

An appeal from the DLF to our sisters and brothers in the workers movement: Let us unite in the year of the united front, let us stand together with striking platinum mineworkers and defeat the Chamber of Mines.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All
A living wage for mineworkers is a living wage for all

Comrades,

We humbly write these words to draw your attention to the struggle and sacrifice that platinum mineworkers are making for a living wage. A victory for the platinum workers will be massive for all South African workers, regardless of which trade union they belong to or which federation they are part of.

The platinum miners' strike for R12,500 is a legitimate demand. Workers have been massacred for making this demand. Yet the platinum workers are un-cowed. 12 weeks on strike, but they are holding steadfast. It's a response to the doubling of prices for basic food stuffs over the past five years and wage repression pursued by the mine bosses over the past 15 years. Mining Capital as a whole has managed in this short space of time to ensure a fall in the wage share of total value produced in South Africa every year, from 55% in 1997 to 38% in 2012 (Stats SA). In platinum mining the wage share of new value created stood at 61% in 1997. By 2012, it had fallen to 35%!

The strike is a response to the excessive profiteering of the platinum bosses. Platinum has enjoyed extremely high rates of return on investment. R48 billion of the R158 billion in mining profits paid out to shareholders from 2006 to 2011 were from platinum mining. This fact has not been lost on miners, who have seen massive expansion of operations and their senior managers earn grotesque sums of money.

The strike is also a response to the bosses demand for a 15% and upwards returns on their investments. This profit bench mark was set last year by the mining giant Anglo American, owner of Angloplats. It would translate into a profit increase of more than R29.5 billion for Angloplats, Implats and Lonmin together from the current profit levels. This is what the shareholders demand! But if far less than half of those increased profits they want were instead to be divided between all the 135 000 workers employed by the 3 giant companies - permanent as well as contract workers - they all would receive a wages well above R12500, after all deductions. Why should we accept excessive profiteering at the expense of a living wage?

And make no mistake: the strike is also about HOPE! Despite the Marikana massacre, the mighty movement that followed showed that workers can do it. Our world can be changed, it must be changed and we will change it!

It is therefore no wonder the propaganda waged by the bosses and their lackeys in the media about affordability and threats of shaft closures has failed to weaken the resolve of the striking mineworkers and its leadership. The refusal of the platinum giants to budge from their initial offer is not about affordability, its simply about power, as was the case with the 1987 strike. Again like the 1987 strike could have already met this demand with the losses incurred to date.

Unlike the unwillingness of the bosses to make any compromise, the mineworkers have made five compromises on their set of demands. The bosses are not negotiating in good faith.

We appeal to all trade unionists to rally against the unity of the capitalist class

supported by the state and to respond with our own show of unity. To this end we appeal for support for the section 77 protected strike that NACTU has applied for.

We also appeal for the trade unions to hold money collections in support of the newly established AMCU strike fund. Monies can be deposited into the following account:

Bank: Standard Bank - Witbank Business Centre

Account Name: AMCU Association of Mineworkers and Construction Strike Fund

Account Number: 332 748 634

Branch Code: 052 750

* Those outside South Africa making a transfer may need the following additional information:

(1) The SWIFT address (Sort Code) is SBZAZAJJ

(2) The physical address of the bank is Saveways Crescent Centre, Oliver Tambo Drive corner of Nelson Mandela Drive, Witbank 1035, Mpumalanga province, South Africa.

(3) Telephone +27 13 653 0205

(4) Fax +27 13 656 0752

Copies of deposit slips or EFT transfers must be emailed to dlf.wcape.tradeunion@outlook.com and in the e-mail please indicate which organization/church/group made the deposit and the province (or country if outside South Africa.)

At this moment in time our slogan an injury to one is an injury to all has be put into practice. A defeat of the mineworkers will be a defeat for the entire workers movement. We have to put aside our political and organisational affiliations to build the unity capable of stopping the bosses starving one of the most powerful sections of the working class back to work.

Issued by the National Committee of the Democratic Left Front

Email: dlf.wcape.tradeunion@outlook.com

Phone: +27 82 085 7088 or +27 82 707 9860