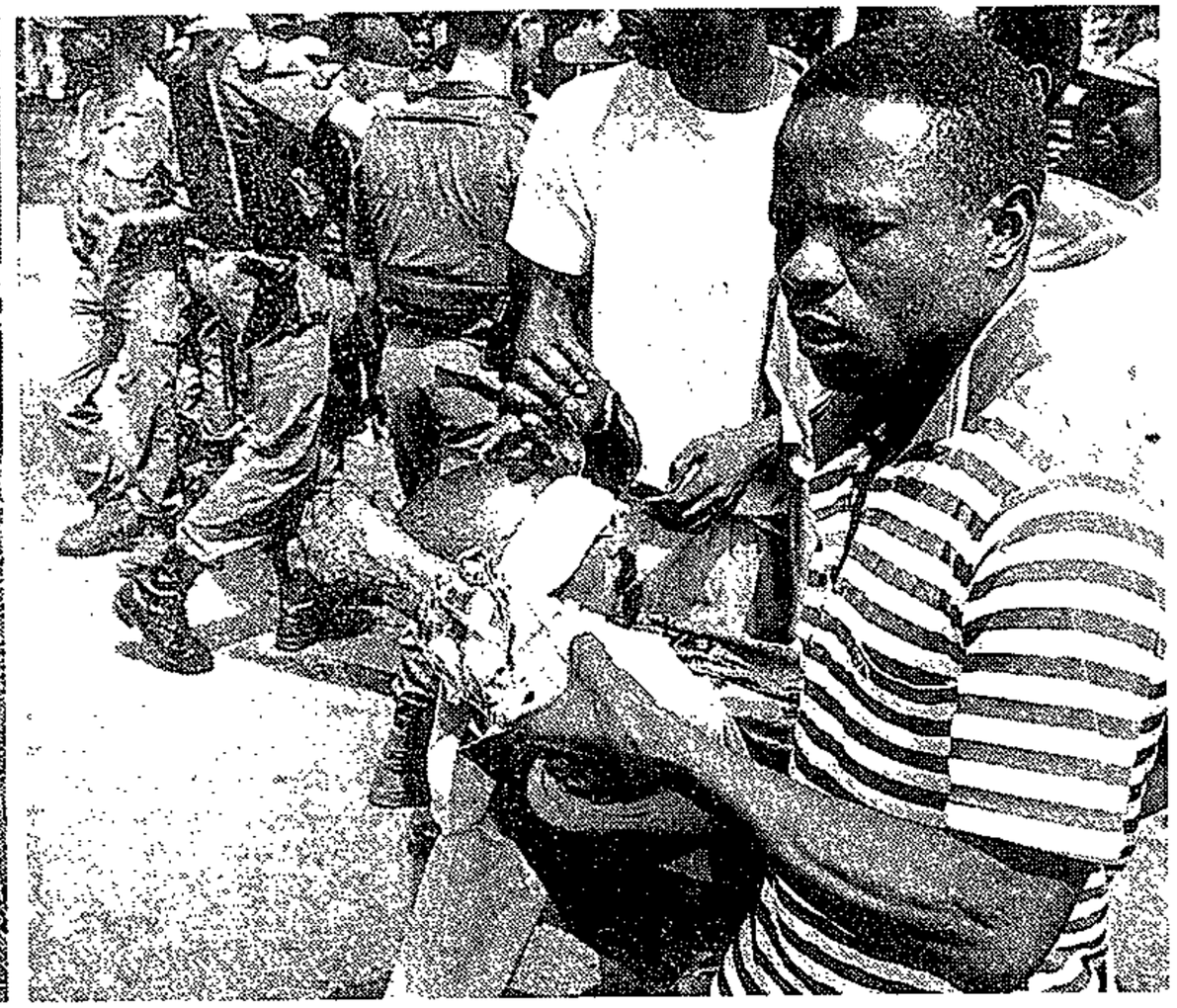
Johannesburg police spokesman Captain Lungelo Dlamini confirmed the incident, which had occurred in Braamfontein.

He said stones were thrown at a truck at the corner West and Jeppe streets. Captain Dlamini said the windscreen and the side windows were shattered and the driver's eyes were injured.

"At the corner of Jeppe and Sauer streets a truck driver was pulled out of his vehicle but police intervened and escorted him out of town," captain Dlamini said.

Several light delivery van drivers were either intimidated or forced to join the protesters when the strike began on Monday.

Addressing the strikers at the Bargaining Council's offices yesterday, Transport and General Allied Workers' national organiser Mr Thulani Dlamini said truckers in Gauteng were exposed to more dangers, hence their demand for increased salaries.



Fustrated transport workers, left, who are on a national strike, confront a policeman in Johannesburg yesterday after the police fired rubber bullets to disperse them. Workers, right, help an injured colleague shot by the police. Pictures: TYRONE ARTHUR

Five policemen hurt in transport strike violence

SEVEN people, including five policemen, were injured and one person was arrested when violence erupted at a gathering of striking transport workers near the Workers' Library in Johannesburg yesterday.

Police spokesman Captain Andy Pieke said the incident happened when the strikers, awaiting the result of negotiations in their wage dispute with employers, attacked passing trucks.

"Police warned the strikers to stop, but they ignored this warning and started stoning the police, slightly injuring five of our members," Pieke said.

"Police fired rounds of rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. Two strikers were injured," he said.

Union negotiators and the Road Freight Employers' Association were still in a meeting organised by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration late yesterday in a bid to diffuse the strike, which started on Monday.

The strikers are demanding an increase of R40 for grade one workers instead of the R35 offered by employers; R60 for grade four and five workers instead of the R54 offered by management; and a R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long distance drivers instead of R36,50.

Meanwhile, private bus company union members, who threatened to join the strike today if their wage demands were not met, suspended plans to strike following a last minute agreement, Golden Arrow MD Hannes Grebe announced late yesterday.

South African Bus Employers' Association president Colin Gie said details of the agreement were being kept confidential until ratification. Workers were set to strike today after wage negotiations reached deadlock. — Sapa.

BD 19/3/98 (333) (152)

THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1998

Truckers shot as violence dogs strike

(333)

ARG 19/3/98

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – Two striking truckers were shot and injured by police here as violence continued to mar the nationwide transport workers strike, which enters its fourth day today.

Seven people, including five policemen, were injured and one person was arrested yesterday when violence erupted at a gathering of the strikers near the Workers' Library in Johannesburg.

Police said rowdy strikers attacked passing trucks while awaiting the outcome of negotiations between union representatives and the employers association.

Police said two strikers were injured when police fired rounds of rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. The injured were rushed to hospital and a man was arrested for assault.

As reported in late editions of yesterday's Cape Argus, four non-striking workers were attacked with iron rods and pieces of wood after they were dragged by their colleagues from the cabs of two delivery vehicles in Salt River.

Police said the strikers dragged Mogamat Barker, Stanley Volkwyn, Deon Manches and an unidentified man from the trucks' cabs after surrounding and stoning the vehicles. Both trucks were badly damaged.

Stones were also hurled at trucks in Vanguard Drive, Epping. A worker was hurt in Sir Lowry Road on Tuesday.

Union negotiators and the employers' association were still in talks overseen by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration late yesterday in a bid to end the strike.

Cape Town truckers were waiting today to hear the outcome of the talks.

The strikers are demanding an increase of R40 for grade one workers instead of the R35 offered by employers; R60 for grade four and five workers instead of the R54 offered by management; and a R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long distance drivers instead of R36,50.

Buses hit the road after 11th-hour wages deal averts national strike

ARG 19/3/98 (333)

SHARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

Buses in Cape Town operated normally today after trade unions suspended plans to strike after last-minute wage negotiations.

Golden Arrow general manager Hannes Grebe announced last night that an agreement had been reached between employers and unions, but it had yet to be ratified by union members. "In anticipation of the ratification of this agreement, worker unions have suspended their strike action planned for today," he said.

Golden Arrow was delighted at the breakthrough and would continue to provide normal services, he added.

Members of the Western Cape Omnibus Salaried Staff Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union were set to join a national strike today.

Union sources said employers agreed to a two-phase 10,5% package, with the first phase coming into effect immediately and the remainder in six months. The first increase is understood to be about 8,5%.

Golden Arrow bus strike called off

(333)

A STRIKE by hundreds of Golden Arrow employees was called off yesterday after a last-minute agreement between representatives of the company and labour.

The workers' representatives called off the strike pending the ratification of the agreement by the workforce. Details of the agreement were being withheld by both parties last night pending the workers' approval

Jeanne Welsh, Golden Arrow public relations officer, said the company was "delighted" at the breakthrough and that it would continue to operate normally.

Labour representatives had given Golden Arrow a notice on Tuesday of the workers' intention to embark on a strike with effect from today.

CT 19/3/98

No settlement in truckers' dispute after late-night talks

(333) (~~[illegible]~~) Star 19/3/98

Revised offer still not enough to ask workers to end industrial action – union boss

Staff Reporter and Own Correspondents

Striking truck drivers and their employers have again failed to reach agreement despite negotiations which lasted into the early hours, Transport Workers' Union spokesman Emily Fourie said this morning.

"We negotiated but could not settle. The employers won't budge on their offer, but at least they have offered to give clerks and receptionists 6% as well. But this is not enough, we can't tell the workers to go back to work with little results after striking the whole week," Fourie said.

She said the workers would gather at Library Gardens today for the fourth day in a row after confrontations yesterday in which two striking truckers were shot by police in central Johannesburg.

Seven people, including five policemen, were injured when violence erupted at a gathering of strikers near the Workers' Library in Johannesburg.

Police said strikers attacked trucks while awaiting the outcome of negotiations between union representatives and the employers' association.

"Police warned the strikers to stop, but they ignored this warning and started stoning the police, slightly injuring five of our members," Captain Andy Pieke said.

He said two strikers were injured when police fired rubber bullets to disperse the crowd.

In Cape Town, four non-striking workers were attacked after they were dragged by their colleagues from the cabs of two delivery vehicles in Salt River's main road.

In Durban, more than 1 000 workers and their assistants marched to the bargaining council's offices to hand over a memorandum.

The strikers are demanding an increase of R40 for grade-one workers instead of the R35 offered by employers; R60 for grade-four and five workers, instead of the R54 offered by management; and an R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long-distance drivers, instead of R36,50.

Late yesterday, union negotiators and the employers' association were still locked in a meeting overseen by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Meanwhile, the Transport and General Workers' Union announced that its members at private bus companies would no longer be joining in the strike today.

Speaking for many ... Emily Fourie is at the forefront of wage talks between employer organisations and striking truck drivers.

Truck driver's daughter a tough negotiator on transport union's behalf

(333) Star 19/3/98

By Melanie-Ann Fers

A petite, 51-year-old blonde grandmother – who would expect to find her with raised fists, leading thousands of angry, striking truck drivers through the streets of Johannesburg?

This is Emily Fourie, acting general-secretary for the Professional Transport Workers' Union (PTWU), who is at the forefront of wage negotiations between transport workers and employer organisations.

A tough negotiator, she describes how she is driven by the desire to see justice and fairness prevail. To the thousands of workers for whom she fights, she is simply known as "Ma Emily".

As the daughter of a truck driver who spent many days away from his home, Fourie is in a good position to empathise with the plight of the drivers.

> **"It is not easy to see your father cry"**

"I often saw my father fatigued. I remember him being involved in an accident ... some of the workers in the truck were injured. I saw him distressed and devastated. It is not easy for a child to see a father cry," she said.

Fourie's father was instrumental in the establishment of the African Transport Workers' Union, the first union to be registered under the former government.

The union's work was not easy and Fourie remembers a time when they were constantly subjected to police raids and threats, and when their members died in police custody.

"I remember when my father was desperately ill in hospital and the police even threatened him there," she says.

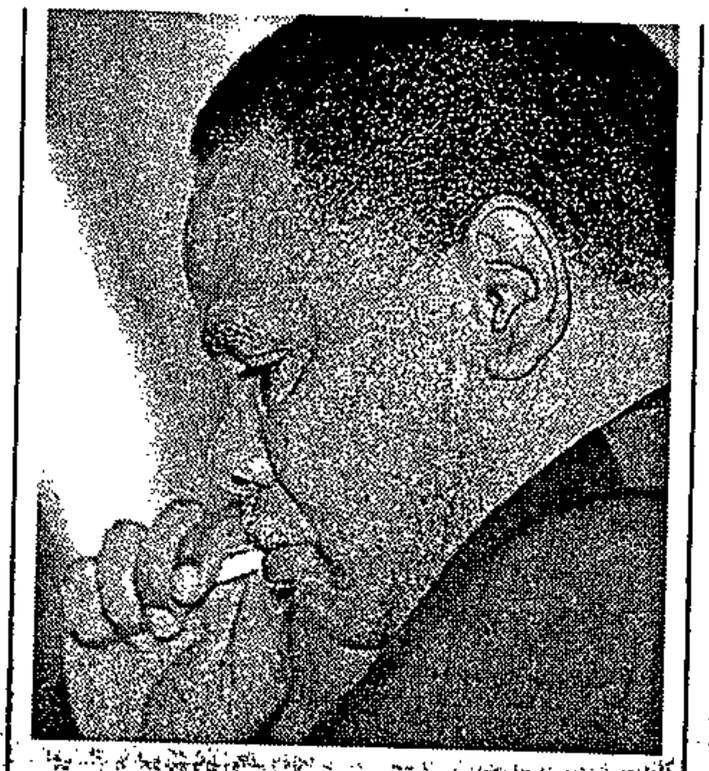
> **"I know about paying the price"**

When her father retired from the union as general secretary, Fourie automatically took up the reins.

Five years ago she suffered a personal tragedy when her eldest son committed suicide.

"It was a busy time, we were involved in strikes and engaged with lawyers until late at night. I had to deal with that, and maybe if I had not been so busy I would have handled my son's problems differently. I know about paying the price," she says.

Despite the tough times, she has remained a trade-union activist for 24 years. She works for the PTWU full-time, speaks on behalf on her members in the security industry, and chaired the Bargaining Council last year.



AfterHours with Business Day

TODAY's edition of Business Day sees the launch of AfterHours, a new lifestyle supplement that will accompany the newspaper every Friday.

Business Day editor Jim Jones said AfterHours was a natural extension of the newspaper's development.

"We are sensitive to the fact that Business Day readers are not simply involved in their professions. They are intelligent, thinking people who lead full and interesting lives and AfterHours will address their interests," Jones said.

"In the past people might have thought Business Day was solely a reliable and credible source of business and financial news. But it is far more than that and we have proved it by providing the finest political and serious news in the country. The next step was to extend our coverage into arts and leisure."

Jones said AfterHours was fortunate to be able to draw on SA's best writers and artists, whose contributions will appear alongside material culled from Business Day's sister newspaper, the Financial Times of London.

A cornerstone of the new publication is YourMoney, an expanded saving and investment guide. It will introduce Standard & Poor's Micropal, SA's first independent rating of unit trusts.

LINKS

SA companies invest R418m in SADC

(R-FIN)

John Dludlu

BD 20/3/98

SA COMPANIES invested R418m in other Southern African Development Community countries in fiscal 1997/98 since the relaxation of foreign exchange controls on investments to the SADC, a senior official from the trade and industry department said.

Mfundo Nkuhlu, the trade department's chief director for Africa trade relations, said yesterday 325 companies had contributed to the R418m.

Speaking at a conference on southern Africa organised by the SA Institute of International Affairs and United World Colleges, he said although the amount was insufficient, it showed the policy was producing results.

A total of R1,6bn left SA after the easing of restrictions. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel announced further relaxation of exchange controls last week for investments in the SADC.

Nkuhlu said it would help if SA capital was ploughed into productive sectors, reversing the present concentration in the retail sector. Retail investments could result in the displacement of smaller operators.

He reiterated government's intention to use the SADC free trade protocol as a framework for granting better market access to exports from other

Continued on Page 1

Transport workers reject employers' new pay offer

(333)

BD 20/3/98

Pearl Sebolao

TRANSPORT workers yesterday rejected a new pay offer by the Road Freight Employers' Association aimed at resolving the five-day national strike, amid calls by the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) to its affiliates to avoid handling materials due to be freighted.

Cosatu restated the workers' demands and called on employers to meet the union as a matter of urgency.

Cosatu also called on company owners to consider reducing out-of-town allowances they gave to managers to put them on a par with those of truck drivers.

A spokesman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union, Emily Fourie, said yesterday that the employers' new pay offer — which included an increase from 6% to 7% for office workers — was unacceptable.

The employers raised the subsistence allowance for long-distance drivers from R36,50 to R38. However, the unions were demanding R40 after coming down from R50.

Management stood by its initial offer for general workers and drivers.

An employers' appeal for the inclusion of additional categories in the road freight national bargaining council was postponed by the labour court to give both parties a chance to settle the matter out of court. The court ruled last Friday that workers could strike over the issue.

Association chairman Johan van der Walt said employers were committed to finding a solution and were exploring various options. The parties met again last night under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Diners Club Voyager member

N

Truckers say they will march

(133) (138) Sowetan 20/3/98

FREIGHT transport strikers yesterday rejected a new offer by employers and threatened to converge on the offices of the Road Freight Employers' Association (RFEA) in Johannesburg today in support of their wage demands.

The latest offer, which involved only certain categories of workers and subsistence allowances for long-distance drivers, came several hours after mediation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration ended in deadlock.

Workers have demanded a R40 increase for grade one workers instead of R35 offered by employers, and R60 for grades four and five instead of R54 offered by employers.

On the issue of the R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long-distance drivers, the employers, who earlier offered R36,50, said their final offer was R38. This was rejected.

Union spokesman Mr Thulani Dlamini told the strikers that the workers' demand for a 13 percent increase for additional categories of workers was rejected by employers, who offered 6,5 percent.

"We eventually came down to 10 percent and still the employers did not want to move from their position. We came down to eight percent, hoping the employers would also come up to the same level. However, the employers said their final offer was seven percent, and our lawyers warned us that if we lose an appeal we could lose even that."

The RFEA said the industry had already lost more than R40 million since the strike started on Monday. – *Sapa.*

Costly truckers' strike could have been avoided, says union

By ZOLILE NQAYI

LAST week's road freight industry's strike, reported to have cost the economy around R100 million, could have been avoided – as all parties had reached consensus on most of the issues before the strike started.

This is according to Emily Fourie, spokesperson of the Professional Transport Workers's Union (PTWU).

The PTWU is one of seven unions representing about 40 000 road freight industry workers who embarked on a five-day national strike which ended on Friday with a settlement of an average 13 percent increase in wages.

"It is a pity that the strike happened, because the only fundamental difference between the unions and the employers was the issue of the inclusion of support staff in our collective bargaining," Fourie told City Press.

The employers, the Road Freight Employers' Association (RFEA), questioned the unions' mandate to represent support staff and therefore felt they could not legitimately claim to represent those workers' interests.

Support staff refers to general office workers who include, receptionists, clerks, controllers, data capturers, and supervisors.

"The question of the additional categories was peculiar to the Transport and Allied Workers' Union (Tawu) as we have many members in those positions and they were completely out of the bargaining council," said Zack Mankge, Tawu's spokesman.

Although other unions had already settled most of their demands with the employers, they carried on with the strike to secure an agreement about the inclusion of support staff, he said.

The issue of the support staff, a major bone of contention between the parties, was taken to the Labour Court earlier this month and the court ruled in favour of the unions. But the employers appealed against the decision and the matter was set to be heard tomorrow.

The matter will not be heard tomorrow as the RFEA and unions agreed to resolve the matter among themselves last Friday.

"I lay the blame for the strike at the door of the employers for pursuing this matter. It was a great principle issue for us to ensure that these workers are represented in the Bargaining Council," Fourie said.

According to him, the issue of the inclusion of support staff in the Bargaining Council was also raised last year and employers ignored it hoping that the problem would go away.

A settlement on the contentious issue was reached on Friday after protracted negotiations and mediation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. In the end the RFEA and the seven unions agreed on an 8-percent wage increase for the support staff.

"All in all, workers are satisfied and we believe that the strike action was successful in realising a settlement favourable to them," said Fourie.

"We agreed on a 21,4-percent increase in the subsistence allowance which brings it to R38 a day. An additional month was added to bring maternity leave to four months and the working hours will from September be reduced from 46 to 45 a week."

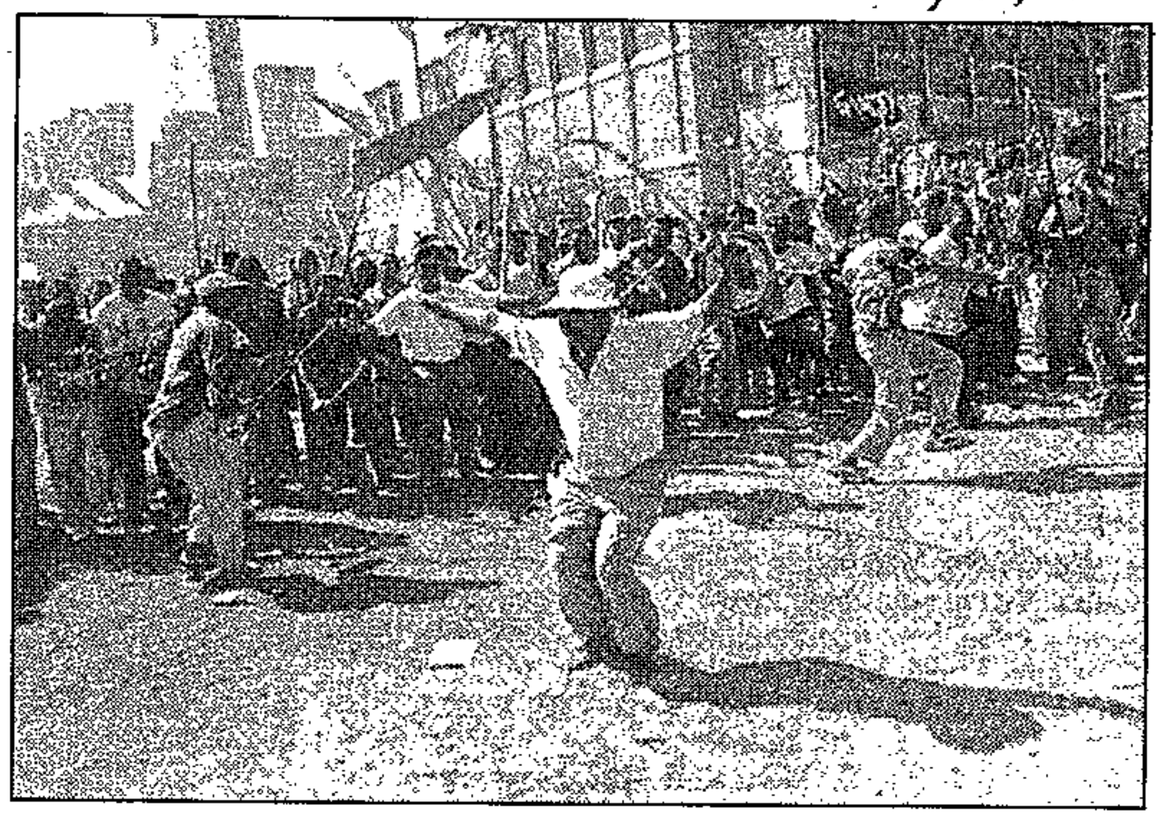
According to Fourie, the agreement also provides for eight days' study leave a year and two days of compassionate leave which can be used for paternity leave purposes.

The cost of the strike to the economy is estimated to be running at hundreds of millions and the workers forfeited a week's wages.

"Black workers understand they have to sacrifice in order to gain. Our white members still have to learn this. The economy has certainly suffered but both parties have walked away pleased," Fourie said.

During the week the strike action saw sporadic violent conflicts between workers, the police and non-striking drivers. "We really hope this is the last strike we will embark on," said Fourie.

Attempts to get the employers' comment on the strike and settlement drew a blank.



BIDING THEIR TIME . . . A group of truckers striking for an increase in wages in Johannesburg this week. Pic: MIKE MZILENI

(333) CP 22/3/98

Transport unions reach compromise

(333)

THE week-long strike by transport workers over wages ended last Friday after the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration brokered a compromise between employers and unions.

The parties agreed to an 11,8% increase for grade 5 workers, 13,7% for grade 4 and 14,3% for general drivers. Subsistence for long-distance drivers was increased 21,4%. Other workers such as supervisors and clerks would get 8%.

BD 23/3/98

Golden Arrow bus strike goes ahead

ARG 24/3/98

(333)

TRANSPORT REPORTER

Golden Arrow bus service workers are set to join a national strike from 3.30pm tomorrow after labour union members declined to ratify a new wage deal between unions and bus employers.

The company's general manager, Hannes Grebe, said today that Golden Arrow intended to lock out strikers from Thursday morning.

"This means that only people who are not part of the strike will be allowed on company property for the duration of the strike."

Last week the strike was averted in anticipation of the ratification of an agreement reached with unions.

It was reliably learnt from union sources that bus service chiefs had offered a two-phase, 10,5 % package settlement with the first phase effective immediately and the remainder in six months.

The first increase was understood to be around 8,5%.

Nationwide bus drivers' strike planned

(933)

Bus drivers are set to embark on a nationwide strike at 3.30pm tomorrow following workers' rejection of a wage-increase offer by employers.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesman Mbengeni Mphatha said yesterday the strike threat followed a breakdown of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago.

He said the 48-hour notice to strike was given yesterday after a mandate was received from workers to reject the employers' offer of an 8,5% increase for the first six months of the year and a further 2% for the rest of the year.

Workers are sticking by their demand for a 10,5% increase.

South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) president Barry Gie said that except for municipal bus services in Durban and Johannesburg, all major commuter bus services in the country would join the strike.

Greyhound and Megabus long-distance coach drivers would also go out on strike.

Gie said, however, that Sabea would do everything in its power to avoid industrial action, which he said would be unnecessary and disruptive. "We will enter discussions with an open mind with regard to a wage increase." – Sapa

Star 24/3/98

Western Jhb truckers to tow their own line

Star 24/3/98 (333)

Roodepoort opts for self-regulation of companies

By Bunty West

Tow truck companies in the Western council have become the first in Greater Johannesburg to standardise fees, pre-empting a move by national government to regulate the industry to protect accident victims from unscrupulous operators.

The self-regulation in Roodepoort has been coordinated by the Roodepoort Towing Association and follows an appeal by tow-operators nationally that the industry be regulated to stamp out piracy.

In terms of Roodepoort's new operating procedures, tow truck operators will be assigned areas to ensure they do not exceed the speed limit while trying to be the first to reach accidents.

Tow operators will also be forced to undergo training and basic first-aid, refrain from arguing at accident scenes, have their premises approved by the council, ensure their vehicles have standardised equipment and be registered with the tax office, while a disciplinary committee will investigate complaints.

Roodepoort Towing Association secretary Dirk Olivier said the organisation wanted tow operators to work with police and traffic officials. While operators in Greater Johannesburg's other municipalities have not yet regulated themselves, they will be forced to do so when a tow truck bill is promulgated in Parliament this year. The bill is expected to set stringent requirements.

"Tow trucks will carry a special registration plate, the towing company's name must be legible on the vehicle, authorisation will be needed from the local authority before a vehicle can be towed, and charges will be set for removing and storing vehicles. These regulations will be policed by the local authority," said Albert van Loggerenberg, deputy divisional manager of the Motor Industries Federation.

Last attempt to prevent bus drivers' strike

BD 25/3/98 (333)

Pearl Sebolao

THE SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) and trade unions are to meet for talks this morning in a last-ditch attempt to avert a strike by 20 000 bus drivers this afternoon, which is expected to disrupt public transportation countrywide.

Both parties said yesterday they were close to an agreement in the wage negotiations and did not rule out the possibility that a settlement could be reached today.

Sabea president Barry Gie said they were looking at other options and would do everything in their power to avoid industrial action.

If, however, the unions and employers failed to reach an agreement, all the major commuter bus services in the country except municipal bus services in Durban and Johannesburg would be affected, Gie said. Long-distance bus companies would also be affected by the strike.

He would not comment on how much the strike would cost the industry, except that it would be "very damaging".

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesman Mbengeni Mphatha said the unions decided not to call on all their members to go on strike immediately.

Only those on the shop floor would stop working this afternoon. The rest would go on strike tomorrow morning to avoid leaving commuters stranded, Mphatha said. "This is solely for the good of the commuters and not the employers."

The unions on Monday put in a notice of their intention to strike, following workers' rejection of a wage increase offer by employers. Employers offered an 8,5% increase for the first six months of the year and a further 2% increase for the rest of the year.

Golden Arrow bus strike expected to start today

(333) BD 25/3/98

ERIC NTABAZALILA

THE bus strike by hundreds of Golden Arrow employees, which was shelved last week after a last-minute agreement between Golden Arrow Bus Services and labour representatives, is expected to start again today.

Thousands of commuters are expected to be stranded as the bus company said it would be impossible for the company to operate any bus services, because of the large number of workers involved in the strike.

The South African Bus Employers Association's (SABEA) representatives called off the strike last week, pending the ratification of the agreement by the workforce. Details of the agreement were withheld by both parties.

But yesterday the employees gave the company another notice of their intention to embark on strike action with effect from today at 3.30pm.

Golden Arrow public relations manager Ms Jeanne Welsh said, however, that SABEA had indicated that the union was still "vigorously pursuing ways of finding a negotiated settlement".

SABEA could not be reached for comment last night.

Welsh said: "Should these efforts be unsuccessful, it is expected that the strike action will ensue in accordance with notification given to the company.

"Golden Arrow wishes to apologise to its passengers for the inconvenience the strike will cause them, especially those passengers who will not have transport.

"We have certain contingency measures in place if the strike goes ahead. These include an arrangement with Metrorail to honour bus clipcards on trains for the duration of the strike."

She said arrangements made last week with taxi organisations in Atlantis, where there is no alternative mode of transport, crashed after taxi organisations in the area said they had been intimidated into reneging on the initial agreement.

She said that in the interests of the safety of their staff, the company had decided to impose a lock-out, starting today. This meant that only those people who were not part of the bargaining unit would be allowed on company premises during the strike.

The strike comes a day before the arrival of President Bill Clinton tomorrow.

Bus strike averted as drivers accept 10,5%

(373) ARG 26/3/98

SHARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

The bus strike, which would have added to the traffic chaos expected to be caused by the Clinton visit today, was averted by the last-minute settlement of a wage dispute.

The strike, which was to have begun at midnight, would have compounded congestion in Cape Town because many bus commuters would have had to go to work by car.

Golden Arrow general manager Hannes Grebe said the strike was called off when unions and the South African Bus Employers' Association reached agreement yesterday.

Secretary of the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Union Edgar Doman said their members were delighted that their "no compromise" stand on a 10,5 % increase had been vindicated and that settlement had been reached.

Employers' association president Colin Gie said that while negotiations had been tense, there had been compromise by both parties.

"In the interests of everybody, we decided to conclude the negotiations."

Workers gave unions a mandate to reject the employers' offer of an 8,5% increase for the first six months of the year and a further 2% increase for the rest of the year.

Yesterday, representatives of bus services and several labour unions met in 11th-hour discussions in Johannesburg to find a solution and avert the strike.

The strike threat followed the deadlock of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago

Drivers and other staff will now receive a 10,5% increase across the board from April which means drivers will earn a minimum of R1 500 a month.

Bus strike called off as bosses agree to 10,5% increases

CT 26/3/98 (333)

ERIC NTABAZALILA

THE bus strike that was scheduled to start a minute after midnight this morning has been called off for the second time since the decision to strike was taken last week.

The threatened strike had been expected to cripple the city's public transport system and force thousands of commuters to use other forms of transport.

Golden Arrow Bus Services general manager Mr Hannes Grebe said yesterday that the negotiations between the employers and union representatives had been conducted in Johannesburg and that the company did not yet have details of the settlement.

But the company was pleased that a settlement had been reached.

Had the bus strike taken place in Cape Town, 870 drivers and support staff and 625 buses would have been idle.

"We apologise to commuters for the inconveniences caused by the strike calls. We hope our customers will have the normal service they are used to today," Grebe said.

Transport and General Workers' Union regional secretary Mr Nkosinathi Mfundisi said their office in Cape Town been told that a settlement of 10,5 % had been reached.

The employees had originally asked for an increase of 16%, but had taken into consideration the fact that other companies could not afford to pay 16%.

"We think we have achieved what we were mandated to do by the workforce," Mfundisi said.

"We know this was not our original demand, but after deliberations, we compromised by asking for 10,5%. But the employers refused to give us that and offered only 8,5%.

"That was when the workers called for strike action. We want to inform all our members that the strike has been called off as our demands have been met.

"We would also like to apologise to the public for the inconvenience the strike calls caused them. But the inconveniences were something we could not stop. It's a lesson to the workers and the employers that we need to settle matters on time without causing our people any grief."

The bus strike was first called off last week pending ratification of the employers' offer by the workforce. The workers refused the offer and told their representatives to go back to the negotiating table.

After negotiations became deadlocked, the workers called for national strike action, which would have started today had a last-minute agreement not been reached.

General bus strike called off

(337)

Sowetan 26/3/98

A NATIONWIDE bus strike, due to have come into effect at 3.30pm yesterday, was averted through the last-minute acceptance by the SA Bus Employers Association of workers' demand for a 10,5 percent increase.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Mbengeni Mphatha said there would be no public transport disruptions after successful negotiations at Johannesburg's Protea Gardens Hotel yesterday afternoon.

Auxiliary workers – administrative staff, mechanics and workshop staff – were due to stop work at 3.30pm yesterday, if the wage deadlock had not been broken.

Drivers from all major bus companies, except municipal services in Johannesburg and Durban, were due to have joined the strike after transporting commuters home yesterday evening.

Wage negotiations

Long distance coach services Greyhound, Megabus and Matstrans also faced strike action if the negotiations had failed.

Mphatha said worker representatives were pleased with the outcome of the negotiations, which he described as tense.

The strike threat followed a breakdown of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago.

Mphatha said the 48-hour notice to strike was given on Monday after a mandate was received from workers to reject the employers' offer of an 8,5 percent increase for the first six months of the year and a further two percent increase for the rest of the year. – *Sapa.*

The truck stops here for unethical employers

CT (BR) 27/3/98 (333)

Those employers who still pay usually non-unionised drivers by the kilometre driven or by the number of loads carried are in for a hard time in coming months. The truckers' strike, which ended last week, has brought a renewed commitment among unions and their members to seek out and prosecute companies guilty of such practices.

The strike also apparently increased the strength of the unions by drawing in many drivers who were not union members or who had allowed their memberships to lapse.

"A lot of them are now joining," said Thulani Dlamini, national trucking organiser of the Transport and General Workers' Union (T&G).

The various unions in the sector had also come closer together, providing a promising start to Cosatu's "Autumn offensive" recruitment campaign.

"The general public often thinks we strike just for money, but better safety and fair treatment are two of the main things we have been running for," said Dlamini.

He and other union officials claim this orientation on safety has already shown quite dramatic results.

TERRY BELL

Since 1996, largely through union pressure, the practice of paying drivers by the kilometre travelled or load carried has been outlawed, although it still persists.

This, say the unionists, has resulted in a dramatic decline in trucking accidents. There are no detailed statistics available about truck accidents, but Dlamini has kept a rough tally over the years.

"We used to have reports of two or three a week," he said. "Now it's maybe two or three a month."

One driver said: "You had to get your kilometres in or carry more loads to make halfway decent pay."

This led to drivers speeding and staying behind the wheel for sometimes 12 and more hours at a stretch.

It still happens, but is now the exception rather than the rule. The wage differentials between different regions of the country have also gone, although there is still a distinction between payments to truckers employed by companies in urban areas and those from rural towns. But there is a commitment to end this practice as well.

However, the life of truckers, especially long-distance drivers, is by no means easy. Nor is it very well paid. Even after the average 13 percent pay increase, the average wage is still little more than R400 a week. And the drivers often spend days or even weeks on the road. Compensation for overnight stays is R38 a night.

"We are still a low-paid sector, just a bit better off than we were before," said Abner Ramakgolo, a T&G official.

None of this has happened without considerable controversy and some of the most dramatic confrontations in modern trade union history. Now unionists such as Dlamini feel the era of aggressive confrontation may be over.

With national bargaining in place and a broad agreement to establish a network of "Diesel Cities" as rest bases for truckers, they maintain that a new era is dawning. Six sites around the country have been pinpointed for establishment of the new trucker stops.

But this move will bring fresh controversy. The fact that the T&G and several other transport unions are considering owning shares in — or even controlling — such ventures may cause a stir in both union and business circles.

By far the biggest controversy, however, will be the proposal to open brothels at the truck stops.

In health terms, the proposal makes perfect sense. Research such as that done by Alan Whiteside at the University of Natal, has clearly plotted the spread of HIV and Aids along the trucking trade routes of the subcontinent.

"So it will happen," said Dlamini, who also hopes to see the establishment of medical facilities at the truck stops.

Cape Town harbour go-slow hits shipping

CT (BR) 17/4/98 (333)

AUDREY D'ANGELO

Cape Town — Millions of rands have been lost by shipping lines, shippers and customers waiting for cargo because of a two-day go-slow triggered by a pay dispute at the port of Cape Town.

Charles Kingon, the Cape Town chairman of the Association of Shipping Lines (ASL) said yesterday although the go-slow was over, it had a snowball effect and delivery of cargo was still delayed.

The ASL criticised Transnet yesterday for not allowing local port management sufficient autonomy in taking decisions.

"It is the opinion of ASL that local port management is not sufficiently empowered to make effective decisions as to the running of their own ports," ASL said.

"Decisions, particularly those relating to labour, have to be referred to head office where the implications of their effect on the broader group will be considered. Given this restraint it is perhaps understandable that working productivity is still at an unacceptably low level when compared to international norms."

A Transnet spokesman said national pay negotiations were unavoidable until the ports were transformed into separate entities in competition with each other.

Patrick Dada, the human resources executive manager at Portnet, said a dispute with the labour unions had been declared but the go-slow had been illegal.

Kingon said it cost R200 an hour for a "big white" container ship to remain alongside the quay. "The ... cost of extra fuel used in sailing faster to make up for lost time as a result of the go-slow is R200 000."

He said some ships had bypassed Cape Town to avoid delay, so there would be additional costs for transshipping cargo at other ports and transporting it.

Bid to lift skills of taxi drivers

(333)

By AURELIA DYANTYI

Star 2/5/98

The Department of Transport is in the midst of training courses for minibus-taxi drivers in a bid to decrease the horrific number of taxi-related accidents, many ending in multiple deaths.

For the past two months, taxi drivers from all provinces have gathered at Gerotek outside Pretoria for the advanced driving course. About 50 drivers from each province took time off from the ranks, eager to improve their driving skills.

Their lessons included blind-spot checks, following distances, speed checks, business skills and customer interaction.

"The course is an attempt to improve and assist taxi drivers in developing proper driving habits on the road and to provide better and safer service to passengers," said Theo Maeder, the chief director of land transport policy.

The Department of Transport planned the course in order to improve the skills of those drivers who do not have K53 driving licences and to help repair the tattered image of the taxi industry.

Even though the course was for advanced drivers, instructors found that they had to give participants learners' manuals to improve their road sign knowledge.

Chief instructor Enos Mhlongo said most of the drivers could not even interpret and understand common road signs.

"To many taxi drivers, the road signs did not mean anything. And their driving, I regret, was not very competent."

After the training, the drivers who passed received certificates. Others, who failed, were issued with certificates of attendance and were encouraged to come back.

The department covered all the costs. More courses would be offered in the future, Mhlongo said.

TRANSPORT - PVT. - LABOUR
1999

Transport crunch as bus drivers gear up for strike

Unions, employers in bid to resolve wages dispute

ARG 9/4/99

HENRI DU PLESSIS
STAFF REPORTER

Bus commuters have been warned to make alternative arrangements to get to work next week as a strike by bus drivers is looming.

An 11th-hour meeting to look at ways of averting the strike may still be held on Monday in Johannesburg, but unions are adamant that a strike will go ahead if they don't get satisfaction, a union spokesman said.

If the meeting fails, bus services in all areas may be disrupted from Wednesday. Large companies such as Golden Arrow and Putco, as well as smaller commuter service providers will be affected.

Union members are demanding an 11% increase across the board, as well as a number of further concessions from employers, including the Western Cape's Golden Arrow.

Employers, however, have countered by saying that a Government subsidy allowed for only a 5% rise in costs annually.

Drivers are also unhappy with a retrenchment package offered by employers and with the daily "spread-over" of hours worked a day. At present many drivers work a 12-hour day to cover both daily peaks, with a break in the middle of the day.

But the bus companies want to extend the "spread-over" to 14 hours a day.

Employers, represented by the South African Bus Employers Association, said trading conditions were very difficult, with revenue increases determined in terms of Government contracts by a specified formula over which they had no control. The increase this year was not expected to top 5% and therefore the employers could only justify a 4,5% pay increase.

Many of their permits would expire by the end of March 2000, and some had already expired. After that, bus operators would have to compete, through tendered contracts, for the services they have already been providing for a long time.

"The employers' association, at the start of negotiations in January, asked for the co-operation of labour in linking the annual wage adjustment to expected revenue escalation.

"The costs of wage increases must, of necessity come from such increased revenue," said association president B W Gie.

"It is extremely disappointing that labour has totally ignored the realities currently facing the bus passenger transport industry.

"Labour is undermining an already precarious situation and further endangering employment within an industry that has witnessed the loss of many thousands of jobs over the past three years."

Planned bus strike will affect six million

(333)

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

MORE than six million bus commuters and businesses around the country will be affected if more than 17 000 workers in the bus passenger transport industry go on strike next week, employers said yesterday.

South African Bus Employers Association (Sabea) president Mr Barry Gie said the association was "extremely disappointed that four trade unions had decided to embark on strike action in spite of concerted efforts by employers to conclude an acceptable negotiated settlement".

Sabea had asked the unions to link annual wage adjustments to the expected revenue increases in terms of the Government's interim contracts which control the operations of bus companies.

Gie said operating permit contract revenues were expected to rise by five percent at the end of the month, and bus operators had to surrender their current permits in March next year.

He added that the wage demands, together with improvements of a number of employee benefits would, if acceded to, result in cost escalations far in excess of projected revenue increases.

The Transport and Allied Workers Union (Tawu), the Transport and General Workers Union (Tgwu), the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association (Wcosu) and the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union (Towu) decided to strike after mediation failed.

Tawu spokesman Mr Oupa Mbele said workers were poised to go on strike next Wednesday.

Mbele pointed out that while the unions were to continue talks with the employers, any negotiations should be beneficial to all the parties involved.

The employers have offered 4,5 percent while the unions are demanding a 13 percent increase. The minimum wage remained at R1 350 a month.

TGWU spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeko said the unions involved would collectively inform commuters of the pending strike for them to be prepared.

The employers' association has suggested that parties agree to independent arbitration in an effort to reopen negotiations, but this had been rejected by the trade unions.

Gie added that the association would continue to make every attempt to normalise the situation.

Sowetan 9/4/99

Why I must fight for my money, by bus driver

333

Strike set to hit 150 000 in city

ARG 14/4/99

ANDREA BOTHA
STAFF REPORTER

Being a bus driver is a difficult, stressful and badly paid job.

Yet Toyer Abrahams, 53, likes it. He likes the people he sees every day and he likes having a job – although he would like to get at least a 10% wage increase as he has to support a wife and seven children.

So, tomorrow morning, he will not be getting up at 4:30am as he has for the past 23 years.

From midnight tonight, he and other members of the Transport & Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu) will be on strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations between the unions and the South African Bus Employers Association, of which local bus company Golden Arrow is a member.

The company is offering a 6,5% wage increase and wants employees to work a spread-over shift of 14-15 hours instead of the present 12-hour shift.

Spread-over duties allow bus drivers to work during both traffic peaks, with several hours off in the middle of the day. The unions want the 12-hour spread-over shifts to remain, and an 11% wage increase.

As a senior employee, Mr Abrahams is fortunate – he does not have to work the 12-hour spread-overs that exhaust the company's younger men.

Driving the Manenberg-Claremont route, he works from just before 6am until just after noon on Mondays to Fridays, and a slightly longer shift on Saturdays.

After deductions for tax, medical aid and pension, he takes home about R500 a week out of a R650 wage, and he struggles to pay his bills, especially with increases in school fees.

His car is broken and he lives in a council house in Hanover Park, yet he does not believe in complaining.

"To me, money isn't everything."

Of course, earning a living is important, and the possible consequences of a strike weigh heavily on his mind.

"I must work for my family and now I must fight for my money."

Sometimes it is extremely dangerous to be on the road in Manenberg, especially when gang violence flares up. Yet most bus drivers have to deal with gangsterism, violence and crime.

Many have been mugged or held up, like Mr Abrahams, who lost his watch in a robbery.

"You work in fear, but you can't refuse to come to work or they will dismiss you," says Mr Abrahams.

He wants his children to stay in school and to matriculate so that they can have a better future.

The nationwide strike, which will leave 150 000 Peninsula bus commuters scrambling for alternative ways to get to work, is likely to cripple bus services in many parts of the country.

■ A Metrorail spokesman today confirmed that people with weekly and monthly bus clipcards would be allowed to travel on suburban trains for the duration of the strike.

She could not yet confirm whether extra trains would be laid on to cope with Golden Arrow's passengers.

18 000 transport workers set to strike over wage impasse

(333) Star 14/4/99

By Eddie Jayiya

About 18 000 transport workers are set to embark on a nationwide bus strike tomorrow which could paralyse industry in major cities.

Four unions – the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union (Towu), Transport and General Workers Union, Transport and Allied Workers Union and Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union – are demanding a 13% wage increase, while employers are offering 4,5%. Other contentious issues include retrenchment packages, daily overtime payments, working hours and insurance benefits.

The strike will not affect municipal buses.

Towu general secretary Gary Wilson said: "We are no longer prepared to accept low wages from the employers. We are willing to compromise on other issues, but will not accept their offer. Last year we received between 10,5 and 11%, and the 4,5% is too little.

"There will be no buses on Thursday and major cities will be affected. The industrial action will affect major bus companies in all the provinces."

South African Bus Employers Association president Barry Gie said the employers met the unions on Monday in a bid to resolve the impasse.

"The unions made it clear that they would call off the industrial action only if we offered them 11%. They told us that they were flexible on other issues. But we could not agree as we felt the resolution of the impasse did not hinge on one issue. We wanted a package settlement.

"The present economic conditions don't allow us to pay an 11% increase," Gie said.

"We are still willing to negotiate with the unions."

Thousands stranded as city suffers bus-strike hell

ARG 15/4/99

SHARKEY ISAACS AND TREVOR OOSTERWYK
STAFF REPORTERS

About half of Cape Town's 150 000 bus commuters were left stranded by today's national strike – while the rest crammed trains or braved heavy road traffic in to the city.

Bus services were halted as drivers and other bus company staff joined the national strike.

People streamed to stations and taxi ranks, while others took to their own cars, adding to serious congestion on the roads. Some firms either used their own transport or hired taxis to ferry workers to factories.

As many as 3 million bus commuters and their employers are affected countrywide by the strike of more than 18 000 workers, including thousands of bus drivers.

The strike follows a deadlock in wage negotiations between four leading transport unions and the South African Bus Employers' Association.

The workers are demanding an 11% wage increase, while management is offering only 6,5%.

Cape Town traffic department's chief inspector, Malcolm Little, said the morning peak lasted longer today.

"Some taxi drivers trying to cash in on the strike dipped in and out of lanes and were ticketed," he said.

The city's chief traffic inspector, Gerald Sobotker, said department staff were coping well in unclogging bottlenecks.

Meanwhile, at suburban stations, commuters crowded on to platforms and squeezed into 620 packed peak-hour trains.

Metrorail's Riana Jacobs said extra trains were unavailable, but the existing fleet was coping with the strike.

She described peak-hour congestion as "slight" at most stations, but commuters on the Cape Flats said trains were filled to capacity, especially those heading in to the city from Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha.

South African Taxi Council chairman Joe Mabaso said taxis would cover all bus routes. There were enough vehicles to cope with the expected increase in demand, he said.

"We are going to cope with more commuters, but there could be hiccups as traffic builds up during the two main peaks.

"We will even use local taxis to transport people to the city, where other taxis will take over."

In the Peninsula, the worst-affected area was high-density Atlantis, where there are no suburban train services and commuters had to rely on minibus taxis.

Commuters in the area had an unexpected preview of the strike yesterday when 27 drivers failed to arrive for their duty stint and were booked off "sick".

At Mitchell's Plain Town Centre, many people were waiting uncertainly early today. Sharon Davids was expecting company transport to pick her up.

"This bus strike is not a nice thing at all. It upsets one's rhythm so early in the morning," she said.

Three other commuters echoed her

To page 2

P.T.O

353

PICTURES: NAAGSHON ZALK

Long haul ... commuters stand in winding queues waiting their turn at a taxi rank in Orange Farm this morning.

Anger as bus strike starts

(333) Star 15/4/99

Marshals struggle with long lines of commuters

By Eddie Javiya and Sapa

Bus commuters across the country battled to get to work this morning as the stand-off between unions and employers continued.

The four unions involved say their bus drivers and other staff will go on until their employers improve their wage offer of 6,5%. The unions are demanding 11%.

Taxi owners cashed in, putting more vehicles on roads.

The number of taxis travelling to Johannesburg from Orange Farm, Palm Springs and the Vaal Triangle doubled, but taxi rank marshals warned things might worsen if the strike continued.

"We are using local taxis to transport commuters to the major cities around our ranks, but we are incurring the wrath of passengers who use local taxis. People who travel to Bara everyday were inconvenienced today," Palm Springs queue marshal Ezekiel Thulani said.

Pretoria Metrorail spokesperson Margaret Dingalo said the company had deployed extra staff. More trains were on standby, but she said no problems had been reported.

At Mabopane, north of Pretoria, the North West bus company said most bus drivers were expected to strike, stranding thousands of commuters on the outskirts of Pretoria.

Most affected are commuters from former Kwa-Ndebele who rely on the Putco service. School children have been advised to remain at home.

In Durban, public transport is operating normally. Several bus companies said they had not been affected by the strike.

In the Cape, about 150 000 commuters were using alternative transport. A spokesperson for the Golden Arrow bus company said commuters in three areas of the Peninsula would be badly affected.

In Port Elizabeth, the situation at the Algoa Bus Company was volatile, with a big truck in front of the gates to prevent vehicles from entering or leaving.

Putco human resources executive Thys Heyns said the strike seemed effective in many areas and major companies were affected. "We don't have the full picture yet, but information reaching us indicates the strike has been effective.

Transport and Omnibus Workers Union general secretary Gary Wilson said: "We are prepared to meet the employers and South African Bus Employers Association to resolve the impasse. But we want them to come with a better offer."

The unions were elated with the response of members. They said most drivers heeded the call as there were extensive disruptions. But they conceded in areas such as Nelspruit, some drivers were working normally.

Wilson added that commuters were supportive and had made alternative transport arrangements from yesterday.

But the commuters are angry with the bus companies because they have trip cards for which they paid and they are not being compensated for paying fares on taxis and trains."

Stand-off ... a Putco security guard walks along a line of buses left standing in a depot in Sebokeng. The four unions involved are asking for 11% wage increases.

333

Bid to end bus strike as the big squeeze goes on

SHARKEY ISAACS
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ARG 16/4/99

A meeting aimed at ending a national strike by 18 000 workers at 17 bus companies will be hosted by the Department of Labour on Monday.

The announcement came as Cape Town commuters this morning again braced themselves for another big squeeze in trains and taxis as the strike entered its second day. Unions and employers are at odds over wage increases.

In high-density residential areas of the Cape Flats, train passengers crowded into third-class coaches.

Other commuters in cars and taxis caused traffic jams as Cape Town's chief traffic inspector Malcolm Little confirmed a significant increase in the volume of peak hour traffic for the second day.

However, he said traffic officers were doing well to iron out bottlenecks.

On Monday the Department of Labour will meet the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), says Mogamat Soeker of the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu).

Zakhele Sibego, of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said there was no question of calling off the strike until a settlement had been reached.

"We don't like it and we are very sorry about the inconvenience we have caused to the commuters, but we are fighting for the rights of workers."

Mr Sibego said the union was prepared to move from its original demand for a 13% wage increase.

"We are going to move drastically and we are hoping employers will do the same."

Arbitration under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration meeting will be attended

To page 3

Unions meet in bid to end bus strike

ARG 16/4/99

From page 1

by representatives of Towu, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union.

Mr Soeker of the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union said four trade unions would again meet in Athlone today to decided on a strike strategy.

Barry Gie, president of the SA Bus Employers' Association, said: "We have already indicated that there is still some scope for movement from our offer of 6,5%, but the unions will have to base their expectations in reality."

As many as three million bus commuters and their employers are affected countrywide by the strike.

Metrorail's Riana Jacobs said Cape Flats trains were filled to capacity, especially those from Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha.

Union's new look at strike

(~~183~~) (~~270~~) 333

COMMUNITY protests may result in the Transport and general Workers' Union (TGWU) calling off its bus strike.

The strike, in which the unions have claimed major success, is being reconsidered "because the people are suffering" says Zakhele Sibeko, TGWU national co-ordinator.

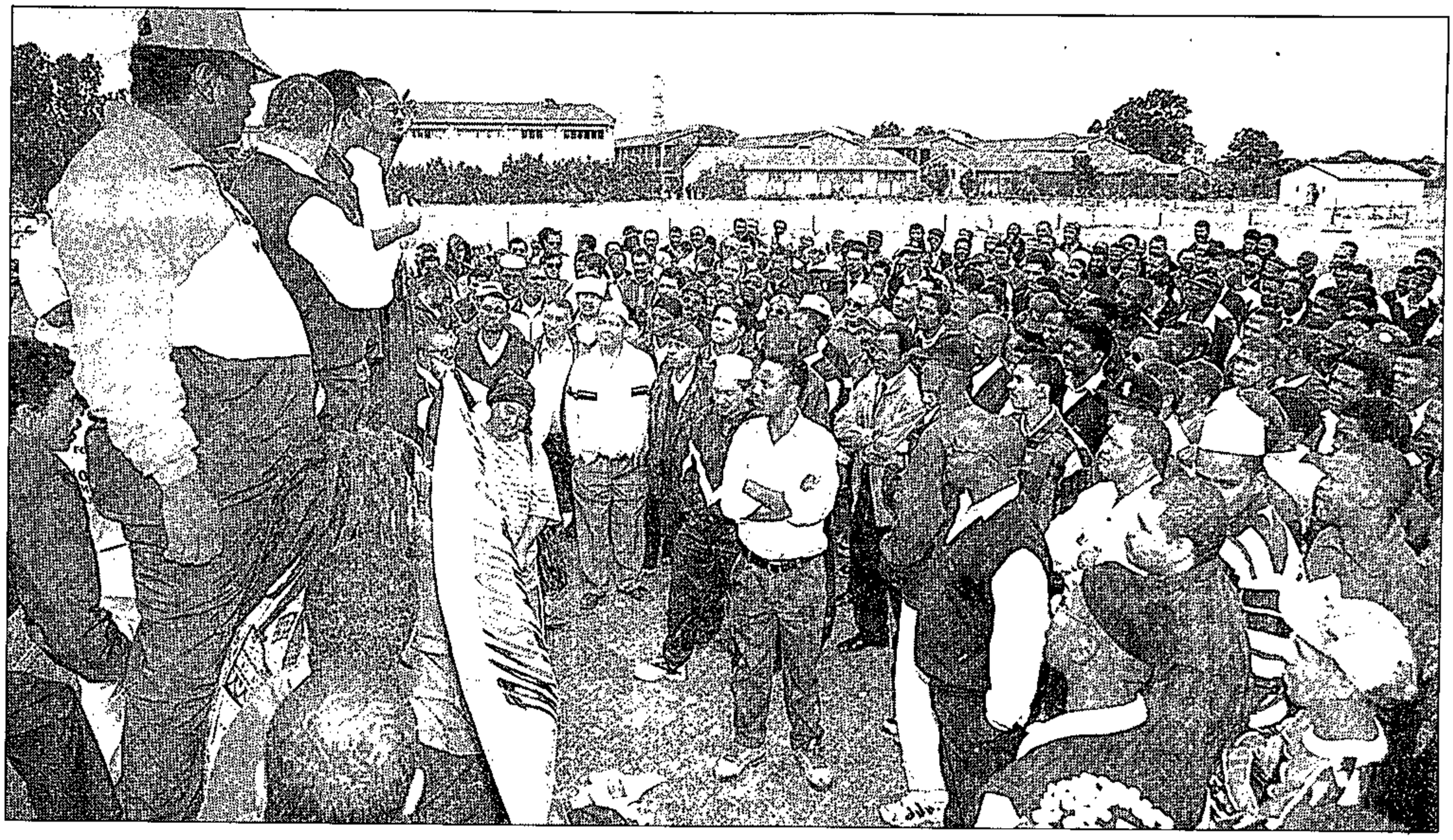
In the Cape, roads have been jammed with the extra private cars and railway carriages have been crammed.

The national strike was called by the TGWU and allied unions, representing about 18 000 workers.

The unions demand an 11% increase, while employers have offered 6,5%.

● See Page 3

CT 16/4/99



STRIKING SUPPORT: Golden Arrow bus drivers gather yesterday outside the Simaj Centre in Gatesville to discuss the next phase of their strike action.

PICTURE: DENZIL MAREGELE

(333)

Unions to reconsider bus strike

CT 16/4/99

MOUNTING pressure from commuters yesterday prompted transport unions to consider calling off their nationwide bus strike, but for now it will continue.

Cape Town's 150 000 bus commuters were left stranded yesterday, and trains and roads were crammed as thousands of commuters were forced to make alternative arrangements to get to work.

People streamed to railway stations and taxi ranks, while others used their own cars, causing major congestion on the roads.

Some firms provided transport to ferry workers to work.

About 2 500 bus commuters made use of trains.

Riana Jacobs of Metrorail said it had a deal with Golden Arrow to assist, and additional trains will be made available. However, only commuters with weekly and monthly coupons, will be allowed on trains.

The Cape Town traffic department said there was an increase in traffic on the N2, N3 and M5.

The worse affected area was Atlantis, where there is no train service and commuters had to rely on taxis.

The unions' decision to reconsider their strike has come as a surprise to the industry, because the unions had claimed a major victory.

They had vowed to continue with the strike until their wage demands were met.

Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) national coordinator, Zakhele Sibeko, said commuters had asked the strikers to reconsider their action because they were suffering.

"We come from the communities and if they ask us to reconsider, then we don't have a choice," he said.

Sibeko said the unions would ask the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa to convene a meeting involving employers, unions, the Department of Labour and possibly the Department of Transport.

"We are trying to set up the meeting with the employers because we are willing to settle. We will be happy if the meeting can take place today. We are prepared to meet throughout the night in order to resolve the impasse," he said.

Barry Gie, president of the South African Bus Employers' Association (SABEA), said he had been informed by Sibeko that the unions were willing to resume talks. "We could not hold the talks on Wednesday because officials are scattered all over the country. He told me that he would talk to his colleagues and inform me when the meeting will take place," he said.

The TGWU, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union, represent about 18 000 workers.

The unions are demanding an 11% increase while SABEA, which represents private bus companies in the nine provinces, is offering 6,5%.

Gie said employers in Cape Town locked out employees to protect staff and property and no buses were running. — Staff Writers and Own Correspondents

Commuters force transport strike rethink

Star 16/4/99 (333)

Unions' decision to reconsider stoppage takes the industry by surprise

Staff Reporter and Own Correspondents

Mounting pressure from commuters has prompted transport unions to consider calling off their nationwide bus strike, which affected millions yesterday, but for now the strike continues.

The unions' decision yesterday to reconsider the strike has come as a surprise to the industry, because the unions had earlier claimed a major victory.

They had vowed to continue with the industrial action indefinitely until their wage demands were met.

Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) national co-ordinator Zakhele Sibeko said commuters had asked the strikers to reconsider the action because they had suffered.

"We come from the communities, and if they ask us to reconsider, then we don't have a choice," Sibeko said.

He said the unions would ask the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa to convene a meeting involving employers, unions, the Labour Department and possibly the Transport Department.

Barry Gie, president of the South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), said Sibeko had told him that the unions were willing to resume talks.

"We could not hold the talks on Thursday night because officials are scattered all over the country ... he told me he would talk to his colleagues and will inform me when the meeting will take place. I am happier than I was this morning, and I am confident that we might reach a settlement," Gie said.

The TGWU, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union represent about 18 000 workers.

The unions are demanding an 11% wage increase while Sabea, which represents private bus companies in all nine provinces, is offering 6,5% across the board.

Gie said employers in Port Elizabeth and Cape Town had locked out employees to protect staff and property, and no buses were running in the two cities.

Services in Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Richards Bay were extensively disrupted. In the Pretoria and Rustenburg areas, only half of the normal fleet was operating. Services in Pietersburg, Kimberley, Nelspruit and King William's Town operated normally.

Metrorail spokesperson Nolundi Rawana said there was an estimated 40% increase in commuters on all trains from the Vaal Triangle to Johannesburg.

Bus strike brings minimal disruption

(333)

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE NATIONWIDE strike involving more than 18 000 drivers in the bus passenger transport industry reportedly caused minimal disruption in many centres.

South African Bus Employers Association president Mr Barry Gie said the work stoppage by employees in 18 bus companies "did not receive universal support" and had only a limited effect in certain areas.

He said the reciprocal arrangements between the association and Metrorail ensured that affected bus commuters could use their monthly clipcard bus tickets on trains during the strike.

Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association spokesman Mr Ashley Jurius said the strike received 100 percent support in the Western Cape. He agreed it had not shown a major impact since commuters flocked to minibus taxis, trains and private cars.

Metrorail spokeswoman Ms Nolundu Rawana said there was slight pressure early in the morning as trains, especially those on Vereeniging and Johannesburg lines, were running at more than 40 percent their normal capacities.

Alternative transport

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeko said the strike had a major effect in Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Province and Gauteng. Workers demonstrated outside bus depots in Dobsonville, Greater Soweto Putco depot and Commuta depot in Selby, Johannesburg.

He said Nelspruit in Mpumalanga and Mayibuye Bus Services in Eastern Cape were not affected as workers reported for duty.

Municipal buses in Johannesburg and Durban were not affected as they were not part of the SA Passenger Transport Bargaining Council.

Chamber of Commerce spokesman Charl Adams said commuters had made alternative arrangements to get to work after notices were placed in newspapers warning of the strike.

The unions have tabled a proposal of an 11 percent wage increase plus improvements to other employee benefits. The SA Bus Employees Association has offered a 6,5 percent increase.

Gie said the association's doors were always open if striking bus drivers wanted to pursue a negotiated settlement. Sabea's offer to submit the dispute to independent arbitration was rejected by the unions.

Queues of city workers wait patiently in a queue for transport to the city from Zola in Soweto. Commuters across the country suffered the consequences of a nationwide bus strike, aimed at resolving a pay rise dispute, which began yesterday. PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

Union wants late talks in bid to avert bus strike

BD 15/4/99

333

THE Transport and General Workers' Union was hoping to set up an eleventh-hour meeting with the SA Bus Employers' Association last night to settle their wage dispute and head off a nationwide bus workers' strike today.

The union said earlier that short and long-distance passengers could be inconvenienced today if 18 000 bus workers around the country go on strike.

Union spokesman Zakhele Sibego said yesterday he had asked the union's general secretary to look at the possibility of meeting the employers association. Its president, Barry Gie, said he was willing to consider a compromise. "We are keeping our doors wide open."

The strike will affect 17 private bus companies — including Putco, Greyhound, Translux and Golden Arrow — but not municipal buses.

"Everything is on track," Sibego said. "We are expecting services to be disrupted all over the country.... I don't expect any long-distance trips to be carried out by our members."

Gie says the employers' association offered a 6,5% increase, but the union "steadfastly maintained" its demand for 11%. Sibego said the association had not offered more than 4,5%. — Sapa.

(333)

National bus strike cripples rural workers

CP 18/4/99

By DOMINIC MAHLANGU, WELCOME SKOSANA and SAPA

THOUSANDS of workers in rural areas failed to report for work on Friday and yesterday as a result of the crippling nationwide bus strike which started on Thursday.

Less affected were areas in the Cape and Kwazulu/Natal where commuters used taxis and trains, as well as the metropolitan areas in all provinces.

Hardest hit were commuters who depend entirely on buses and travel distances of up to 100 km to their work places.

The Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) hinted yesterday that it would table a new offer at a meeting with bus owners and the department of labour tomorrow, saying it hoped this move would end the strike by its members.

Some 18 000 workers from 17 private bus companies went on strike at 1 am on Thursday, bringing services to a halt and stranding tens of thousands of commuters countrywide.

The strike came after workers declared a dispute on wage negotiations with the South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea).

The most affected areas on Friday and yesterday were rural areas where there are no trains and fewer taxis on the roads.

Most workers decided to stay home on Friday and Saturday to avoid the long queues.

WAITING FOR THE BUS . . . Commuters wait at a bus stop in the futile hope for a bus as a nationwide strike by busdrivers took effect on Thursday. **Pic: MPHO MPHOTHO**

Chaos reigned on Friday afternoon when workers from the rural areas could not find transport to take them home.

Taxis did a roaring business on all the major routes normally swarming with buses.

Commuters from Hamanskraal, Atteridgeville, Mabopane, North West and KwaNdebele found themselves stuck at the various bus points, and most of them had to resort to alternative transport.

Bus commuters claimed that they were not informed by bus companies about the pending strike and had bought tickets, some of which cost R60 a day.

Commuters who travel by municipal buses in Johannesburg were not hampered by the strike as they did not participate. .

North West Transport Services said since the bus drivers embarked on a nationwide strike on Tuesday few people turned out for work this week.

Vaal triangle taxis which were deployed in full numbers to deal with the sudden rise of commuters were in most parts of Sebokeng, Sharpville and Evaton unable to meet the demand.

In the early hours of Friday morning when City Press moved around the three major townships of the Vaal triangle, scores of passangers as early as 5 am were standing in groups waiting for taxis or any other transport that might take them to work.

At a bus depot between Evaton and Sebokeng, bus inspectors who spoke in low voices looking out of the windows, afraid that striking drivers might see them, said the situation was volatile.

"We are afraid that if we speak our minds out about the strike we might be killed," they said, avoiding answering further questions.

Simon Mphahlela, director of Ipelegeng Bus Services operating in the areas of Sharpeville, Sebokeng, Evaton and some parts of Orange Farm said his company was losing over R110 000 a day due to the strike.

Workers from Putco, Commuta and Ekangala bus services staged demonstrations in their bus depots demanding a 13 percent wage increase, 12 working hours and retrenchment packages.

However their employers are only prepared to offer them a 4, 5 percent increase.

TGWU has rejected the 14 hours proposed by the Sabea, stating that it is a disgrace and workers cannot afford to work under those kind of circumstances.

333

Back to arbitration after bus-strike deadlock

ARG 20/4/99

SHARKEY ISAACS
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Labour mediators go back to the arbitration table today after talks to end the strike by 18 000 bus staff were deadlocked last night.

Meanwhile, Cape Town commuters again squeezed on to trains and in to minibus taxis for the fourth working day running – with wet roads and more cars making the journey to work a nightmare.

Unions and employers are at odds over wage increases, with the workers demanding a 12% increase and bus employers offering 6,5%.

Transport and Omnibus Workers Union president Mogamat Soeker said there was no question of calling off the strike until a settlement had been reached.

He said: "We don't like it and we are sorry for the inconvenience to commuters, but we are fighting for the rights of workers. Union members have given us a mandate for a 12% increase and nothing less."

Workers said they would have to be consulted before the unions shifted from 12%, something they did yesterday as a negotiating ploy.

Arbitration will continue today under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

About 3 million bus commuters were affected by the national strike, said Metrorail's Riana Jacobs.

Bus strike rolls on as talks stall between union, bosses

COMMUTERS affected by the countrywide bus strike will have to make alternate transport arrangements again today after wage talks between labour and management representatives from the transport sector deadlocked late last night. Talks will resume at 11am today.

The talks, facilitated by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, faltered after the union rejected the employers' offer of a seven percent hike — 0,5% up from their previous offer. The union lowered its demand from 11% to 10%.

The strike will go on until the unions and the employers reach an agreement, "even if it is going to last for three or four weeks", a Transport and General Workers' Union official warned.

A city radio-taxi service reported an 80% increase in passengers yesterday, and though Metro Rail trains were more congested then usual, no overcrowding was reported. — Staff Writer, Sapa

CT 20/4/99

(333)

Hopes fade for solution as bus strike continues

(333)

By Eddie Javiya and Hopewell Radebe

Star 20/4/99

Chances of ending the nationwide bus strike at a meeting last night were dashed when the meeting ended without any resolution in sight.

Transport and General Workers' Union national coordinator Zakhele Sibeko said no agreement had been reached and the meeting was adjourned to 11am today.

The employers last night offered the union a 7% increase, half a percentage point up on their previous offer, and the union moved from 11 to 10%.

Sibeko said the union had made considerable concessions over the increase and by lowering its figure had taken a chance which would probably have surprised and angered its members.

"We are slowly losing hope because we are failing to establish common ground," he said.

Workers warned that failure to reach agreement could lead to protracted industrial action.

About 18 000 workers embarked on a legal strike on Thursday, leaving millions of commuters stranded throughout the country.

Four transport unions – the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union – are involved in the strike.

End of bus industry strike in sight

Sowetan 20/4/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

PROSPECTS of resolving the nationwide passenger bus industry strike, which has cost millions of rands, improved yesterday when the trade unions and employers' representatives agreed to reopen talks.

Putco bus company human resources general manager Mr Thys Heyns confirmed that all parties in the bus passenger transport bargaining council met under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration.

Major bus service companies have been hardest hit by the ongoing work stoppage by 18 000 workers since last Thursday in support of wage demands.

Heyns said the companies had lost millions of rands in revenue, while workers had also lost millions of rands in wages. He could not give exact figures.

"Hopefully the four trade unions have seen how important it is that we all come to a negotiated settlement because of the realities of our situation," Heyns said.

Spokesmen for both the Greyhound and North West bus companies said that their companies were severely affected by the strike, although they could not disclose the financial losses.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeko said the unions were keen that talks with the South African Bus Employers Association would find a solution to the impasse.

(333)

Maharaj steps in to stop collapse of bus drivers' wage talks

Simphiwe Xako

A TIMELY intervention by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj yesterday rescued the mediation process from collapsing after bus drivers represented by four unions threatened to abandon negotiations and continue with their six-day wage strike.

BD 21/4/99

333

SA Bus Employers' Association president, Barry Gie, said Maharaj's intervention was "a blessing" as the drivers' withdrawal from the wage negotiations would further jeopardise the already financially depressed bus industry.

"Although we cannot specifically give individual companies' revenue losses at this stage, we can certainly confirm that millions of rands have already been lost as we normally ferry more than 6-million passengers a week," Gie said.

Maharaj was called in after negotiations, under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, deadlocked once more at yesterday morning's meeting. Bus drivers threatened to continue with the strike.

By late last night mediation parties and management waited patiently outside the commission's offices while unions caucused further negotiation strategies and a possible compromise. The two parties locked horns over a wage increase, with unions demanding a 10% hike against management's offer of a 7% increase in the pay package.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that according to a report released by a Johannesburg-based industrial relations and labour law consultancy yesterday, the first quarter saw a sharp drop in strike action compared with previous years.

Andrew Levy & Associates said 25 000 man days were lost in the first quarter of this year — a marked decrease compared to figures for the same period during the past eight years.

About 288 000 man days were lost last year, 78 000 in 1997, 175 000 in 1996 and 60 000 in 1995. The highest loss in man days recorded in the first quarter was in 1994 with 295 000.

Company spokesman Jackie Kelly said the first quarter of the year was generally quiet as most wage talks did not get under way until the middle of the year. Several strikes in the mining sector and a lengthy strike at Toyota contributed to this year's figures.

(333)

End in sight for bus strike

JOHANNESBURG: The wage dispute that has seen bus workers around the country out on strike and left thousands of commuters stranded was expected to be resolved last night.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesperson Zakhele Sibego said in Johannesburg that a meeting with the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) might go on all night, but the dispute would be resolved before morning.

The unions have lowered their demand from 11% to 10% and Sabea has offered a seven percent increase — ,5% up from their previous offer.

Sabea president Barry Gie was unavailable for comment. — Sapa

CT 21/4/99

the Western Cape government revise conditions for issuing road transport permits. A

said it w
standing

Bus drivers' strike hits industry where it hurts

Simphiwe Xako (333)

FIFTEEN bus companies have been seriously affected by the national bus drivers' strike, say industry officials, who are worried that the walkout may result in a loss of passengers over the long term.

Thys Heyns, SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) vice-president, declined to report individual companies' revenue losses due to the current strike, but alluded to a loss of millions of rands. About 6-million passengers ride the buses every week. BD 22/4/99

Heyns said 15 bus companies around the country were seriously affected by the strike and that commuters were making for trains and taxis. "This is sad for the bus industry as passengers are never fully recovered once they decide to use other forms of transport," he said.

A series of wage negotiations ended in deadlock over the past six days as both workers, represented by four unions, and management locked horns over a wage increase. Management has stuck to an offer of a 7% hike against the unions' call for a 10% raise.

Sabea president Barry Gie said the latest talks continued until early yesterday morning and that management and unions would meet once again tomorrow.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesman Zakhele Sibiya said the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act gave workers the right to strike.

"The fact that many workers end up losing their jobs does not mean that we should stop striking and accept working under unacceptable conditions. It is the right of workers to ensure that they are satisfied with their working environment," he said.

Sabea estimates that 3 000 jobs have been lost in the industry over the past four years as a result of economic contraction, passenger trends and strikes.

New move to settle bus strike

CT 22/4/99

333

EDDIE JAYIYA
OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG: While it appears likely that the week-long strike in the bus industry will end tomorrow, one of the companies affected said it would be prepared to consider offering a revised, higher wage offer.

The national co-ordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Zakhele Sibeko, said the union did not want to prolong the strike beyond Friday.

The strike by about 18 000 workers enters its seventh day today and has affected millions of commuters, who have resorted to taxis, trains and private vehicles to get to work.

Great North Transport, one of the 18 companies in the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), has written to Sabea president Barry Gie informing him of the board's decision to propose a fresh mandate.

Great North's acting human resources manager Bogoshi Matlala, stressed that the new mandate was for centralised bargaining and not for plant-level negotiations.

"It must be noted that while we respect the constitution of the Bargaining Council, we would like to stress that the needs of the travelling community must be respected."

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns said: "Our constitution precludes individual members from engaging in talks with unions outside the Bargaining Council. Appropriate action will be taken if the company is found guilty."

□ LABOUR (333)

Work stoppage delays five airline flights

A two-hour work stoppage at Johannesburg airport yesterday caused a delay for five local SAA flights, Victor Nosi, the vice-president for SAA communications, said yesterday. Nosi said baggage handling employees of Apron Services embarked on a go-slow in sympathy with SAA employees who had received voluntary severance packages that had been negotiated with the unions. Andrew Maswanganye, the aviation secretary of South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union, said no agreement had been reached on the handling of those who had not been absorbed by the new structure when SAA "unilaterally and unprocedurally went ahead with retrenchments on Friday last week, effective immediately". – *Zintle Filtane, Johannesburg*

CT(BE) 22/4/99

□ BUSINESS

Employer breaks ranks in bus strike

(333)

By Eddie Jayiya

Star 22/4/99

One of the companies affected by the week-long strike in the bus industry indicated yesterday that it would be prepared to consider offering a revised, higher wage offer.

Great North Transport, one of the 18 companies which constitute the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), has written a letter to association president Barry Gie informing him of the directors' decision to propose a fresh mandate.

In its letter, signed by acting human resources manager Bogoshi Matlala, it stressed that the mandate was for the centralised bargaining process and not for plant-level negotiations.

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns said: "We are investigating whether the company has acted outside the constitution, which precludes individual members from engaging in talks with unions outside the bargaining council.

"We have told the unions that the company's position will not influence Sabea's mandate."

The national co-ordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Zakhele Sibeko, said: "We will see what employers bring to the table on Friday. We have reported to our members and so far we have received a mixed response. We don't want the strike to be prolonged beyond Friday."

Sabea president Barry Gie said: "Discussions aimed at resolving the current wage dispute ... continued into the early hours yesterday.

"In the interest of commuters, the industry, business and the public, we requested labour to suspend the strike pending the outcome of ongoing negotiations. This request was regrettably rejected by labour, who indicated that the strike action would continue.

"The unions also rejected our proposal that outstanding issues be submitted to arbitration. We regret the inconvenience to commuters because of the continued industrial action."

Minister at wage talks

(333)

Sowetan Reporter

TRANSPORT Minister Mac Maharaj, who is embroiled in the stand-off between four trade unions representing 18 000 strikers in the passenger bus industry and employers, yesterday paid a surprise visit to the conciliation talks in a bid to end the strike.

Maharaj agreed to join the talks after a high-powered trade union delegation, negotiating with 18 bus companies under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, appealed to the Minister to intervene.

Department of Transport spokesperson Ms Didi Moyle said Maharaj had decided to intervene as the talks were "falling apart". She said the Minister had urged both parties to continue negotiations in the interests of the country.

The department was positive the impasse would be resolved, she said.

Transport and Allied Workers Union spokesman Mr Oupa Mbele said yesterday union delegates had felt the minister should be called in after talks had delivered only disagreements, accusations and counter-accusations from both parties. Tawu and three other unions have revised their demands from 11 percent to 10 percent, while the SA Bus Employers Association had raised its offer from 4,5 percent to seven percent.

Members of the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union, the Transport and General Workers Union, the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association and Tawu have been on strike for more than a week over wage grievances. The talks will recommence tomorrow.

Employers Association president Mr Harry Gie has blamed the unions for the protracted strike, which has cost the industry millions of rands in lost revenue.

He has also blamed them for causing distress to millions of black township commuters and schoolchildren who have been stranded by the strike.

Sowetan 28/4/99

CAPE ARGUS, FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1999

Hundreds of schoolkids stranded by bus strike

333

SIPHOKAZI MGUDLWA
AND SHARKEY ISAACS
STAFF REPORTERS

ARG 23/4/99

Hundreds of children have been unable to get to school since the national bus strike started nine days ago.

The strike has disrupted Zola Secondary School in Maitland, which has a contract with Golden Arrow to transport pupils from Khayelitsha.

Siphosihle Ngwame, a Grade 8 pupil at Zola Senior Secondary in Maitland, has not been to school since the strike started.

"I decided to stay at home until the strike was over, because I did not have money to buy a train ticket," said Siphosihle.

Principal Xolela Mjonondwana said the school had not been functioning since the strike started last week.

"Since Thursday last week, we have not had any classes and only a few pupils have shown up since then," said Mr Mjonondwana.

The staff had distributed letters with the school stamp and letterhead which would allow students to use trains.

"But, up to now only 20% of the pupils have shown up and I think most of them still think we are waiting for the strike to finish," said Mr Mjonondwana.

Tony Eaton, for the Western Cape Education Department, said Golden Arrow had a contract to transport 928 pupils from Khayelitsha.

If Golden Arrow had not provided transport to the school by today, the department would bring in another contractor.

Unions and employees were meeting in Johannesburg today to consider a new management offer of a 7% pay rise.

Transport pay dispute remains deadlocked

Star 26/4/99

333

Employers and unions blame each other for impasse

By Eddie Javiva

Trade unions and employers in the transport industry traded harsh words yesterday, blaming each other for the failure to reach a wage settlement to end the ongoing strike by thousands of transport workers.

On Friday, employers and unions met at the headquarters of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), but again talks deadlocked. Unions have now ruled out further talks with employers.

> **Bosses were arrogant and labour will intensify demands**

The four unions – Transport and General Workers' Union, Transport and Allied Workers' Union, Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union and Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union – are demanding a 10% increase, while employers are offering 7%.

Initially, the unions demanded 13% while companies offered 4,5%. The CCMA has been trying to help the two sides reach a settlement.

Intervention by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj last week failed to resolve the impasse.

A last-ditch effort to end the strike on Friday failed, and unions later accused the big companies of arrogance and an unwillingness to offer workers the 10% increase.

Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union general-secretary Gary Wilson said Friday's negotiation with employers was a waste of time.

"The employers were arrogant and they just sat in their room, sending commissioners with their response to our demands.

"We will intensify the strike and it will be difficult for them to get us around the negotiation table again. We will not back down on our demands," he said.

Wilson claimed that certain employers with the South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) were privately offering workers 10%.

"We conveyed the latest overtures from the companies to Sabea through the commissioners.

"This makes a mockery of the bargaining system and it appears that big companies want the strike to go on so that small employers will be forced to close down.

"When the small companies fold, the big ones will take over their routes.

"We wanted to warn them that their big brothers had ulterior motives. But they did not want to talk to us," he said.

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns dismissed the claim by unions that some companies – including Putco – had secretly made offers of up to 10% as a tactic by labour leaders to mislead commuters and the public.

He said all companies wanted a speedy resolution to the strike and denied allegations that big companies wanted to elbow small employers out of the market.

Heyns is Putco's senior human resources executive and Sabea's chief negotiator.

> **Employers want strike so that small companies have to close**

"I reject claims that my company secretly promised unions a higher percentage.

"We fully supported the position of Sabea. The unions' demands do not take cognisance of the situation. We have the backing of all the 18 principals in the bus industry," he said.

"We are disappointed by their tactics. While still prepared to negotiate with them, we will not make any further concessions until they lower their demands," Heyns added.

SAA has shed 1 000 workers

BD 26/04/99 (333)

Robyn Chalmers

SA AIRWAYS (SAA) has shed 1 064 jobs since last year in the company's build-up to partial privatisation, says executive manager for communications, Victor Nosi.

Nosi said at the weekend only 94 people were forcibly retrenched and the remaining 970 opted for voluntary retrenchment. "The number of jobs lost is far lower than originally envisaged," he said.

He said the retrenchments and voluntary retrenchment packages were across the board and included senior managers.

The cost to the airline has not been released but is believed to run into tens of millions of rands.

Nosi declined to give the names of top management members who had left due to confidentiality agreements. However, the departure of senior staffers has been taking place for some time, in line with a management reshuffle outlined by SAA CE Coleman Andrews in the latter half of last year.

Andrews promoted a number of young SAA managers to more senior positions, new managers were brought into SAA from the US, Canada and Switzerland while others left, such as the cargo GM, Charles Fairweather.

Before the restructuring exercise, SAA employed almost 11 000 people and the previous management expected to shed up to 3 000. A 10-week study commissioned by Andrews last year showed the airline was bleeding badly and was close to bankruptcy.

Operationally, costs were too high and revenue too low; crew productivity was low and overheads high; and service levels were generally unacceptable.

Organisationally, the airline tended to be inwardly focused, inactive and defensive, and corruption was at unacceptably high levels.

Andrews said a new strategy to revive the ailing airline helped stem larger job losses. SAA is also understood to have made a modest profit in the year ended March 1999, against a loss of more than R300m the previous year.

The restructuring takes place ahead of SAA's long-awaited partial privatisation, with an information memorandum issued last week laying out the rules and regulations for potential bidders.

Government is expected to sell up to 20% of SAA to an international equity partner by the middle of this year. A range of airlines have indicated their interest in bidding for SAA, including Lufthansa and Singapore Airlines, Swissair and Delta Airlines, British Airways, KLM and the Texas Pacific Group.

Bus commuters face another weary week

ARG 26/4/99

SHARKEY ISAACS
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of weary bus commuters face another week of disruption today after talks aimed at ending the nationwide bus strike collapsed on Friday.

Talks are due to resume on Wednesday and there is hope the strike may end by the weekend.

Intervention by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj last week failed to resolve the impasse.

Union members yesterday accused the employers of arrogance and an unwillingness to offer workers the 10% pay increase demanded.

On Friday, employers and unions met at the headquarters of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in Johannesburg, and, after the deadlock, the unions ruled out further talks. The four unions – the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union – are demanding a 10% increase and the employers are offering 7%.

Strike goes on as bus companies are hit by divisions

(333)

Sowetan 26/4/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

BUS commuters were dealt a severe blow at the weekend when the protracted strike involving more than 18 000 drivers could not be resolved as a result of divisions among bus companies.

Senior managers of some of the 18 bus companies were reported to have secretly offered employees a 10 percent wage increase in an effort to break the strike.

Talks stalled on Friday as a result of the altercations among employers at the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration.

Transport and Allied Workers Union spokesman Mr Oupa Mbele decried the fact yesterday that senior managers had promised union members at Putco, Greyhound, Great North and Megabus in KwaZulu-Natal a 10 percent wage increases should they return to work.

He said this had created problems for trade unions and other bus companies, since workers would never agree to settle for anything less than 10 percent. Bus companies were released to go and resolve the dissent among themselves first.

South African Bus Employers Association president Mr Barry Gie denied that Putco, Greyhound and Megabus had approached workers with 10 percent promises, stressing that it was a "shabby tactic" to forestall proper negotiations.

Gie did say, however, that the association would be dealing with Great North Bus company at a separate meeting about the allegations linked to wage offers allegedly made to employees outside the passenger bus bargaining council.

Dejected bus commuters also voiced dissatisfaction with both parties for failing to reach an agreement.

Miss Esther Ndebele was upset because she was forced to spend a lot on taxi fares from Meadowlands, Soweto, to Sandton, while she kept her unused weekly bus clip-card coupon.

Gie said they would do everything possible to resolve the wage dispute "once and for all". He indicated that parties broke to report back and seek mandates from their constituencies.

Three other unions, Western Cape Omnibus Staff, Transport and Omnibus Workers Union and Transport and General Workers Union, had revised their offer from 11 to 10 percent while employers raised their offer to seven percent.

Bus unions reject bid for longer working hours

By Eddie Javiya

Transport trade unions and the bus industry, locked in a crippling nationwide strike, are not only deadlocked on wage increases – two of the 18 companies involved also want to increase employees' working hours, claim the unions.

The strike by more than 18 000 workers enters its 12th day today, and unions have ruled out any further talks with the employers.

The unions are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase, down from their original 13% demand, and the employers are offering 7%, up from an original 4,5%.

The unions yesterday launched a scathing attack on two of the 18 bus companies involved, accusing them of holding the transport industry to ransom by demanding that bus drivers work two hours more per shift.

At the moment drivers work 12 hours. Now, claim the unions, Golden Arrow in Cape Town and Algoa in Port Elizabeth want drivers to work 14-hour shifts.

Three of the four striking unions – the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu), the Transport and General Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union – planned to march to the headquarters of Golden Arrow today to present a memorandum.

Speaking from Cape Town, Towu general secretary Gary Wilson said the unions rejected any change in working conditions.

"We will not allow Golden Arrow and Algoa to hold the industry to ransom. They have been arrogant throughout the negotiations and it is amazing that the other 16 companies can allow Golden Arrow and Algoa to derail the process.

"We will not give away the benefits we have fought for over the years. We have made it clear to the employers that a 14-hour shift is out of the question. We are not going to back down on this issue," Wilson said.

"Our members have warned us against making any concessions to the employers. The strike goes on, and if the employers don't want to improve their offer, then they must face the consequences of their stubbornness.

"They are in for a rough ride. We are more than determined to continue with the industrial action."

SA Bus Employers Association president Barry Gie denied that Golden Arrow and Algoa were holding the industry to ransom. He said all the bus companies wanted the shift to be increased to 14 hours.

"It is not an issue for Golden Arrow and Algoa only, but an issue for all the companies. We totally reject the unions' claims that only two companies favour the 14-hour shift. It appears the unions are targeting certain companies to create confusion. We have repeatedly told labour that employers are unified in their demands," Gie said.

Talks spur hope for end to bus strike

(333)

By Eddie Javiya

Prospects for an end to the crippling national bus strike – in its 13th day today – improved yesterday with an announcement by three of the four unions that they would enter into fresh talks with employers.

The Transport and General Workers' Union, the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union (WCOSU) and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union told *The Star* yesterday that they would meet the SA Bus Employers Association (Sabea) at the headquarters of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The fourth union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu), said it would not attend what it called "an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike".

The unions want a written undertaking from the employers that they will pay workers a 10% increase and drop demands for longer working hours.

The unions, representing 18 000 strikers, are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase, down from their original 13% demand, and the employers are offering 7%, up from an original 4,5%.

Towu general-secretary Gary Wilson said his union would not attend the meeting. He added that unions at the meeting would not be able to sign a binding agreement with the employers.

But WCOSU president Christopher Fredericks was confident a settlement would be reached.

Sabea president Barry Gie said there was always hope for a settlement in any talks, and expressed regret that Towu has decided to stay away from the talks.

Star 29/4/99

Bus unions, employers in new bid to end 15-day strike

SHARKEY ISAACS
Special Correspondent

Further efforts will be made today to end the bus strike, which has now lasted 15 days.

Three of the four trade unions involved are prepared to talk again with employers, but the Cape Town-based Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu) will boycott what members have described as "an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike".

Towu general secretary Gary Wilson said his union would not attend the meeting at the offices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in Johannesburg, because union delegates attending the talks would not be able to sign a binding agreement with the employers.

"It is just an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike. We will attend the meeting only if the employers are prepared to sign. We have informed the commission of our position, but we won't stop other unions from meeting the employers," he said.

South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) president Barry Gie said there was "always hope" for a settlement in any talks.

"We must now commit ourselves to the process and find ways of managing it. We are optimistic we will make progress this time around.

"It is unfortunate that Towu has decided to stay away from the talks. It would have been ideal to have all the stakeholders there," he said.

Sabea will meet representatives of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union (WCOSU) and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union (Tawu).

The unions, representing 18 000 strikers, want a written undertaking from employers that they will grant a 10% pay increase and drop their demands for longer working hours.

The union demand has come down from 13%, while the employers have gone up from 4,5% to 7%.

WCOSU's Christopher Fredericks said he was confident a settlement would be reached.

He said: "We have new proposals we will discuss with other unions to come out with a unified mandate. I am optimistic we will resolve the impasse.

"I suspect that the talks will be lengthy, but we will reach a settlement by Saturday.

"If the parties are committed to finding a solution to the strike, we might make a breakthrough today."

TGWU national co-ordinator Zakhele Sibeko said his union wanted a speedy resolution to the problem, adding: "We cannot prolong the strike unnecessarily. We must find a way forward, and it is a pity that Towu is not attending the talks.

Meanwhile, bus workers yesterday marched to the Golden Arrow Bus Service head office in Bofors Circle in Epping Industria to protest at the deadlocked wage negotiations between unions and employers.

The strike has hit 150 000 commuters who use buses to get to work daily, and has worsened congestion on the city's roads.

AUG 29 1989

Job losses loom as strike triggers bus company cuts

Khayelitsha children are ejected from school buses by drivers

ARG 29/4/99

A lot of new jobs were created

BEAUREGARD TROMP AND SIPHOKAZI MGUDLWA
STAFF REPORTERS

The national bus strike is starting to bite. Golden Arrow Bus Services has cancelled a R30-million contract for 38 new buses and scrapped a R10-million project for a new electronic ticketing system next year.

General manager Hannes Grebe said he expected the strike to result in job losses.

"Many passengers who have been forced to make alternative transport arrangements for the past two weeks will not return to bus travel once the strike is over," he said.

"A declining passenger base in an industry which, before the strike, expected only a 5% increase in revenue, bodes ill for its future viability."

He added: "There is no doubt that further job losses will occur in the industry and it is possible that some companies may have to close their doors."

Seventeen bus companies have been affected by the strike, with an estimated total of 17 000 workers.

The four unions involved in the strike are demanding an across-the-board increase of 10% and shorter working hours. Employers are offering 7%.

While strikers and the SA Bus Employers' Association members have been locked in negotiation, independent bus operators under contract to Golden Arrow have felt some sharp effects of the strike, with several incidents reported this week alone.

About 5.30am today a Manuels Bus Service bus was shot at while transporting factory workers on Old Klipfontein Road, near Boys' Town.

No one was injured in the attack, and although Manuels is a sub-contractor of Golden Arrow, police are refusing to speculate on whether the shooting was related to the strike.

Hundreds of Khayelitsha pupils who depend on private buses to get to school were left stranded yesterday when Golden Arrow drivers prevented their Chilwan's buses from leaving the township.

Pupils at Harry Gwala Secondary in Belhar, Zola Secondary in Maitland and Thembelihle Secondary in District Six were mainly affected.

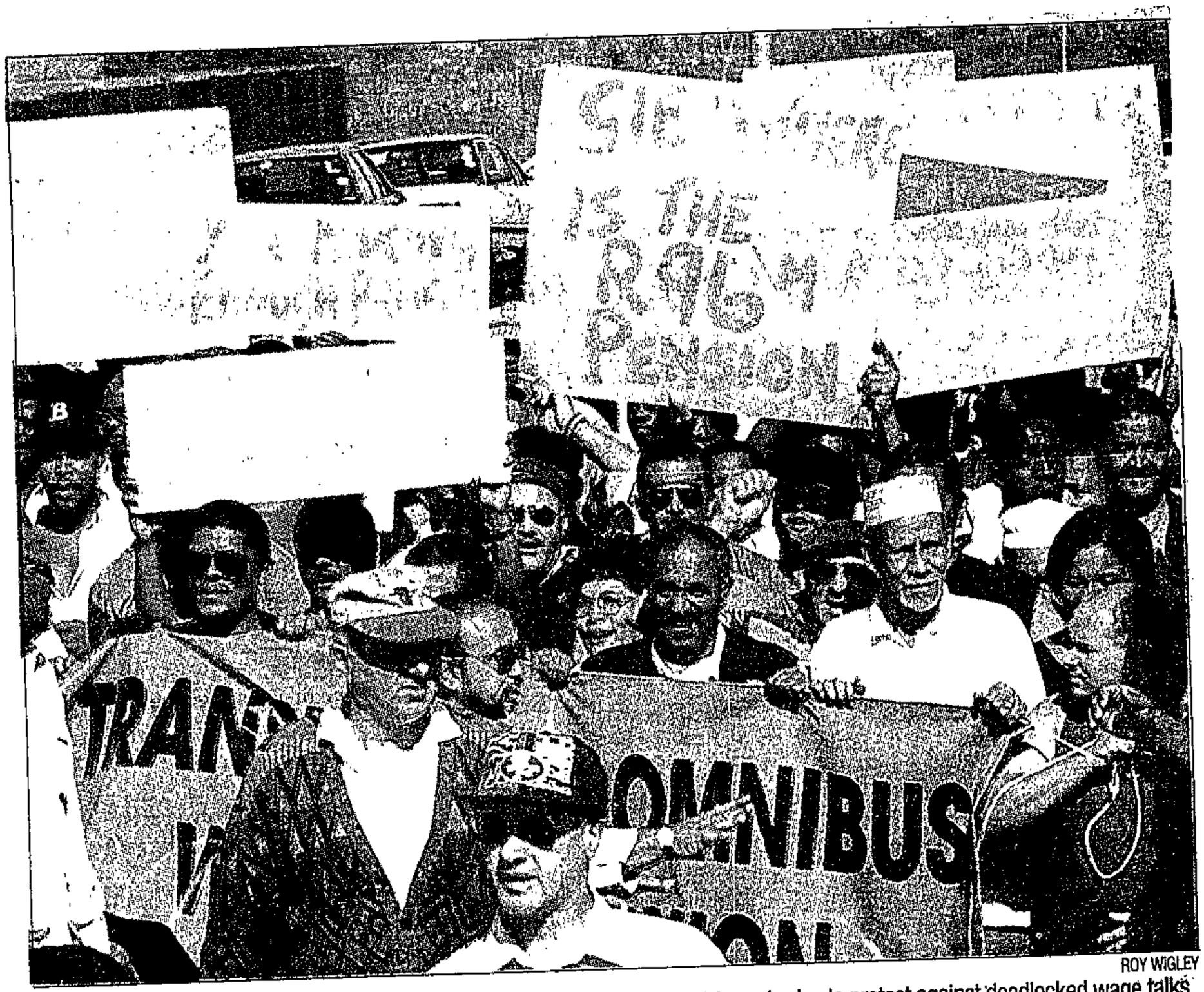
"We were told to get out of the buses because they are not allowed to transport us while they are on strike," said Sammy Adams, a Grade 11 pupil at Thembelihle Secondary.

Thembelihle principal Bongani Mfikili said: "I was very disappointed and worried because some of the people who stopped the buses transporting the pupils have children in the same schools."

Western Cape Education Department spokesman Tony Eaton said the department had referred the matter to the police.

Mogamat Soeker of the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, one of the main unions at Golden Arrow, apologised to pupils, parents and the community for the action of the drivers.

"It was not our aim to stop the children getting education," he said.



ROY WIGLEY

All aboard: bus workers march to Golden Arrow head office in Epping Industria yesterday to protest against deadlocked wage talks

333

Bus strike hits hardest at Atlantis commuters

CT 29/4/99

RHODA DAVIDS

ATLANTIS is probably one of the areas worst affected by the city's bus strike.

If it were not for the local minibus taxis, residents would have been stranded for almost two weeks. But using taxis has also doubled commuters' normal travelling expenses.

Carol Weyers from Atlantis says the bus strike took Atlantis commuters by surprise. "I bought my weekly clipcard on the Tuesday (April 13). It costs R56,30 and then on Wednesday we heard about the strikes and from the Thursday I had to travel by taxi.

"I wasted that money. I also need R20 daily for the taxi. It is R10 for a one-way trip. I now spend almost double on transport."

Weyers leaves her home just after 6am and arrives in central Cape Town at 7.45am, 15 minutes before she has clock in.

She says it takes a while longer to get to work in the morning because, instead of taxis taking the freeway route without stops, like the buses, the taxis have to stop in Paarden Island and Woodstock to drop off commuters.

This mother of three, along with her husband, who also works in Cape Town, has been commuting by bus for nearly seven years. This is the first time she has experienced a bus strike.

She added: "Thank God my husband is on leave, because I don't think we can afford R200 a week on taxi fare."

Weyers says that since the bus strike, over 50 taxis leave Atlantis in the morning for the city. In two weeks the strike has affected over 150 000 local commuters.

New talks between the employer and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) are set for this morning.

Schools say the strike is affecting pupils' education. One said 10% of 1 200 pupils had not been attending since the strike started.

Trade unions representing 18 000 strikers are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase, down from 13%.

Employers are offering seven percent, up from 4,5%.

NOT FARE: Carol Weyers is among many Atlantis residents forced to use minibus taxis because of the bus strike. *PICTURE: JACK LESTRADE*

Unions meet to assess bus strike

THE Transport and General Workers Union met yesterday to assess the 12-day-old national bus workers strike and to consolidate its position on a wage increase.

Speaking during a break from the meeting, TGWU spokesman Zakhele Sibego told reporters the union may decide to end the strike. The TGWU and three other unions were due to meet the SA Bus Employers Association (Sabea) in Johannesburg today.

The meeting would be facilitated by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The other three unions are the Transport and Allied Workers Union, the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Union and the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union.

Thousands of bus workers from 18 private bus companies have been on strike for 12 days in demand of a wage increase.

The unions and Sabea are deadlocked, with workers demanding 10 percent and the bus companies offering seven percent.

Sabea denied yesterday that the recent decision by two private bus companies to increase workers' hours from 12 to 14-hour shifts had been taken in retaliation for workers' demands for wage increases.

Association president Barry Gie said the Golden Arrow Bus Company and Algoa Bus Company decided in January this year to officially change their working day to 14 hours.

He said most private bus companies had wage determination schemes which allowed for 14-hour shifts. Gie said these were "spread over" the shift, with workers being given breaks of six or seven hours between early morning and late afternoon work.

Sibego said the unions would not agree to the companies' proposal as the union had previously fought the matter in court and won. *Sapa*

Weekend 29/4/99

(333)

Mediators close to ending bus strike

By Eddie Javiya

Mediators yesterday presented proposals separately to employers and three of the four striking transport unions in a bid to find a solution to the crippling national bus strike.

Unions at yesterday's mediation were the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union and the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union.

The Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union boycotted the mediation.

Both sides were tight-lipped about the proposals last night, but the unions were cautiously optimistic that the strike could be resolved.

The two-week industrial action by about 18 000 bus workers has forced millions of commuters to use trains and taxis.

Before negotiations began on wages and the contentious issue of shift length, the unions were initially demanding a 10% increase – a 3% compromise from their original 13% – while the employers had improved their offer from 4,5% to 7,5%.

Employers want to increase shifts from 12 to 14 hours – a plan the unions strenuously oppose.

Union sources said the mediators had proposed a wage or salary increase of between 8% and 8,5%, as well as possible solutions to shift lengths.

Argus 20/4/99

(333)

Friday April 30 1999 SOWETAN

Forum pleads for an end to bus strike

Sowetan 30/4/99

By McKeed Kotlolo

THE North West Transport Forum, concerned about the ongoing national bus strike and its negative impact on commuters, called for its immediate end yesterday.

The Botlhaba area branch of the forum expressed its concern at the continuing bus strike and the effect it has had on thousands of commuters in the past two weeks.

Forum vice chairman Mr Aaron Maphosa has called on all the parties, including trade unions and employers, to reach a settlement before the weekend, "failing which, the forum will approach Metrorail to provide trains on the Hammanskraal, Radium and Pretoria route, as a relief measure", he said.

Maphosa said they were not calling for an end to "undermine the strike action by the unions". The forum had a duty to serve the interests of commuters and, in a situation like this, alternatives had to be sought because the strike had been protracted and there was no indication that it might even be solved this week, he said.

According to the forum, the majority of Botlhaba area commuters served by the North West Star bus company were living in rural areas where buses were the only affordable means of commuting.

The forum said since the strike started, people commuting to their workplaces in Pretoria and the Babelegi industrial area daily, were forced to use taxis which, "apart from being very expensive, cannot cope with the volume of people, especially at Hammanskraal's Kopanong Centre".

Legal positions

While the forum expressed its recognition of and respect for the legal positions and the right of parties involved in the dispute – in terms of the applicable labour legislation – it also highlighted the daily hardships experienced by thousands of commuters left stranded by the strike.

"We therefore say that the people have suffered and it is now enough. Please, reach a settlement for the sake of your brothers and sisters who are caught in the middle of this dispute.

"If you cannot agree (on the increment) why not settle for a compromise and bring this to an end," the forum pleaded.

Bus strike called off as unions reach settlement

(333)

TWEET GAINSBOROUGH-WARING

ARG 15/09

Good news for bus commuters is that the two-week long nationwide bus workers' strike has finally been called off after a wage settlement between the unions and the SA Bus Employers Association.

In a statement yesterday, the Golden Arrow Bus company said a wage increase of 8,5% had been agreed upon nationwide.

A Golden Arrow spokesman said buses were expected to start running again by Monday.

But late last night Mogamat Soeker, president of the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union, said this union did not have a mandate to accept an 8,5 percent increase and its members would not be working on Monday. This means bus services in Cape Town may still be disrupted.

Commuters whose clipcards expired during the strike will be able to use them until all their unclipped rides have been used up.

Scholars' term passes will be refunded on a pro rata basis for the period of the strike if scholars submit them to the company at the end of term.

Financial losses as a result of the strike have forced the bus company to cancel a contract for 38 new buses.

Striking bus workers back in the saddle

By EDDIE JAYIYA

The two-week-long national bus strike is over and more than 18 000 striking workers will return to work on Monday.

At the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration headquarters yesterday, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union, and the SA Bus Employers' Association reached an agreement on an 8,5% increase across-the-board which would be backdated to April 1 this year. The fourth union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, boycotted the talks.

Compromise

The unions had demanded a 10% increase – a compromise from the initial 13% – while employers improved their offer from 4,5% to 7%. The contentious issue of shift work for bus drivers is to be referred to binding arbitration, in terms of the Bargaining Council's constitution.

The parties will draft separate terms of reference for the arbitration, which will take place within two to four weeks.

The signed agreement will be taken to the Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, and the parties will apply for it to be extended to any non-parties to the collective agreement that are within the registered scope of the Bargaining Council in terms of section 32(1) of the Labour Relations Act.

The unions have agreed to suspend the strike action, pending the signing of this agreement, after reporting back to their constituencies and members. All employees are expected to return to work by the first shift on Monday.

Putco senior human resources executive Thys Heyns said commuters who did not use their coupons during the strike would get a discount when buying new tickets. "Only commuters with old tickets will get the discount," he said.

Cape Town buses back on road

BEAUREGARD TROMP AND SHARKEY ISAACS
STAFF REPORTERS

ARG 3/5/99 (333)

The city's biggest union has called off the 19-day bus strike, which has affected thousands of commuters.

This morning a few buses were back on the streets, driven by members of the three unions that settled with the South African Bus Employers' Association on Friday.

But the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu), which represents more than 900 workers, held out until a meeting in Guguletu today, where members unanimously decided to end the strike.

They will return to work at midnight tonight.

Towu general-secretary Gary Wilson said the union had been unwilling to accept Friday's settlement until it had consulted its members.

"The agreement is there in principal but it is still up to those unions to ask their people if they accept," he said.

The workers had accepted "under duress" the agreement for an increase of 8,5% – and only as part of a larger bargaining body.

Protracted bus strike cost R115-m

(333)

Sowetan 4/5/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE crippling two-week national strike by 18 000 workers, which ended at the weekend, has cost the bus companies a staggering R80 million in revenue, a spokesman for the employers' association said yesterday.

Putco human resources general manager and South African Bus Employers Association deputy president Mr Thys Heyns said striking workers at 18 bus companies also lost about R35 million in wages.

Heyns said operations returned to normal yesterday after the parties agreed on an 8,5 percent wage increase brokered by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

He was happy that the workers and employers had accepted the realities of the current economic situation.

The industry was going through difficulties caused by current changes in transport policies.

"Both the employers and employees took cognisance of the difficult situation the industry is going through," Heyns said.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeko said the agreement to end the strike took immediate effect at the weekend, while the outstanding issue of working hours was referred for further arbitration.

Transport and Allied Workers Union spokesman Mr Oupa Mbele said the current 14-hour work shift was "problematic for the workers" because management persistently resisted changes as laid out in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, which stipulates shifts no longer than 12 hours.

Mbele said the workers were still meeting over the 14-hour shift to reach a settlement with employers through an independent arbitrator.

Organised labbur has rejected the appointment of an arbitrator, claiming he/she would be biased against the trade unions.

Four unions – the Transport and General Workers Union, Transport and Allied Workers Union, Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association and the Transport Omnibus Workers Union – went on the strike on April 15 after declaring a wage dispute.

Bus companies reported earlier that they were severely affected by the strike, each suffering revenue losses estimated at more than R2 million a day.

On the Cape Peninsula most bus services were also reported to be back to normal yesterday. However, some members of the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association were still holding meetings before reporting for work.

In Pretoria and in areas around the North West, bus services were also running normally yesterday. The KwaZulu-Natal Transport Services reported that buses were running on normal schedules.

Only buses from the Great North Transport Company in Northern Province were reported not to be operating, despite the agreement reached at the weekend.

The two-week bus strike, which affected millions of commuters throughout the country, cost bus companies and employees R115 million. PIC: MBUZENI ZULU

Bus strike is over at last – at a cost of millions

(333)

Sacrifice worth it, say drivers

ARG 4/5/99

SHARKEY ISAACS
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bus workers claim their 19-day work stoppage for higher wages has emphasised the value of the bargaining council in the transport industry.

They said the strike, which caused their families hardship and may have severely damaged the bus industry, was worth the sacrifice because it had forced the SA Bus Employers Association to double its initial wage offer.

They believed that in spite of the loss of nearly three weeks' pay, they would ultimately benefit. Tracing salary negotiations, they said their bosses had been pushed to increase their offer from 4,5% to to 6%, 7% and then finally to a 8,5 % across the board.

Golden Arrow bus driver Vuyani Kedama, a shop steward with the Transport and General Workers Union, said he, like many others, were satisfied with the end result. He has been a bus driver for 12 years and his present earnings before tax are R679 a week.

"Although the final settlement was not the10% increase initially demanded by the four trade unions it is still above the current inflation of 6%."

He said he was lucky in that he was married to a teacher on whose income the family was dependent.

"Without her money there would have been no food for our children. Naturally we also had to make sacrifices and budget and it was difficult to make ends meet."

Fuad Inglis, 52 , a bus driver for 30 years and father of two, said the financial side of the strike had called for sacrifices from everyone. "Every worker had wonderful support from their families. But every sacrifice is worth it if you have dignity and principles."

He has been a shop steward for the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union for 10 years.

Yesterday Towu, which represents more than 900 workers, decided at a meeting in Guguletu to accept Sabea's 8,5% offer and end the strike. The other three unions involved in the strike had voted to settle on Friday.

Towu president Mogamat Soeker said members of the city's biggest bus driver union had been forced to accept the settlement only "under duress" as part of the larger bargaining body.

"This was first ever legal bus worker strike under the ANC government. In the previous pro-apartheid regime bus operators were regarded as an essential service and its workers were forbidden to strike under the old Labour Act."

■ The strike cost Golden Arrow millions of rands and the company also had to cancel two contracts amounting to more than R40-million.

Sowetan 21/9/99 (333)

Taxi violence results in boycott call

SHOTS were again fired at the Mdantsane taxi rank in East London yesterday, after taxi-related violence over the weekend in which one person was killed and seven injured.

Police spokesman Captain Sibongile Ndyoko said shots were fired at the Highway Taxi Rank in Mdantsane.

The shots were fired into the ground and nobody was injured, but a man was arrested and may be charged with discharging a firearm in a public place.

Yesterday's shooting follows a bloody weekend for taxi drivers and commuters which started on Friday afternoon when a King William's Town taxi driver was shot dead.

It ended on Sunday when seven people were injured during a confrontation between two rival taxi groups in Mdantsane.

On Thursday two groups – Mdantsane East London Taxi Association and Melta Non-Racial – signed a ceasefire and promised to hand themselves in to police for detention in the event of a renewed outbreak of violence between the groups.

On Sunday, a group of East London women fed up with the violence which has seen commuters caught in the crossfire, met to muster support for a taxi boycott.

The date for the boycott is still to be announced but the women will ask the local government to close the ranks and arrange alternate transport until the conflict is resolved. – *Sapa*

Taxi drivers prepare for strike

(333)

Thousands of commuters may be stranded today if drivers halt work due to suspects being let go

BD 23/9/99

Stan Maphologela and Sapa

THOUSANDS of taxi commuters in several parts of Johannesburg and the East Rand could be left stranded if taxi drivers carry out strike plans in protest against the bail application of five taxi owners charged with murder at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

The National Taxi Drivers' Organisation (Natdo) called yesterday on Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete, Justice Minister Penuell Maduna and Gauteng premier Mbhazima Shilowa to intervene immediately.

This follows a recent ambush incident where about 13 taxi drivers intending to meet for a strike were shot by taxi owners from Faraday Taxi Association.

A possible strike action today by about 600 drivers will be aimed at opposing the granting of bail to five Faraday Taxi Association members who were arrested as a result.

The five are facing charges relating to the shooting in Johannesburg of 13 drivers, two of whom died, in August in a violent clash between the taxi owners and their employees.

The accused are to appear today in court, with the likelihood of getting bail.

Natdo president Themba Mgabhi said commuters travelling to work would be ferried as normal until the beginning of the strike this morning. Most of the commuters who will be affected will be those travelling between Johannesburg's Faraday rank and Katlehong on the East Rand, Alberton, Turffontein, Southgate, Linmeyer and Mulbarton.

Mgabhi warned that the strike action could continue "indefinitely" should the five accused be granted bail. Drivers would march to the offices of the justice and safety and security departments if the owners were released.

"We will continue the action for as long as the perpetrators are outside, as we are convinced that their release will result in more of our members being killed," he said.

Mgabhi accused the police of dragging their feet in arresting all those suspected of having participated in the attacks. "We were shocked to learn that only five were arrested despite more than 10 names being submitted. It is also surprising that up until now, no statements have yet been taken from the victims and witnesses," he said.

Natdo was not satisfied with the handling of the case, which it said was referred from the Soweto police taxi violence unit to the Heidelberg unit.

Johannesburg police spokesman Capt Lungelo Dlamini disputed this, saying there could not have been arrests without witnesses' statements. He said the case was never investigated by the Soweto taxi violence unit.

Natdo demands that Maduna ensures that the taxi owners who were arrested not be given bail, and that Tshwete ensures the other taxi assassins be arrested as soon as possible.

New airline to train black pilots (333)

SOUTH Africa's first black-owned international carrier, due to take to the air later this year, has embarked on a campaign to recruit and train young black pilots as Boeing 747 flight crew.

"For historical reasons, black South African Boeing 747 skippers, pilots and co-pilots are a very rare breed," African Star Airways' managing director, Mr Joseph Kirama, said in a statement.

"At the moment there is virtually no pool of experience to draw upon," he said.

The airline would establish an academy equipped with a flight simulator as well as two Boeing 747s to train black cockpit crew.

Academy

Mafikeng Airport in North West had been identified as a possible site for the academy.

Additionally, newly recruited pilots not yet rated to fly Boeings would receive some of their 747 training in conjunction with other international airlines.

Kirama said the carrier would draw heavily on local expertise when recruiting both flight and ground crew.

This already included applications from almost 100 former Sun Air employees.

The airline has been registered as a member of the International Air Transport Association. – *Sapa*

Sowetan 30/9/99

CAPE TIMES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1999

COMPANY CAST 'IN A BAD LIGHT'

Intercape suspends bus driver who spoke out

(333)

CT 4/10/99 ~~270~~

TOUR BUS OPERATOR Intercape is to prevent its employees from joining trade unions, claims the bus driver who was suspended by the firm last week. **GASANT ABARDER** reports.

AN Intercape bus driver who spoke out about the poor working conditions of South African bus drivers has been suspended from duty "because he cast his company in a bad light".

Vuyo Khebeni, who has worked for the tour bus operator for three years, told the *Cape Times* last week of how operators mistreated drivers following a spate of horror bus accidents — including one involving an Intercape bus — in the past few weeks, which has claimed scores of lives and left many injured.

Drivers had to put up with shoddy accommodation, high levels of stress, deadlines and other poor working conditions, which were major reasons for many of the accidents, Khebeni said last week.

Khebeni, a Transport and General Workers' Union shop steward, said that the firm was trying to prevent workers from joining trade unions.

On Friday, Khebeni received a letter from his employer to inform him that he had been suspended. The letter stated that he had brought Intercape into disrepute.

"My conscience is very clear. Everything I said was true and I stood up for my rights. I was prepared to put my neck on the line, and I feel that my right to freedom of speech is being infringed," he said.

Khebeni also claimed that Intercape management was "threatening and victimising people one way or another by advancing people who don't join the unions".

"If they get rid of me, there will be no one to look after the workers. I am the only one who stood up to them (management). Morale amongst workers is low, working conditions are poor and workers are afraid to approach management with their problems," he said.

Khebeni said that with the letter confirming his suspension, he received a letter of warning dated September 14 1999, which he did not receive on that day. He was warned of "unacceptable behaviour" which, he said, management could not define.

He will be informed today of the date for his disciplinary hearing.

Intercape human resources manager Floris Hamman could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Ruling averts taxi strike

(333)

A TAXI strike may have been averted yesterday when five taxi owners were refused bail in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

Five people are facing two counts of murder, three of attempted murder and malicious damage to property arising from a dispute between drivers and bosses affiliated to the Faraday Taxi Association.

The drivers, who may not be named, were arrested on September 2 in connection with a shooting incident in which 13 taxi drivers were shot while inside a minibus taxi in the city centre on August 31.

The court referred to the requirements of proving exceptional circumstances and found the five had succeeded with their claims of self-defence.

However, the legislation, besides requiring proof of exceptional circumstances also required the granting of bail to be in the interests of justice.

Magistrate Helene Engelbrecht said: "The effect of a threatened strike cannot be ignored. People would be unable to go to work. There would be tremendous economic repercussions and the security of members of the public would be in jeopardy."

Before postponing the case to November 10 for further investigation she also found the lives of the five suspects and their families would be in jeopardy if the court granted bail. — *Sapa*

Sowetan 5/10/99

Bus driver set to face disciplinary hearing

CT 5/10/99

(333)

GASANT ABARDER

THE bus driver who has spoken about poor working conditions in the tour bus industry is to appear before a disciplinary hearing tomorrow that could lead to his dismissal.

Vuyo Khebeni, who has worked for tour bus operator Intercape for three years, told the *Cape Times* last week that drivers had to put up with shoddy accommodation, high levels of stress, deadlines and poor working conditions.

Speaking in the wake of a spate of bus crashes that claimed scores of lives and left many injured, Khebeni said he believed drivers' poor working conditions contributed to many accidents.

Khebeni, a Transport and General Workers Union shop steward, claimed that his employer was trying to prevent workers from joining trade unions.

On Friday, Khebeni was handed a letter telling him he was being suspended because he "spoke out to the media regarding Intercape" and "had made assumptions without fact".

Yesterday, he received notice of the disciplinary hearing. He is being charged with breaches of the company's code of conduct:

- Breach of trust;
- Breakdown of employment relationship "in that an employee publicly spoke about last week's bus accident — contrary to instructions from management and the terms of the employment contract — which is both negligent and wrong";
- Making incorrect misrepresentations to the public based on unverified assumptions.

Khebeni said that his right to freedom of speech was being violated. He had not referred to any specific operator.

He said bus drivers were afraid to speak out because they could be easily replaced.

Floris Hamman, human resources manager of Intercape, said: "This is an internal matter. All I want is for Mr Khebeni to explain his accusations, which have so far been unfounded. Why is it that none of the other workers are having problems?"

In a statement to the *Cape Times* yesterday, Intercape denied all allegations made by Khebeni. "They are unfounded and not based on fact. It is our company policy to respect the right to organise and belong to trade unions as well as the principle of freedom of association."

Strike goes ahead despite bosses' plea in court

Simphiwe Xako (333)(152)

THE SA Federation for Civil Engineering Contractors (Safcec) applied for an urgent interdict yesterday to prevent today's wage strike by more than 18 000 employees going ahead.

The Labour Court will hear the matter tomorrow, so the strike will go ahead.

The strike, called by the Construction and Allied Workers' Union and the Building Construction and Allied Workers' Union (Bcawu), follows a deadlock over wages.

The unions are demanding a 9% increase, while employers are offering 7%.

Federation spokesman Hennie Botha said Safcec would implement an 8,6% overall cost of employment increase. A Bcawu spokesman said had the offer had been made earlier the strike would have been called off.

BD 6/10/99

Intercape driver's claims echoed

CT 6/10/99 (333)

GASANT ABARDER

TWO more bus drivers who worked for tour bus operator Intercape have spoken out about the company's alleged intolerance toward trade unions and general ill-treatment of its workers.

Vuyo Khebeni, a driver and Transport and General Workers Union shop steward employed by Intercape, was suspended and is facing a disciplinary hearing today for telling the *Cape Times* of the ills of the tour bus industry.

Khebeni said the stressful conditions workers had to endure were behind the present spate of fatal bus accidents.

Intercape has charged Khebeni on three contraventions of its code of conduct:

- Breach of trust.
- Breakdown of the employment relationship when he spoke out about a bus accident, against management's instructions.
- Making incorrect representations to the public, based on assumptions that were not verified.

Yesterday another two drivers who formerly worked at Intercape painted a similar picture to that given to the *Cape Times* by Khebeni.

Ashley Pitso, who left Intercape in 1998, after two years of service, said the owner of the company had personally given him an ultimatum when he wanted to join a trade union.

"I was told the trade unions did not sign my pay cheques and that if I joined the unions I must leave. Then I was put on long-distance trips and received a pay increase for not joining the trade unions," he said. But conditions on long-distance trips were "horrific".

"Drivers have to cope with long hours, driving alone for up to 13 hours," he said.

Pitso, who is much happier now as a driver with another tour bus company, had no doubt that poor working conditions and fatigue of overworked drivers led to accidents.

Another former Intercape driver, Maynard Fourie, said he was given the same message by management about trade unions. He also believed stressful conditions contributed to the high rate of bus accidents.

Intercape, meanwhile, has denied Khebeni's allegations, saying they are unfounded.

Skills training given to taxi drivers

A TOTAL of 797 taxi drivers from all nine provinces of South Africa have attended the three-day taxi training project, sponsored jointly by Toyota South Africa and the department of transport.

The training is aimed at improving the driving skills of taxi drivers, and was provided as part of the implementation of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) initiative, launched by the department of transport in 1996.

First launched in March in the Western Cape, the project saw 664 taxi drivers pass the three-day training course, while 120 failed and 13 did not complete the training.

Toyota SA supplied six Toyota Hi-Ace minibuses for the training.

"Toyota SA, as a concerned corporate citizen, embarked on this joint project with the department of tranport with the aim of improving the driving skills of taxi drivers. Toyota SA is concerned about the high number of accidents on our roads and by offering this training course, the company wished to help improve road safety," said Francois Loubser, Toyota's director of marketing communications.

Gerhard de Coning, the executive manager for Gerotek, said the training project was a great success. "Our aim was to train 1 000 taxi drivers, but due to circumstances beyond our control, we could manage to train only 797 taxi drivers in the six-month period. Gerotek would like to thank Totoya SA and the department of transport for making this training possible."

Dumisani Ntuli, the department of transport's senior project manager: capacity development, said the motivation behind the taxi driver training programme was to eliminate the high number of accidents on the roads that involved minibus taxis. (333)

He added that, with the support of companies such a Toyota South Africa, projects such as training courses for taxi drivers would go a long way in improving service provision and the safety of passengers.

"These projects will not only improve the driving skills of taxi drivers and ensure peace of mind for their passengers, but will go a long way in helping to curb the high number of accidents on our roads," said Ntuli. (~~334~~) (179)

The training course consisted of the following modules: basic defensive driving techniques, advanced driving techniques, customer relations and client interaction, basic business skills, vehicle maintenance, anti-hijacking techniques, road safety signs and regulations knowledge refresher course, vehicle inspection, vehicle set-up, K53 driving principles, skid recognition and control, cadence braking and obstacle avoidance and braking distance.

The trainees were evaluated before the training started to identify each individual's inherent weaknesses. During training, the instructors focused on these weaknesses to rectify them. Every trainee was evaluated after training by an instructor other than the one who trained him or her, to determine whether the trainee complied with the required standard.

Two tests were written, one on road signs and regulations and the other on theoretical aspects of driving, as well as a practical driving test. A pass on all three was required for successful completion.

CP 31/10/99

Women taxi owners unite

By Ndivhuwo Khangale (333)

Sowetan 5/11/99

WOMEN taxi owners in Gauteng are making their presence felt in the male-dominated industry and believe that can change its tarnished image by instilling a culture of tolerance.

The recent establishment of the Eastern Gauteng Taxi Association Women's League (EGTAWL) is proof of their determination.

EGTAWL is an association of women who own taxis and who are also the wives of taxi bosses.

Their involvement in the taxi business is aimed at creating a violent-free industry.

The association has branches in Thokoza, Zonkesizwe, Benoni, Springs, Nigel, Brakpan and Vosloorus.

Members meet once a month to discuss means of curbing taxi violence.

An addition to the fast growing association, the Vosloorus-Boksburg Taxi Association Woman's League (VBTAWL) branch will be launched tomorrow at the Volsloorus Civic Centre.

VBTAWL chairwoman Mrs Thandi Gule said: "We want to discourage our husbands from resolving problems in the industry through fighting.

"When they die, we are the ones who suffer. Through this association we can harmonise easily with our husbands. We know how to calm them down," Gule said.