

NUM NEWS



THE mining industry will never be the same again. When 325 000 mine-workers supported the union's call for a day of mourning, and were joined by some 300 000 workers from Cosatu, they were taking the biggest national action of its kind.

This action showed:
 * That all workers see safety as important.
 * That the NUM has the support of most of the miners.
 * That the union is prepared to fight to get the best health and safety conditions in the industry.

There will be no turning back. Safety must be negotiated with the NUM. Safety must be put before profits.

Who is Gencor fooling?
 The underground visit to Kinross arranged by Gencor showed that a leopard can never change its spots. It showed that Gencor is not prepared to give the union reasonable

COMMENT

and adequate access to prepare its case for the inquiry into the disaster at Kinross gold mine. It showed that Gencor remains anti-union. Although it eventually granted the NUM permission to go underground, the visit's value was limited because:

- * The union's experts were part of a group of 60 people that went to the scene of the accident. Many of those who went had no members at the mine (Uwusa and Amawu).
- * Some 13 days had passed since the date of the accident and the area had been cleared.
- * The union's advisors

did not even get time to take measurements on site and were not allowed to remove any of the materials.

* No opportunity was given to ask questions, although this was promised.

This clearly affects the union's case in trying to establish the truth. Who is Gencor fooling?

Many statements have been made concerning the safety of SA mines. Many invitations have been sent to foreign governments to send safety experts to examine conditions -- yet the NUM is not even given proper access after the Kinross disaster!

Wage dispute



After a year of record profits, the Chamber of Mines still refuses to meet the union's wage demand of 26% across the board.

The mine owners made over R19000-million profit last year. With a rising gold price, the mine owners are still making good profits. But they continue to pay starvation wages.

The union is committed to getting a living wage. And the mine owners have shown, over time, that they are only prepared to listen when workers strike.

Mozambique
 The government action to reduce the number of Mozambicans working in

South Africa is outrageous and unwarranted. Instead of addressing the problems in South Africa, the government continues its policy of destabilisation and aggression against neighbouring states.

This action is clearly part of its attempt to defend apartheid and capitalism in the wake of concerted international pressure.

The solution to the South African question and peace in the sub-continent is not to end the contracts of Mozambican workers.

It has been repeatedly stated that:

- * The unbanning of the ANC and other organisations;
- * The release of all political prisoners;
- * The freedom of association and political activity; and
- * An end to apartheid are among the necessary preconditions to end the current crisis in the country.

Fighting the fight, worldwide

THE miners' battle is an international one -- and that is how it is being fought.

All over the world, miners are demanding their rights, and taking action to win them.

Bolivia
 The Mineworkers' Union of Bolivia is fighting government plans to close two tin mines and the privatisation of nine others. In a protest march more than 5 000 mineworkers walked from the mining area to the capital, La Paz.

After the march was stopped, miners went on a hunger strike.

Since President Victor Paz

Estenssoro came to power more than 7 000 miners have lost their jobs and there are fears that another 10 000 will be unemployed.

Production has decreased from 20 000 tons to 10 000 tons and is expected to go down to 2 000 tons this year.

The Bolivian Mineworkers' Union is putting pressure on the government to keep control of the state mines, and resist the transfer of mines to the private sector.

The production of tin is important to the Bolivian economy, because almost all the tin mined there is exported to other countries.

Because of the protests -- and to prevent the miners from reaching the capital -- the government declared a state of emergency.

Over 160 union leaders were arrested and taken to small villages in the north-east of the country, and the miners' march was stopped by soldiers in Calamarca, 60 kilometres from the capital.

Although the government said it will look at the miners' grievances, the workers are still very suspicious.

To show how serious they are, 1 000 miners started a hunger strike. Twenty-five

days after the hunger strike started, the government agreed to reconsider the closure of mines and to look for alternative work for the miners. It also released arrested union leaders.

Meetings between the Miners' International Federation and Bolivian mineworkers' leaders were held in Brussels in August.

Spain
 Rio Tinto copper mine in Huelva came to a standstill when the workers refused to accept the retrenchment of 1 350 workers in July and August.

The mine has been operating at a loss because of low copper prices, but the workers insisted that profits should suffer, not jobs.

They have rejected the staff cuts and brought the mine to a standstill.

Other workers in the industrial area have organised a general strike.

Yugoslavia
 Four mineworkers were killed and 12 injured in a mine explosion at Seoci in the Kakanj coalfield of Yugoslavia.