



# Reinstate the Xstrata 2000 Workers

Statement of the Workers and Socialist Party

## Use mining profits to create 100 000 Jobs!

The Workers and Socialist Party (WASP) calls on all workers and residents to support the Glencore Xstrata Eastern Chrome Mine workers' struggle for reinstatement. The 2000 mineworkers were fired after they went on strike in May in protest against the company's protection of a white supervisor who racially assaulted a black worker. This is also a struggle against racism and for workers' right to stand up against it, as well as for the mineral resources to be used to create decent jobs for all who need them.

### Mine bosses feed on racism

The heartless dismissal of the Xstrata workers for protesting legitimately against racism reveals how racism remains ingrained to the core of the mining industry. Racism has always been part of the life-blood of the SA mining industry, with the cheap black migrant labour and white baaskap system as the basis for a ruthless exploitation of the black working class, in particular, yielding the bosses extremely high levels of profit. Worldwide, racism has been a weapon to divide and rule the working class since the capitalist system first emerged.

Outrageous as the Glencore Xstrata bosses' protection of a racist white worker may be, their primary objective is another. The dismissal first and foremost signifies another attempt by the mining bosses to turn the tables and reverse the balance of class forces in the mining industry, which were shifted in favour of the mineworkers by the strikes of last year. The Lonmin workers' unprecedented 2012 victory over the brutal attempts of the mining bosses and their capitalist ANC government to drown in blood their struggle for better wages, in defiance of the NUM leadership, represented an important historical turning point in the relationship between mineworkers and -bosses.



Xstrata Workers at the WASP Launch in Limpopo

The Lonmin strike victory – reinstatement of all workers and an 11-22% wage increase – inspired workers throughout the mining industry, on the farms and in other industries to rise to their feet and fight for better wages and working conditions, against racism and the whole system of working class slavery. It is this newly found confidence in the power of independent organisation and struggle that the mine bosses want to bring to an end.

### An injury to one is an injury to all!

The main reason for the dismissal the Xstrata workers is to contain the virus of mineworkers militancy from spreading across the Sekhukhune platinum belt, to 'teach' other workers a lesson not to struggle and thus suppress the renewed self-confidence and militancy of the working class everywhere. Their dismissal should therefore be seen as an attack on all mineworkers and the whole working class. It is for this reason that other mineworkers, particularly from around the Steelpoort and Burgersfort areas, the whole of organised labour, communities and youth should rise and mobilise in defence of the Glencore Xstrata workers.

To act otherwise would be to isolate the Xstrata workers

and allow their defeat, which could serve to demoralise all other workers and discourage them from struggling for better working and living conditions, while encouraging the bosses to escalate the attacks they are already launching against the mineworkers in Rustenburg, Carletonville, Klerksdorp and the working class communities and youth everywhere.

accept that the mining giants pillage our land and people, taking home billions in profit every year, and leave nothing to show for it in our communities.

The only alternative to this divisive competition for the crumbs of a few jobs thrown at the workers and communities is the unity of

youth, particularly students in secondary schools and colleges should elect committees that would join forces with the committees of the workers from various mines, and trade unions where possible, to work-out a fighting plan and co-ordinate mass action in the mines and other workplaces, communities and schools.

### WASP proposes a joint workers and community campaign of rolling mass action for:

- Reinstatement of the dismissed Glencore Xstrata workers release all arrested protestors
- Dismiss the racist supervisor and those in management responsible for protecting him
- For 100.000 jobs by Xstrata and other mining companies in the Sekhukhuni platinum belt to employ the applicants and give socially useful, decent jobs for the community - cut the working week without loss of pay
- Nationalisation of the mines under democratic workers control and management

### Use the mine and companies profits for:

- Expanded public works programme to build decent roads, houses, electricity and water provision for all
- Build more schools and classrooms, colleges and universities
- Abolish all fees in public schools and colleges
- Build more and better equipped clinics and hospitals; fill all staff vacancies
- Minimum wage of R12 500

### Say no to the bosses' divide-and-rule!

In a manoeuvre to divide the workers and communities, the Glencore Xstrata management has advertised the jobs of its workers with the dispute still pending. Obviously they are trying to take advantage of the high level of unemployment, evident in the close to 100 000 applications for the mere 1000 positions advertised. If anything this reveals just how hopeless is the idea that communities and young people can secure a future by scavenging on the jobs of the dismissed Glencore Xstrata workers.

We can no longer accept this dog-eat-dog race to the bottom. The 1000 new posts will not be permanent, secure jobs. The 'lucky' few replacements will be casuals at the mercy of the same racist management. We can longer

the workers, communities and youth. In WASP's view the basis for such unity is a programme demanding both the reinstatement of the dismissed workers, satisfaction of their demands and the creation of jobs for all 100 000 applicants by Glencore Xstrata and the other mines, as well as the provision of free services such as education, water, electricity, roads and housing in all communities at the cost of the mining industry. This would be possible on the basis of the fabulous wealth created by the workers – Glencore Xstrata, for example, made net profits of over R11bn last year. With this money alone one could employ 73.000 people on a wage of R12.500!!

The programme should entail a campaign of joint, rolling mass action involving workers, communities and youth. To this end, communities and

Only this and nothing less could paralyse the determination of the mining bosses to set an example of devastating defeat with the Glencore Xstrata workers, advance workers and communities' struggle for jobs for all and free basic services for all.

### To this end WASP calls for:

- A conference of all mass democratic organisations of local communities, workers and youth/students to discuss and adopt a common programme of demands and action.
- Election of Worker and Community Forums in every village to co-ordinate these various organisations and plans of joint, mass actions.
- A day of Regional General Strike of all workers, communities and students in the whole Sekhukhune district

