



Box "23"



MAY DAY  
MESSAGE

JOINTLY ISSUED BY:

- COMMERCIAL CATERING & ALLIED WORKERS UNION
- GENERAL & ALLIED WORKERS UNION
- BRUSHES & CLEANERS WORKERS UNION
- COUNCIL OF UNIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA

May day is also known as Labour Day, is celebrated on the first day of May by workers throughout the world each year.

It started off in America in 1890, when workers demanded an eight hour day by holding demonstrations and parades. In this way workers demonstrated their determinations to bring an end to their exploitations.

Ever since then, workers throughout the world have demonstrated their solidarity and support for each other. Meetings, parades and celebrations are held in every corner of the globe.

May Day has thus become the day of the working people all over the world. It is a date which is celebrated by trade unions throughout the world to demonstrate against all forms of harassment and exploitation by employers.

#### IN SOUTH AFRICA:

In South Africa, this date has first been commemorated in 1926. It is once again being celebrated this year. It is therefore a very opportune moment for workers to examine and discuss their lives and to understand the significance of their exploitation as workers and their oppression in South Africa.

There are unjust laws in South Africa which cause much suffering and pain. Influx control for example, leads to workers being hounded out of the urban areas because they are not regarded as a permanent part of South Africa. It has led to the breakup of virtually every family. The pass laws disrupt the lives of workers every single day. Other workers are ruthlessly moved out and forcibly shifted into uninhabitable barren areas .

The worker in South Africa need to remember this. The worker is the victim of a cruel and oppressive system.

The continued detention and harassment of trade unionists, the deaths in detention and restrictive labour laws make it impossible for the worker in South Africa to ignore Labour Day. The basic things which workers struggle for are the same throughout the world:

The workers in every nation seek freedom and justice

The workers in every nation want peace and an end to war

The workers in every nation want to have employment

The workers in every nation want to see their children receive free and equal education

The workers in every nation want to live where they can choose to

The workers in every nation want to live in a free and just society.

It is appropriate that on May Day we demonstrate our determination to struggle for these goals. We need to break the chains of our exploitation and oppression.

#### SOLIDARITY:

On this day, together with workers throughout the world, we therefore pledge to fight for bread for everyone, peace in the world, and freedom for all.

It is necessary that as South African workers, we pledge ourselves today to build a society which provides freedom not oppression; peace and not war; employment and not unemployment; equal and not discriminatory education; to live where they can choose and not in government ghettos; and to live in a free and just society, not an oppressive and exploitative one.

We therefore ask that workers

- not buy any goods on 1 May 1984

as a protest against the General Sales Tax and food price increases.

Jointly issued by:

Commercial, Catering & Allied Workers Union

General & Allied Workers Union

Brushes & Cleaners Workers Union

Council of Unions of South Africa

**Collection Number: AK2117**

**DELMAS TREASON TRIAL 1985 - 1989**

***PUBLISHER:***

*Publisher:* **Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand**

*Location:* **Johannesburg**

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