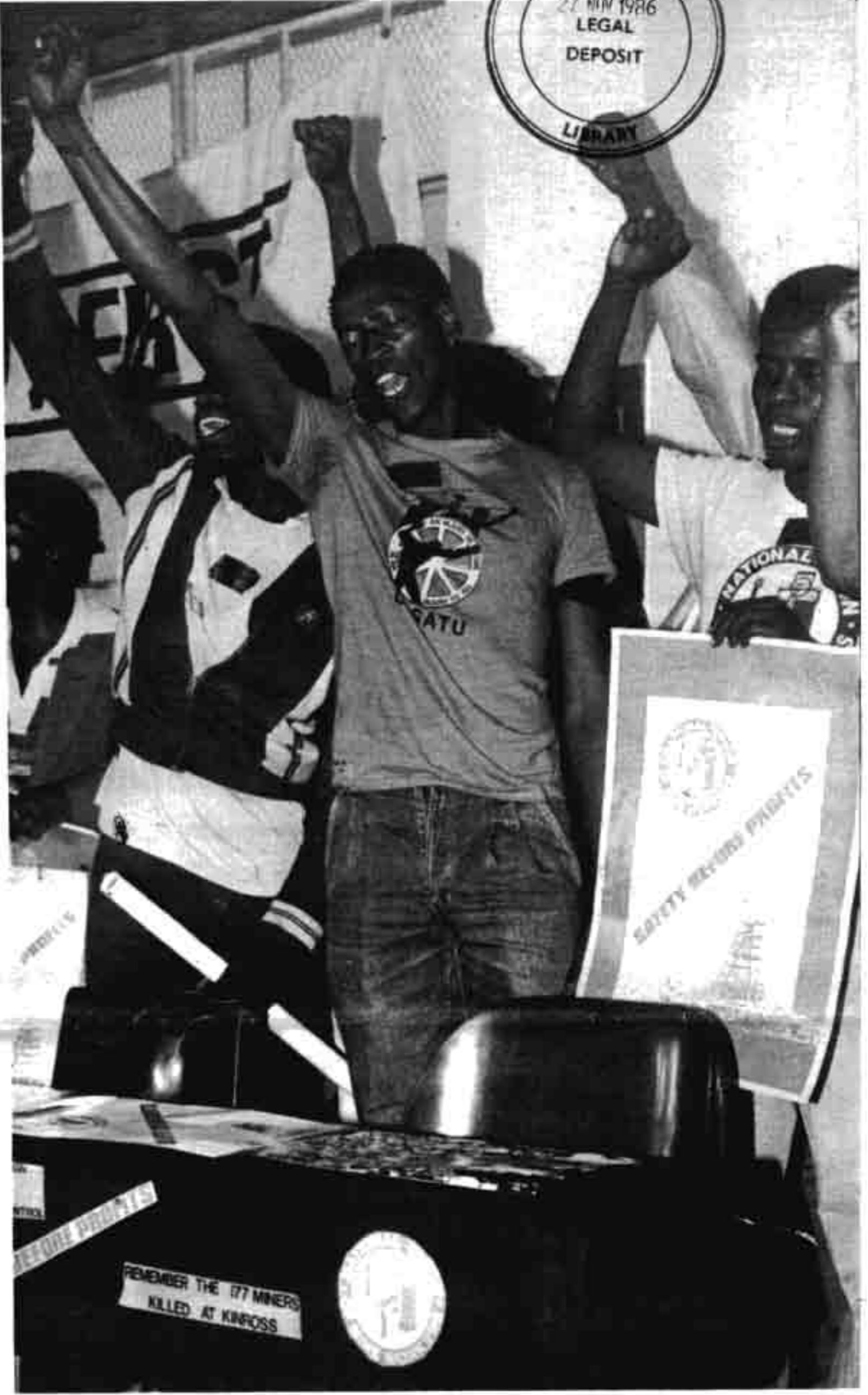


NUM NEWS



Official newsletter of the
National Union of Mineworkers
October 1986

Miners make their mark



A solemn salute for the Kinross comrades during the memorial service at Cosatu House.

ABOUT 325 000 mineworkers supported the National Union of Mineworkers' call for October 1 as a Day of Mourning.

They were joined by over 300 000 workers from Cosatu affiliates -- some who stayed away, while others observed one to three hour stoppages.

This was the biggest action of its kind in South Africa labour history. Mineworkers showed clearly that the comrades who died at Kinross gold mine will not be forgotten.

The widespread support showed clearly that:

- * Mineworkers regard safety as very important.
- * The miners are prepared to take action when called to do so.
- * The NUM is the most representative union in the mining industry.

The police and mine security took action at various mines.

150 union members were arrested by police at the union's regional offices after workers marched from President Steyn mine carrying placards calling for "Safety before Profits".

At Witbank police arrested seven workers and one NUM official for holding an illegal meeting. They appeared in the Witbank Magistrates' Court on charges of sedition. All have been released on bail of R500 each.

At Winkelhaak gold mine workers were attacked with teargas by mine security leaving a miner injured after being hit by a cannister.

At Vaal Reefs shaft No 9 and Kloof gold mine, workers were attacked by mine security who tried to force them to go to work.

About 200 people attended a memorial meeting at Cosatu House, Johannesburg. Speaker after

speaker attacked safety practices in the mining industry.

Comrade Paul Nkuna, regional secretary of the Wiatersrand region of the NUM, said we have mourned our dead for too long.

"The time has come to end the mourning. How long are we going to mourn. In 1960, 1976, 1980 and now again we are mourning our dead."

He said the workers must

build up their organisations so that they could confront the bosses and the state.

He said the major enemy was the capitalist system because the bosses "put profits before safety."

Comrade Jay Naidoo, general secretary of Cosatu, said the working class must fight to control the means of production.

"It is racism and greed which killed thousands of

workers in the mining industry. We must fight to ensure that safety is put under workers' control."

Rev. Beyers Naude, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, said the deaths were unnecessary and could have been avoided.

"How many more workers have to die before all the necessary safety precautions will be taken?" he asked.



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.

Stand up for your rights!

A thousand ways to stop dying

BLACK mineworkers in South Africa have very few rights. They don't have the same rights as mineworkers in other countries. They don't even have the same rights as factory workers in South Africa -- and factory workers don't have that many rights.

The few rights mineworkers have under the Mines and Works Act are:

* **The right to refuse dangerous work (regulation 8.3.2)**

When you feel your workplace is not safe, the white miner must make sure all workers leave the area. The white miner must do an inspection and make the workplace safe. Nobody must enter the area until it is safe.

* **The right to use the complaints book (regulation 4.4.3)**

There must be a complaints book in every shaft. Many bosses believe these books are only for white miners, but they are wrong. Any worker can write a complaint in this book about safety, or tell his shift boss -- who must write it in the book.

* **The right to go to the inspection and inquiry after an accident (regulation 25.5)**

You have the right to go on an inspection of the accident site, and to the inquiry -- but only if you are being blamed or may be held responsible for the accident. You can take your fellow workers or your union with you to the inspection and inquiry.

If you are injured or killed, your family or friends can call the union to talk at the inquiry or inquest. NUM has spoken for many workers killed or hurt in accidents.

* **The right to call for a special inspection (Section 5.4)**

Your union has the right to call for special inspections if it thinks the mine is dangerous to your health or safety. The union must give reasons to the Government Engineer, who will then investigate the mine.

* **Protective clothing (regulation 7.7.3)**

The mine must give you a hard hat free of charge. But it can not be forced to give you anything else -- the law says nothing about boots, overalls, goggles, earplugs or other protective clothing.

* **Toilets (regulation 4.9)**

You must have clean toilets near your workplace. If the toilets aren't clean, you can write a complaint in the complaints book.

* **Drinking water (regulation 4.2)**

There must be fresh drinking water near the workplace.

THERE are a thousand ways to die when you're working underground -- and it's up to mineworkers to make sure the bosses know that.

It's up to mineworkers to make sure the bosses do something about it, too.

To make it easier, the National Union of Mineworkers has printed a booklet telling mineworkers of their rights and how they can fight for those rights.

The booklet is called "A Thousand Ways to Die -- the struggle for safety in the gold mines". But what it says is just as appropriate for miners in coal and other mines.

It explains why accidents happen, what mineworkers can do to prevent them, how they can force the bosses to improve safety conditions, and gives the addresses and phone numbers of local mine inspectors.

As NUM president Comrade James Motlatsi says in the booklet: "All workers must remember that safety comes first. Safety must be our daily song."

Not everyone likes the NUM safety song, though, as Cde Motlatsi points out: "The Chamber of Mines doesn't try hard enough to make the mines safe, or spend enough. It spends a lot more time and money finding ways to get more gold out of the ground -- and how to make more money."

The Chamber also keeps secrets, says Cde Motlatsi.

"NUM asked to see 42 of their safety reports to help with our own report, but the Chamber refused."

Cde Motlatsi says the mine bosses must change their attitude. They must start listening to the union when it talks about safety. They must understand it is the voice of the workers, and is fighting to save its members lives.

"The bosses must show they really care about the safety of their workers, and agree with the union about fulltime safety stewards and safety committees. I want to see the bosses on each mine sign safety agreements with the safety committees."

"The bosses must also stop their threats. Workers must feel comfortable in their jobs. When it comes to safety, workers must have the right to say what they want."

Cde Motlatsi doesn't only have a message for the bosses -- he has a message for the mineworkers, too.

"When it comes to safety, workers must not let anybody threaten them," he

says. "If they think a working place is not safe, they must not go into the area."

"Workers must be hard on other workers who do not care or think about safety. They must report those workers to the union, and make sure the union does something about it."



The Miners' Bill of Rights

1. The right to elect safety stewards and safety committees.

NUM believes safety stewards are the first step in the struggle for safer jobs underground. The workers on every mine must have the right to elect safety stewards and safety stewards' committees.

The shaft stewards will talk to the bosses and ask them to sign safety agreements. The workers will then elect safety stewards and safety committees on each mine.

2. The right to refuse dangerous work.

The law gives workers the right to refuse dangerous work. If conditions are dangerous, workers must call a white miner. The white miner must send the workers to the waiting place -- and then he must "make safe".

Workers have this right -- but they do not really have this right. It is not easy for workers to refuse to work in dangerous conditions. They must "work now, complain later".

NUM believes workers must have a real right to refuse dangerous work. Firstly, workers must not be charged when they refuse to work in dangerous conditions. Secondly, if workers think a workplace is dangerous they must have the right to call a union safety steward. Thirdly, if workers are still not happy they must have the right to call somebody higher than the white miner -- like the shift boss or overseer.

3. The right to call and go with inspectors on all inspections -- without the loss of pay.

The Mines and Works Act does not give workers the right to go on inspections with inspectors. A worker or a member of his union only has the right to join the inspector on inspections after an accident -- and only if the worker is blamed for the accident.

Workers say they do not trust the bosses when the inspectors come to the mines. They do not believe the bosses tell the truth -- or that the bosses show the inspectors everything. As one worker said: "Workers also need to inspect the inspectors."

NUM believes union safety stewards must have the right to go with inspectors on all inspections, without any loss of pay. The union must also have the right to do its own inspections.

NUM believes safety stewards must not only have the right to go on inspections with inspectors. After accidents, they must also have the right to make an inspection before the inspector comes. Workers say the workplace is often changed after an accident, so that nobody will be blamed for it.

4. The right to proper health and safety training.

It is the bosses' duty to give workers proper training. NUM believes the workers must also have the right to help in planning training courses. The bosses must also give unions the right to train safety stewards without loss of pay. Workers in many other countries have this right already.

5. The right to get all information about health and safety.

The law gives factory workers the right to ask the bosses for any reports, records or other information on safety. Mineworkers do not have this right. NUM believes mineworkers must have the right to read and get copies of all safety records and other safety information.

6. The right to protection from threats and punishment when demanding your rights.

Workers must have the right to demand all their rights without the fear of being charged or fired. For example, workers have the right to refuse dangerous work. But workers say they are charged if they refuse to work. Until workers no longer fear being charged, they will not really have the right to refuse.

7. The right to have a say in the running of the mine -- and all future plans.

Workers on every mine have the right to know what is happening on the mine. They must also have a say in the running of the mine. For example, when bosses want to buy new machines they must tell the workers. Workers must help choose them so they can make sure the bosses are buying safer machines.

Workers must have a say in all new plans for the mine. If the bosses decide to mine in dangerous places, workers must be told -- and make sure the bosses do everything to make the new place safe. The bosses must keep no secrets from the workers. It is the workers who are getting killed, not the bosses.

THE KINROSS DISASTER

15 000 voices - all saying: Safety first



"SAFETY before profits" was the rallying cry at Secunda's Embalenhle Stadium -- and it's a cry that's going to be carried kilometres underground by South African miners.

Thousands of them converged on the stadium to pay tribute to their fallen comrades, who died in the Kinross mine disaster on September 16.

Adorned in NUM stickers with the slogan "Safety First", they made clear how they feel about safety conditions on South Africa's mines.

Posters carried by fellow Kinross miners echoed the rallying cry. "Safety is our first priority" read one. Another said: "We want decent working conditions underground". Yet another said: "46 000 workers have died underground".

Speakers at the memorial didn't mince their words, either.

* NUM president Comrade James Motlatsi asked miners: "Are you prepared to continue filling graves with bodies?"

"Are you prepared to go underground to dig out the bullets they are going to shoot us with?"

Cde Motlatsi also said: "The mine bosses have shown a disregard for the lives of black miners. They have even refused to let some of our colleagues come here today to join us."

"But we will close the mines from Namaqualand to Messina on October 1 to show how we feel about mine safety."

* Cosatu general secretary Comrade Jay Naidoo said: "The mine bosses' profits have meant starvation wages

Fists and coffin held high, Cosatu and NUM members carry a coffin into the memorial service at Cosatu house for the Kinross dead.

The deadly foam

POLYURETHANE foam is so dangerous that when it burns it can literally kill a man twice in a few seconds.

Mineowners around the world have known this for 20 years. That's why polyurethane foam is banned in British and American mines.

South African mineowners also know this -- but that apparently doesn't stop them using the foam in their mines.

Burning polyurethane has been responsible for that it makes a gas called carbon monoxide. underground deaths on at least two earlier occasions - at Buffelsfontein Gold Mine, a Gencor mine, in 1978 and at Vaal Reefs Gold Mine in 1983.

By all accounts the foam

which caught fire at Kinross and which led to 177 deaths was also polyurethane.

Dr Herbert Eisner, a world expert who has studied mine fires and explosions for more than 40 years, came to South Africa to help NUM investigate the fire at Kinross.

He said the main danger with polyurethane foam is Eisner said 0,1% of carbon monoxide in the air can kill. And tests in England have shown that a fire in a mine that uses the foam can fill 7% of the air with the deadly gas -- enough to kill a man in one breath.

The foam also makes other deadly gases like hydrogen cyanide, which can also kill people -- but not as quickly as carbon monoxide.

That's why we say the foam kills twice -- once with carbon monoxide and again with hydrogen cyanide.

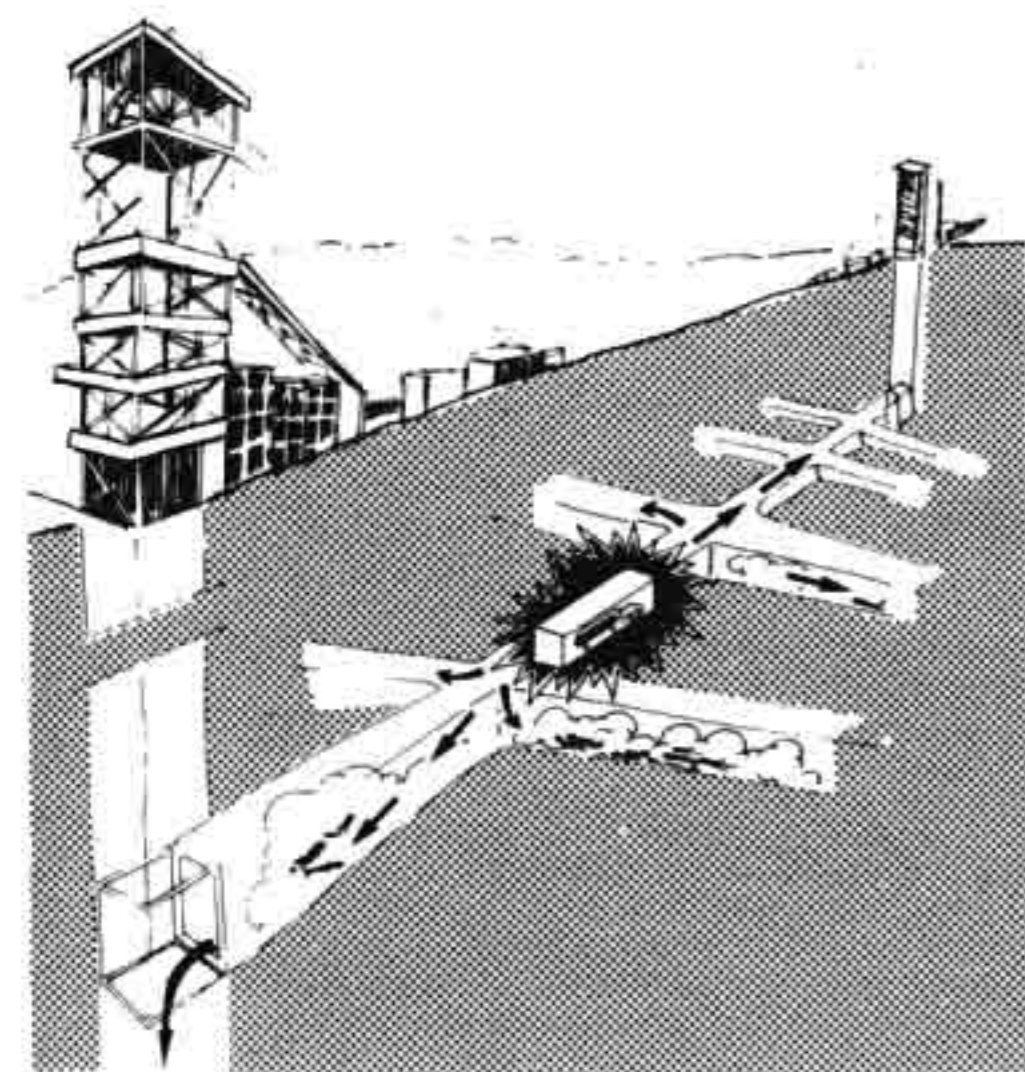
If the foam at Kinross was polyurethane, why did Gencor allow it?

After the fire, Gencor and the Chamber of Mines first said they did not know of the dangers of polyurethane.

Then the Chamber was told they could walk into the public library in Johannesburg and pick up a book that tells of the dangers of the foam.

Dr Eisner says the dangers of polyurethane are so well known that "a safety officer for a mine who does not know the hazards of the foam does not know his job."

The Chamber of Mines admitted it knew how



THE full story of what happened underground at Kinross will only be known when the inquiry is held.

In the meantime, many messages have been received from all over the world on the Kinross disaster. The Miners' International Federation and all its affiliates sent messages of support to the NUM and the

families of the deceased. Other organisations which sent messages include: The British National Union of Mineworkers; Swedish Confederation of Labour (LO) United Mineworkers of America; the Australian Prime Minister; the Swedish Prime Minister; and the Trade Union Congress of Britain (TUC).

THE KINROSS DISASTER



Posters told exactly how the miners felt about their fallen comrades.

The spirit was high among those who attended the memorial service at Secunda's Embalenhle Stadium.



The death trap: Kinross mine.

shoulder-high after they spoke.

They cheered, too, when the numerous messages of support were read from trade unions in Chile, Sweden, Britain, West Germany, the United States, Canada and several African countries.

Other messages came from the SA Congress of Trade Unions, (Sactu) the United Democratic Front and Cosatu.

There were also cheers for the comrades who were unable to make it to the memorial -- particularly those forced to go underground at Kinross on that day.

And there was anger towards mine management when NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa announced that Kinross shifts had been forced to work at gunpoint.

for the workers. "It is this greed which caused the deaths at Hlobane and Kinross."

* Comrade Winnie Mandela said: "Miners are making the money to let those men sit on those Casspirs outside. The gold and diamonds you dig pays those policemen -- it pays

for their uniforms and their guns."

She said the people of Soweto and other townships would join the work stoppage on October 1.

The crowd loved what the speakers had to say. They danced, cheered and sang freedom songs throughout the memorial service, and carried NUM speakers



NUM Secunda regional chairman Eric Vala was chaired around the stadium after the meeting.

that can kill a man in seconds

dangerous the foam was, but said it used chemicals on the foam to stop it burning so easily.

But Dr Eisner says these chemicals are useless. Tests in England show treated foam is just as dangerous as ordinary foam.

South African mineowners have sent people to international conferences where these tests have been spoken about. And many books and journals have written about how useless treated polyurethane is.

This raises important questions which will need to be answered at the inquiry into the Kinross disaster.

The use of the flame cutting equipment underground will also need to be examined.

In Britain a welding

accident could never start a fire underground. Dr Eisner says welding is so dangerous that it is not allowed underground on British mines. Broken railway tracks must be dug up and repaired on the surface. The practice on the South African mines seem to be very different.

Because of all the arguments over Kinross' safety record, Dr Eisner went to have a look for himself. First Gencor promised to allow NUM and its experts to inspect the mine. But then they waited for over a week before they allowed Dr Eisner to go down.

When the visit occurred, NUM's delegation had to join a party of over sixty people who went

underground. This party included people with little or no interest in the case, including representatives from AMAWU and UWUSA.

The visitors were shunted through the mine and not given a chance to inspect the area properly. All because our law does not give workers proper rights in regard to safety.

Again this could never happen on mines in other parts of the world.

In Britain, mineowners are not allowed to run their mines after an accident. The government inspector takes over the mine while he does an investigation.

During that time management can only go down the mine with the inspector. The union has the

same right. In South Africa this does not happen. It is easy for the mine bosses to cover up the truth about accidents.

One of the truths the mine bosses love to cover up is that SA mines are among the most dangerous in the world.

On the day of the Kinross fire, the the Chamber of Mines released figures which said South African mines were the safest in the world.

But Dr Eisner says this is simply not true. South African coal mines kill more than eight times the number of British miners underground. The gold mines are even bigger killers -- Kinross and our dead comrades are proof of this.

Another way the

mineowners pretend their mines are safe is by giving out stars to mines that have "good" safety measures.

Dr Eisner doesn't believe this is a good way to make mines safer.

He says the system encourages mine managements to hide the truth -- something they are already very good at. If they speak about accidents and dangers on their mines, then they might lose one or two of their stars.

Dr Eisner says we need a new system to make sure dangers on the mines are reported and the mines made safer.

We know this will only happen when workers and their shaftstewards have a full say in health and safety on the mines.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

**JB
Marks**

The giant who led the first miners' strike

TWO years ago an old lady from Eldorado Park near Johannesburg stood in the snow and ice covering the ground at Heroes' Acre in Moscow.

The woman was Mrs Gladys Marks, and she had come to see the grave of a man she had not seen for 20 years -- her husband, JB Marks, the man who had led the African Mine Workers' Union (AMWU) during the strike of 1946.

A few weeks ago, NUM visited Mrs Marks in Eldorado Park and she told us about JB and his life of struggle against apartheid.

JB was born in Ventersdorp in the Western Transvaal in 1903. His father was a worker on the railways and his mother was a nursing sister.

He studied to be a teacher at Kilnerton Training College -- and it was there that he organised his first strike. The food was bad at the school and students were treated very badly, so JB and his friends told the students not to go to classes until things got better.

Things never did get better -- but JB had his first taste of the struggle.

Soon after he finished studying, JB joined the Communist Party. At the time -- 1927 -- the Party was not banned.

He also got a job as a teacher at Vredefort in the Orange Free State, where he taught the children of black miners.

That's where he first got to know miners' problems -- and also met the woman who became his wife.

Soon after they got married, JB left home. The

Communist Party sent him to study at the Lenin School in Moscow with other leaders like Albert Nzula and Moses Kotane.

But JB came back some time later -- and joined the ANC.

In the late 1930s he was elected to a committee to help revive the ANC, which had become weak. He remained a member of the Communist Party and helped organise many of the unions that joined CNETU.

In 1941 the ANC decided to establish a union for mineworkers and Marks was elected president because of his determination to fight for workers' rights. He was also elected chairman of CNETU.

JB was arrested during the great strike of 1946 but released on bail. When the AMWU was crushed after the strike, he continued to work for the ANC and the Communist Party.

In 1950 he became a member of the CP Central Committee and President of the ANC's Transvaal branch.

He was banned in 1952 but continued to work for both organisations.

In 1963, soon after the ANC was banned, JB left the country with Joe Slovo.

His wife and family never saw him again. On August 1, 1973 -- after 10 years of hard work in exile -- he died from a disease he got while living in Tanzania.

And now he lies buried under the snow many thousands of miles from home, in a graveyard with many other people from all over the world who gave their lives to the fight for freedom.



FIVE BRAVE

ONE of the greatest struggles in South African mineworkers' long fight for a better life began one cold morning in August 40 years ago.

On that day -- August 12 1946 -- more than 60 000 mineworkers on the Reef began a week-long strike that was to shake the mining industry.

It wasn't the first strike on the gold mines. But it was one of the most important events in the miners' proud history of struggle in this country.

The stoppage was one of the biggest in South Africa until the workers' movement took off in the 1970's.

For the first time mineworkers used a trade union to organise their strike -- a union called the African Mineworkers' Union, led by a tall man called JB Marks.

And in the strike the AMWU fought for exactly the same things we in NUM demand today -- a living wage, a healthy workplace, more money for injured workers and an end to the system of migrant labour.

At the end of those five brave days at least 12 workers lay dead. Most of the strikers were driven back to work at gunpoint.

The workers won none of their demands. But they did leave an example of courage for us to follow -- and many lessons for us to study.

Today we in NUM are taking this struggle forward,

and one way to make sure we win is to learn well from their example.

To do this, we must first look at the conditions our fathers worked under in those years.

Lambalazi and less than two shillings a day

The 1940s were bad years for all the workers of South Africa. It was the time when the whole world was at war with Adolf Hitler, the German dictator.

Wages were low, food was scarce and the townships were overcrowded. In the countryside the land dried up, cattle died and crops refused to grow.

Things were especially bad for the mineworkers. Underground, in terrible conditions, they did the hardest work in the country.

Every day white miners beat the workers to make them work harder. Rockbursts and other accidents killed thousands of workers.

If a man died in an accident, the mine sent 50 pounds to his family -- enough to last a few months.

Coffins and rotten food

In the compounds, 40 men slept on top of each other in cement beds they called coffins.

Rotten food came from the mine kitchens. The lumps of black bread called mbunyana intlokoyekati were so small they left a hole in your stomach. Workers called their porridge lambalazi --

water that makes you hungry. In return for all this, workers were paid one shilling and eight pennies a day -- at a time when families needed ten shillings a day to live.

Sometimes these things seemed as hard as the rock that workers mined underground. But the miners knew that just as they could move rock to find gold, they could stand together and fight these things.

Boycotts, sit-ins and the AMWU

The mineworkers did not wait for a union to help them. They used many of their own weapons in their struggle against the mine owners.

On some mines, workers refused to eat food from the kitchens. They said: "We will boycott your kitchens until the food improves."

At other mines workers used the sit-in strike underground to protest at assaults and too much overtime.

You can see that our fathers were using the same weapons miners use in the struggle today.

There were many struggles like this during the war years. Often the strikes were crushed by the police -- but many times the workers won and got small changes that made life a bit better.

The union makes us strong

The problem was that

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

1946



DAYS

Wherever they struck, the miners were hounded by police...

workers on the different mines were not united. If workers on a mine in Benoni went on strike, then workers in Johannesburg and on the West Rand did not hear of the strike until it was too late.

There was no way worker leaders from the different mines could come together to plan united action, either.

That's why the African National Congress, after realising the terrible hardships that miners worked and lived under, decided in 1941 to form the first union for black mineworkers -- the African Mineworkers' Union (AMWU). JB Marks was elected President and JJ Majoro became the first secretary.

The AMWU joined a union federation called the Council of Non-European Trade Unions. At that time there were 119 unions in CNETU. It was the biggest trade union grouping in South Africa until Fosatu was started in the 1970s and Cosatu in the 1980s.

The union grew very slowly at first. It was not easy for union leaders to get passed the barbed wire and police surrounding the compounds.

During the war, the government also made a law that more than 20 people could not meet at one time.

By 1943 the union had only 1 800 members -- out of 350 000 black workers on the mines.

JB and his comrades were getting impatient. So he decided to break the law and organise mass meetings on

mine property -- and the workers flocked to hear him speak in their thousands.

An old man who worked on a mine in East Champ D'Or remembers those meetings, where workers crowded to pay a shilling to join and a sixpence a month to be members of the union.

"Marks would come and use the football grounds. In those days there was no security branch and it used to be the South African police -- a sergeant and a couple of people to take notes -- who would come.

"All the miners would go there. The compound police wouldn't stop them. Marks was going from mine to mine -- there were a lot of mines in those days.

"Ordinary underground workers became members. Even the omabalane were paying their sixpences. Nearly the whole compound would go to meetings."

By 1944, the AMWU had 25000 members and their fighting spirit was growing stronger every day.

Ten shillings a day

In April 1946, the union held its annual conference. Things were getting very bad on the mines. And the workers were angry. They decided to demand the following things:

- * Increase wages to ten shillings a day.
- * Two weeks' paid leave every year.
- * The right to have union meetings on the mines.
- * The right to live with their families on the mines.

The union tried to talk to the mineowners about these

things. But the bosses refused to listen.

At a reportback meeting in August 1946, JB Marks told the miners:

"We are wrestling with a giant. You have approached the mine authorities in a good manner and put your demand to them. But in every case, where you asked for a fish, you got a serpent."

At the same meeting a well-dressed worker from Randfontein Estates got up. The cops were there, so he gave his name only as "Moustache".

He said: "I say only one thing can help us -- that we at this meeting strike from east to west."

The workers roared their approval -- and the great strike of 1946 was on.

Five long days

For five days -- from Monday August 12 to Friday August 16 -- the strikers held out against the guns and bayonets of the police. Twelve workers were killed. Hundreds were injured. And tens of thousands were driven down the mine shafts at gunpoint.

CNETU tried to call a general strike to support the miners, but most of the CNETU and AMWU members were arrested early in the strike. Other unions in CNETU failed to join the strike and the miners were defeated.

But the AMWU and its members left an example of unity and courage that we can learn from.

Lessons from the strike
CNETU: This was still a young organisation, and most of its unions were small. It had 119 small unions and many of these had less than a thousand members each.

There were also divisions in CNETU during the war. Some union leaders wanted to organise strikes in the factories. Others said that if they went on strike it would weaken the war against Hitler.

In 1945, a group of unions split away from CNETU.

These fights helped make sure there was little support from other unions when the miners were being beaten by the police.

Internal fights can make the unions weak -- especially at times like today when the government is out to crush the union movement.

CNETU also shows how important it is to have one big union in each industry rather than lots of small unions.

Community organisations: In the 40s, community organisations began to grow in the townships. The Communist Party was very active inside the country, organising rent and food strikes. Together with the ANC and other organisations, it helped organise the famous Alexandra bus boycotts of the 1940s.

Huge squatter movements also sprang up in Alexandra township and Orlando.

But the problem was that these community struggles

were not united under the banner of one organisation.

The ANC was still growing strong in the 40s and was not yet a mass movement.

The AMWU was not able to call on these organisations for support during the 1946 strike.

Today things are different. We have mass organisations growing in the township.

Today workers can call on these organisations when help is needed. And these organisations can call upon the workers for support.

Workers must be part of these organisations to make sure that they play the leading role in the struggle for liberation.

AMWU: The union also had problems that explain why the miners were defeated in 1946.

At the time of the strike, it had over 25 000 members -- but there were 350 000 workers on the mines.

The union also did not have a strong system of shaft stewards, so there was no chance for full participation by workers in the decisions of the union.

In 1946, some miners heard about the strike and joined -- even though they had never heard of the union.

All these things show how important it is to organise every worker on the mines and to make sure each and every member has a say in the running of our union.

SAFETY BRIEFS

FIVE NUM regional health and safety committees have been established to monitor health conditions and safety on South African mines.

The committees -- formed after the union's national health and safety conference in May -- presently organise in Nama-qualand, Orange Free State, Secunda, Kimberley and Klerksdorp.

They will be responsible for setting up branch committees in their own regions.

The committees' umbrella body, the national health and safety committee, has already taken several resolutions:

- * Blood sampling must be stopped immediately.

- * Safety stewards should be allowed to inspect their workplace without losing pay.

- * Black mineworkers should not be discriminated against when they are compensated for occupational diseases.

- * All workers should have access to mine complaint books.

Committee members are involved in negotiations at several mines, such as Ergo where they have started negotiations for a safety agreement between the workers and management. These negotiations have been delayed because of wage discussions, but they should start again soon.

At Elandsrand, health and safety committee members held a workshop in March to discuss working conditions. Those taking part reached agreement on all but one issue: an inspection. This will be followed up as soon as possible.

Western Holdings miners are also planning a workshop.

A project team at President Brand is working on safety issues at the

We salute our fallen comrades



The names of the Kinross dead

HERE are the names of our fallen comrades, who died in the Kinross mine disaster.

Osipeng Israel Lentswe (Taung); Hans Mopolonyane Thabanelo (Rooikop Farm, Schweizer Reneke); Aupanyane Jan Makati (Ganyesa); Tsweti William Montiso (Wilderhoek, Bloemhof); Mpitimpiti William Sompondo (Alice); Manduleli Headman Mzongwana (Middle-drift); Thembilisi Bazi (Alice); Reckson Mfokeng Mashogo (Mhala, Gazankulu); Mfundisi Mashele (Ritavi, Gazankulu); Levis Boy Mpenyane (Ritavi, Gazankulu); Masilo John Moloto (Bobobedu); Joseph Mashapu Mokebong (Lebowa); Matuba Stanford Mashamaite (Bochum, Pietersburg); Mafodi Lawrence Mathabatha (Thabamooop, Lebowa); Alpheus Makgalangaka Mahlaku (Maphuno, Lebowa); Seshaba Joshua Tiro (Molopo, Bop); Johannes Maputla (no address); Solomon Sarel Monareng (Mapulaneng, Lebowa); Million Bernard (Mapulaneng, Lebowa); Albert Rasanang Chikane (Mapulaneng, Lebowa); Seropolane Aaron Shai (Sehego, Lebowa); Tsetse Abram Seboka (Sekhukhune, Lebowa); Donald Seeletjane Thobela (no address); Mahlakweng Caiphus Kgoedi (Baktiseer, Lebowa); Lephechane Makatsane (Mokhotlong, Lesotho); Abel Young Mpesi (Mokhotlong, Lesotho); Matela Mouti (Leribe, Lesotho); Augustinus Mafate (Leribe, Lesotho); Karabo Many (no address); Qetelo Nijolo (Quthing, Lesotho); Johannes Modiquo Sekoane (Leribe, Lesotho); Gobilawa Tweswe (Tabankulu, Transkei); Mkuhuli Rumpu (Kentani, Transkei); Zamqhinga Nxathule (Flagstaff, Transkei); Simon Kolisi (no address); Danile Nxongo (Engcobo, Transkei); Paulo Justinus Maseru (Buthabutha, Lesotho); Ngeva Mayekiso (Tabankulu, Transkei); Somanla Ngobeni (Umtata, Transkei); Tembani Maqokoto (Ngqeleni, Transkei); Mosoue Phillip Thabane (Mt Fletcher,

Transkei); Dodile Ernest Mpingwana (Mata-tiele, Transkei); Komokholo Clarence Maqelepo (Mt Fletcher, Transkei); Nkosinam Ntoba (Butterworth, Transkei); Mnikelwa Zweni (Ngqeleni, Transkei); Joseph Qumba (Flagstaff, Transkei); Leonard Tshintshikile Muga (Kentani, Transkei); February Namba (Mqanduli, Transkei); Mncudisi Mafwa (Mqanduli, Transkei); Mantsingilane Duti (Willowvale, Transkei); Armando Uliase (Massing, Mozambique); Albert James Nobela (Kamhushwa, KaNgwane); Bifone Amos Maimango (Kamhushwa, KaNgwane); Million Solomon Sambo (Schoemandal, Barberton); William Gwazilandi Ngwenyama (Magogeni, Barberton); Jobe Victor Manyi (Kwamhushwa, KaNgwane); Siphon James Ndlovu (Phaphazele, Barberton); Aaron David Sibiya Pinaar (Enkomereni, Nelspruit); Limited Mangulenje (Thyoio, Malawi); Odile Nyalungwe (Zomba, Malawi); Michael Jembe (Blantyre, Malawi); Mphahngeni Bisole (Stutterheim, Eastern Cape); Jus Magano Motlhoare (Taung, Bop); Alphas Shitlbelane (Langverwacht, Evander); Million Fanyana Sambo (Mapulaneng, Lebowa); Phineas Johannes Raganya (Baktiseer, Lebowa); Mbulelem Mandlenkosi Gumede (Ubombo, KwaZulu); Joseph Elphas Mathenjwa (Ingwavuma, KwaZulu); Amos Mkhahlela Mngomezulu (Ingwavuma, KwaZulu); Mpiji Buthelezi (Mahlabatini, KwaZulu); Petros Ndawo (Mnambithi, KwaZulu); Mofaseing Daniel Mooki (Distobotha, Bop); Macks Sontaga Tshella (Naphuno, Lebowa); Petrose Mahlori Bosi (Quthing, Lesotho); Lekhotla Mapei (Quthing, Lesotho); Mookelisi Zazini (Khuile, Port Elizabeth); Natal James Silubane (Bosfontein, Barberton); Jackson Gotsmodimo Botakwe (Ganyesa, Bop); Joaya Mahlobo Nkosi (Amersfoort, Transvaal); Kaiti Simeon Sambo (Kamhushwa, KaNgwane); Selalome Solomon Modirwa (Molopo, Bop); Ma-

toime Joshua Moagi (Naphuno, Lebowa); Kamoho Moloi Mojaki (Quthing, Lesotho); Qayile Sijoo (Tsolo, Transkei); Mzukisi Mbonde Mbonile (Tsomo, Transkei); Lindikhaya Joka (Tsolo, Transkei); Tsambo Daniel Tlou (Noborwa, Louis Trichardt); Zahcaira Dumisani Ntuli (Mtubatuba, KwaZulu); Zandisile Sandlana (Bathurst, Cape); Freddy Muniya (Sibasa, Venda); Phangumusa Mchunu (Tugela Ferry, KwaZulu); Bonginkosi Mthembu (Hlabisa, KwaZulu); Mosabi Mafodi Peter Mathabatha (Thabamooop, Lebowa); Peter John Gadama (Zomba, Malawi); Wedison Menadi (Blantyre, Malawi); Wicknaia Kamputa (Lilongwe, Malawi); Gidione Khombe (Dedza, Malawi); Benart Chimaluzeni (Ntcheu, Malawi); Kidney Magwira (Ngumbe, Malawi); Zinaumaleka Banda (Lilongwe, Malawi); Denis Thukani (Lindcock Farm, Bedford); Mchutshwa Reuben Dlamini (Manzini, Swaziland); Obed Thobela Mkhonta (Shiselweni, Swaziland); Sempe Mphuthi Qopo (Berea, Lesotho); Ntutuzelo Welsh Sotondoshee (Tsomo, Transkei); Lungisa Mqatsa (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Plass Sipungu (Engcobo, Transkei); Mueketsi Machili Machili (Mt Fletcher, Transkei); Zuzile Bollivia Yuse (St Marks, Transkei); Magungoo Mahotyana (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Leye Mbendela (Mulanje, Malawi); Mampemba Chelombe (Mwanza, Malawi); James Saidi (Dedza, Malawi); Berson Mwawa (Chiradzulu, Malawi); Dines Mosses (Mulanje, Malawi); Joao Josefa Nguenha Bie (Bilene, Mozambique); Fernando Jacob Bie (Panda, Mozambique); Elias Uisse Chiungo (Massing, Mozambique); Lote Antonio Bila (Xai-Xai, Mozambique); Gabriel Zefanias Chiungo (Massing, Mozambique); Pazimane Bande Mazive (Massing, Mozambique); John Magoda Pisana (Emoyeni, Nelspruit); Ronnie Aaron Nkosi (Ntuzizi, Lebowa); Eimon Reckson Dlamini (Acornhoek, Transvaal); Vusi James Dlamini (Shiseleni, Swaziland); Mthab-

deni Madikane (Tsolo, Transkei); Nyawuzakhe Mlembelele (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Bennet Matanda (Libode, Transkei); Nayi Vayuka (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Jacob Vusumuzi Mlenzana (Mt Fletcher, Transkei); Mhlabatshona Mqunye (Port St John, Transkei); Mzurwana Mveli (Qumbu, Transkei); Lungisa Rozani (Libode, Transkei); Thomas Bonginkosi Phonca (Flagstaff, Transkei); Gcaleka Bebeza (Mt Fletcher, Transkei); Tobolela Mpho Lchela (Mokhotlong, Transkei); Zakia Ntwehlo Ranganana (Mufeteng, Transkei); Nephtilly Moruti Khoete (Maseru, Lesotho); Ralichase Machaba (Quthing, Lesotho); Joseph Khosi Beleme (Mohareshoek, Lesotho); Peo Napo Nathaniel Semoko (Quthing, Lesotho); Velle Kwanano (Quthing, Lesotho); Lifalane Rannane (Quthing, Lesotho); Molata Simon Molata (Leribe, Lesotho); Kedefunwa Govane (Xalanga, Transkei); Othile William Kenosi (Kudumane, Bop); Motima Willem Johnson (Lehurutsho, Bop); Daniel Hendrick Motswagole (Ganyesa, Bop); Malusi David Maphela (Molepolole, Botswana); Dinkwana Nkgakae Mompolai (Molepolole, Botswana); Thaloganyane Kapeletse Kapeletse (Ngwaketse, Botswana); Gosiemang Montsho Lefutse (Ga-Lekota, Botswana); William Mzwandile Dano (Alice, Ciskei); Andries Belfast Nazima (Mapulung, Lebowa); Thompson Dizele Ngobeni (Bobobedu, Lebowa); Mokheti Nathaniel Majoro (Leribe, Lesotho); Ishmael Lesimanyane Mporane (Mafeteng, Lesotho); Ntsiu Samuel Lerata (Leribe, Lesotho); Mlindela Mathenjwa (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Mlungisi Muto (Glen Grey, Transkei); Motlatsi Paul Ntja (Mokhotlong, Lesotho); Bosi Tyumze (Butterworth, Transkei); Joseph Timothy Nkosi (Eerstehoek, Bushbuckridge); Ngqweqe Tana (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Sapopo Tshentshine (Lusikisiki, Transkei); Khoete Ralekhetla (Mohareshoek, Lesotho); Bulane Pascalis (Mohareshoek, Lesotho).

*That 7000 workers at the Beatrix mine went on strike -- after mine police injured 16 workers with rubber bullets and birdshot on September 4 when they were returning from a legal mass meeting which was held

on the mine premises. During the strike -- which lasted from September 7 to September 10 -- workers presented management with a number of demands. The outcome of the discussions is still

pending. *That 3500 workers at Free State Geduld mine No 1 went on strike when the white shift boss entered the shaft with a gun. *That Phillip Batyshe, Arthur Mohale and

Rubert Besent were elected full-time shaft stewards at De Beers' Finch and Geology mine in Kimberley. *That 600 workers at Zincor went on strike after the unfair dismissal of a fellow worker. The

outcome is still pending. *That security police raided our Carltonville offices. Union pamphlets, posters and copies of our constitution were taken. *That 700 workers at FSG No 1 shaft went on strike on September 16 after the white shift boss came to work with a gun.



NUM NEWS is our union's newspaper. But the paper can only grow if we get stories from you about what is happening on the mines. Write letters and tell us about the struggles on the mines. We are also still looking for a name. Please send your suggestions to: General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers, PO Box 2424, Johannesburg.

Name:

Address:

Mine: