

Thousands join in street protests

THE country has been swept by a massive mood of defiance against apartheid laws.

The people have taken to the streets to show their opposition to apartheid and racism.

Defiance actions in the past few months have included massive marches involving hundreds of thousands of people, the stayaway against the elections and occupations of "whites-only" hospitals and beaches.

"Unbanning" ANC, UDF

The people have "unbanned" organisations like the UDF and ANC by openly wearing t-shirts and stickers. They have ridden on white busses, swum in white pools and boycotted white shops.

On the mines workers have protested against racist practices like segregated lifts and changerooms.

And by their highly disciplined and mainly peaceful actions, the people of South Africa have once again proved that it is the apartheid government and their army and police who are the real source of violence.

The focus of the defiance campaign of the Mass Democratic Movement is not only to defy apartheid laws.

It is also part of the MDM's strategy to build the climate necessary for negotiations with the government to bring about

the transfer of power to the majority.

"The defiance campaign derives from the lack of political power by the majority of South Africans and will continue until the people have access to political and economic power", said UDF national executive member Titus Mafolo.

He said people at the local level were now taking the initiative around the campaign and using it to start rebuilding organisation.

Right to speak

COSATU general secretary Jay Naidoo said another focus of the campaign was "our right to speak, organise, meet and protest freely."

"In this way", he said, "we will be building the free political climate necessary for any meaningful negotiations to take place."

Naidoo said the union movement's opposition to the Labour Relations Amendment Act should be seen as part of the general mood of defiance in the country.

Build organisation

The South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) said the defiance campaign would only be strengthened if organisation was strengthened.

"Only by consciously reviving organisations repressed by the emergency, and regrouping and

consolidating our existing organisations, will we be able to take forward the campaign."

The campaign, originally aimed against the Group Areas Act, Separate Amenities and other racist laws has gone far beyond that as the people have included other demands in their marches.

The COSATU congress in July this year took a decision to mobilise "a National Defiance Campaign against all unjust and discriminatory laws".

Local demands

Marches such as those in Cra-dock and Oudshoorn have taken up the question of high rents while other marches have demanded the release of detained leaders.

What is happening is local organisations are taking up the campaign and using it to highlight grievances and demands particular to their areas.



A marching mood of defiance across the country

One worker's story of discrimination at Kinross

This is what one worker, David from Kinross Mine has to say about his experiences of racism. David speaks for thousands of other mineworkers.

"Firstly we must have an armband as an underground worker. Staff members and mine officials carry ID cards. I see this as discriminatory."

"The problem is white workers don't wear armbands. I agree with others when they say we are just slaves who are known by their numbers. Whites are known by their names."

"On our mine there is a separate cage for white and black people. Whites don't have to queue for long. When they phone

their cage arrives, but we have to queue for hours even if their cage is empty. Sometimes we finish work at 12 and are still queuing at 2."

Another complaint workers have is that they have no time to eat, drink or rest underground.

"Since I arrived in 1983 we have never been given time to eat underground. We make a meal and water to take underground with us. But we sip at it while we work."

"Whites are given free lemon squash by the mine and they carry lunch packs. Then they sit and eat lunch while the team leader does all the jobs like checking and supervising."

A common grievance is what happens to people who get sick or slightly injured underground.

"If a white gets sick he c

phone and will go up immediately. If a black gets sick he waits until the time he is supposed to come up."

Workers are also angered by the differences between the quality of food and segregated canteens - these are often justified on the basis of skills or seniority.

"There is a canteen for officials where they pay 25c for breakfast. They get two eggs, bacon, liver or sausage and bread and butter."

"Blacks get free brown bread and tea. Even if a black worker wanted to pay for breakfast or lunch he would not be allowed into the canteen."

"There is job discrimination. A black man can prove himself to be more efficient and a harder worker than a white man. But he will not be made a supervisor. There is no black man - no matter how educated - who is supervising white men."

"Another thing that angers me is training. Each white man when he arrives is trained for supervision - that is to supervise a black man."

"This year is the first year the mine has started training black miners. Whites start straight away but a black has to wait several years, and even then he is discriminated against in terms of training and advancement."

"The other area of discrimination is that of housing."

"Finally, there is racism right up to death. A black mineworker gets a very cheap coffin and his body is placed into a van while white miners get expensive coffins and a hearse."



NUM Rustenberg organiser TITI MTHENJANE speaks at the funeral service of Defiance Campaign victim JEFFREY NJUZA. Comrade NJUZA was shot and killed by a white supervisor in the purification plant of Rustenberg Refineries on 2 September. It is believed a racial incident over the use of a "whites only" tea cup led to his untimely death. His five year old son, THEMBA, salutes his father's memory.

Police beat NUM members after funeral of Defiance victim

ABOUT 10 000 people converged on the small township of Thlabane, near Rustenberg, to pay their last respects to the first victim of the Mines Defiance Campaign, Comrade Jeffrey Njuza.

Mourners at the Roman Catholic Church heard speaker after speaker tell of the courage of Comrade Njuza in defying racism.

On the way to the cemetery the singing mourners were met with Bophutswana police and soldiers armed with rifles and teargas canisters.

Without warning several teargas canisters and live bullets were shot into the cemetery. After the short disrupted burial mourners were beaten, sjambokked and tear-gassed.