

HISTORY OF MAY DAY

May 1st has been celebrated throughout the world as International Worker's Day (May Day) for over a century. Its history dates back to 1856 when workers in Australia went on a work stoppage for an 8-hour working day.

- ★ In 1886 workers in America supported the struggle for an 8-hour working day with massive strikes and demonstrations. Labour leaders were then charged with conspiracy - and hanged. These were the workers' first martyrs.
- ★ In 1890, May 1st was accepted as the Workers' International Day of Solidarity. By this time "Workers of the

World Unite!" had become a popular slogan.

- ★ 1918 is regarded as the beginning of May day for Black South African Workers because of their meetings, processions etc, that year.
- ★ In 1931, the African May Day Committee organised a March through the streets of Johannesburg. The procession led to clash with the police. Many workers were injured and some were sent to prison.
- ★ In 1950, the ANC (Tvl), TIC and the Johannesburg District Committee of the CPSA jointly organised a

stayaway on May 1st. The highly successful stay-away led to clashes between workers and police in Orlando, Alex, Brakpan and Sophiatown. Nineteen workers were killed and 20 injured.

- ★ In 1959/1960-1 the Government abolished May Day as a paid holiday for workers in SA. By this time progressive trade unions like SACTU, which was affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions, had come under severe attack from the Government.

SADWU'S GUIDELINES FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

The South African Domestic Workers' Union (SADWU) has outlined the following guidelines for domestic workers:

Suggested minimum wages for domestic workers:

Semi-skilled person: R150 per month.

Someone with special skills or special responsibilities such as cooking, baking or looking after small children: R200 per month.

Both suggested salaries are for an eight-hour working day.

Workers should be provided with three meals a day and working clothes.

A transport cost should be provided for workers living out.

If you cannot afford the full recommended wage, then pay for the number of hours you can afford.

A part-time living-out worker, for example, could then be employed on a pro rata percentage of the recommended wage for a full-time living-out domestic worker.

A daily casual worker: Minimum wage: R18.10 per day plus transport. Meals must be provided. A morning is four hours, but should be paid rather more than half of an eight-hour day as one works harder during the first four hours.

A gardener should earn the same as domestic workers, except the daily casual who earns R20 per day. Meals and transport should be provided.

Hourly rate: R2 per hour.

Overtime: R2.50 per hour.

Baby sitting: R2.50 per hour.



Continue struggle for May Day

- ★ May 1st 1986 was the 100th Anniversary of May Day. Last year's call by COSATU to celebrate May Day as a paid public holiday was an outstanding success.
- ★ This coupled with the growing struggles and solidarity of the

workers forced the Government to recognize the importance of May Day. But instead of recognizing May Day as Workers Day, the Government has declared the First Friday of May as South African Workers' Day.

- ★ COSATU has rejected this so-called concession and has pledged itself to continue the struggle to recognize 1st May as a paid public holiday for all workers in SA.
- ★ The TIC fully stands behind COSATU.