

MINERS TAKE TO THE STREETS

Since the beginning of May, hundreds of thousands of mineworkers have embarked on a wave of mass action in support of a living wage, an end to repression and a general improvement in working conditions.

More than 150 000 workers have challenged the bosses' oppression and domination by staging protest marches, underground sit-ins, go-slows and strikes.

Eskom workers also staged a national protest action on June 29. This action forced the bosses to stop their programme of restructuring the industry which have resulted in heavy job losses (see story on page 8).

Chronology of protest actions

May 23

* Ten thousand workers from Gold Fields and JCI mines marched in Johannesburg to present demands at head offices of the two mining houses.

SACP General Secretary Chris Hanl, was amongst those who led the march and pledged SACP support to the demands of mineworkers.

June 5

* About 20 000 workers at Anglo American Corporation's Vaal Reefs mines marched to the bosses' offices to present demands.

Demands included the abolition of the mines' private army, recognition of NUM by mines, declaration of a moratorium on retrenchments, turning hostels into family homes, removal of racial discrimination, an end to union bashing and the installation of an Interim Government.



Show of force: mineworkers out in the streets of Johannesburg.

June 13

* 3000 Anglo-Vaal's Haartebeesfontein workers marched in Johannesburg to present demands to improve conditions of employment.

Hartebeesfontein Gold Mine is known for its anti-union activities. NUM members have been organising workers with management always delaying or destroying new membership forms due for processing. This tactic has made it difficult for NUM to gain recognition.

The 19 000-strong workforce support NUM, while bosses use dirty tactics to deny them freedom to belong to the union of their choice.

Workers demands are:-

- * the recognition of NUM for all job categories 1-8;
- * the proper and speedy processing of stop order forms;
- * an immediate end to harassment of workers by mine security;
- * the provision of quality food.

June 17

20 000 miners employed at Anglo American's mines in Carletonville marched in demand of a decent wage and the democratisation of hostels. The workers were from Western Deep Levels and Elandsrand gold mines.

NUM Vice-president Elijah Barayi led the march from Western Deep Levels No. 9 shaft to the mine manager's office at No.3 shaft.

NUM delegation was met by mine managers who promised a speedy response to the miners demands.

June 19

More than 6000 President Steyn miners marched to the mine offices demanding a living wage.

A memorandum demanding a 20 percent wage increase was presented to mine bosses. Another demand was for free riders to pay a fee for services they enjoy from efforts of the NUM.

June 24

Rand Mines' Harmony gold mine was flooded with 10 000 miners demanding better conditions of work and an end to large-scale retrenchments

Motlatsi meets Cuban president Fidel Castro



In a recent visit to Cuba by a delegation of the National Union of Mineworkers, Fidel Castro personally welcomed them to the country. The NUM delegation had attended May Day celebrations in the country's capital, Havana. Over a million people joined in the festivities.

James Motlatsi, president of the NUM, is seen in the picture above shaking hands with the Cuban leader.

The NUM has sent a number of workers to Cuba for training in fields such as engineering for periods of up to seven years.



Demand for better wages: part of mineworkers demonstrating against poverty wages.

that are currently underway. 6000 workers are to lose their jobs in this latest attack on mineworkers jobs.

June 25

About 7 500 mineworkers at Anglo's Free State Saalplaas gold mine marched from their hostels to the manager's office to present demands.

Demands were for the improvement of general conditions of work and higher wages.

June 25

The entire workforce at I.M.S. of 337 marched to management office to demand better conditions of work and a living wage.

June 29

3000 Eskom workers marched on Eskom offices at Megawatt Park near Johannesburg.

The major demand was to stop Eskom from unilaterally restructuring the industry. Another demand concerned supplying electricity to the 23 million blacks who need it now. Eskom is now involved

in negotiations with unions to discuss, amongst others, the restructuring process and the involvement of workers therein.

June 29

7000 mineworkers at Anglo's Freddie's Mine in OFS marched in protest against poverty wages and bad working conditions.

June 30

9000 mineworkers at Anglo's Free State Geduld demonstrated against starvation wages and bad conditions of work.

NUM to donate R30 000 to victims of violence

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has committed itself to contribute an amount of R30 000.00 to the Boipatong Relief Fund to help the victims of the Boipatong massacre and other victims of violence throughout the country.

The announcement was made by James Motlatsi, when addressing thousands of workers at Western Deep Levels on June 29. The workers were commemorating the victims of Boipatong in which more than 40 people were killed