

The striking workers of the 1973 strikes were not organised into a union - they came together out of a common need for a living wage. The battle cry of the workers was "Asiyi emsebenzini, sifuna imali yethu!"

After the strikes, thousands of workers joined up. One of the unions formed was **MAWU**. Its Transvaal branch was established in 1975. MAWU was a founder member of the Trade Union Advisory Council (**TUACC**) formed in 1974 and of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (**FOSATU**) formed in 1979.

MAWU's membership decreased during the hard years following the repression of 1976. But after 1979, it started growing fast and became the biggest union in the metal industry. Between 1980 and 1984 MAWU members were involved in more strikes than all other unions. **MAWU** also built the first effective shop stewards' councils and was involved in many struggles with employees and the state.

The Motor Industry Combined Workers' Union (**MICWU**) was formed in 1960 as an offshoot of the white craft union **MIEU** which organised artisans in the motor sector. **MICWU** was a registered union and soon affiliated to **TUCSA**. Throughout the 1960s it only organised coloured and Indian workers. Shop floor organisation was not strong. Workplaces were small and difficult to mobilise. The union negotiated a closed shop and used the Industrial Council to negotiate a better deal for its members.

NUMSA:

EARLY BEGINNINGS.

NUMSA was founded in 1987. Its roots were in unions formed during the 1960s and 70s.

NUMAWOSA was set up in Port Elizabeth in 1967 by **TUCSA** with funding from the IMF. Its heart of organisation was always the motor assembly factories in Port Elizabeth, but branches were soon established in Durban and East London.

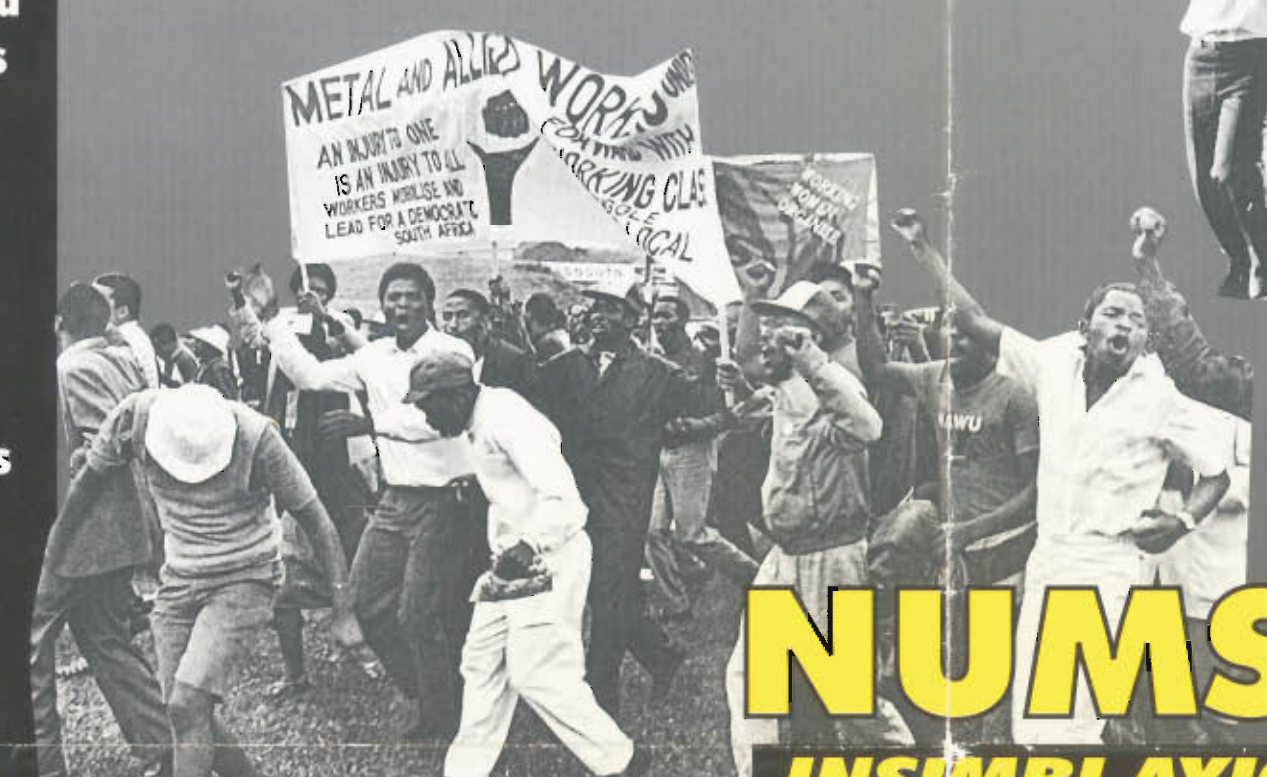
After the 1973 strikes it set up a parallel union for African members and spread to Pretoria. Although the union had to be separate because of the law, all meetings from the shop floor to the executive were held jointly.

Once it had got out of **TUCSA**, talks between the **WPMWU** and itself began again. Their affiliation to the **IMF** and **FOSATU** brought them closer together until they merged in 1980 to form **NAAWU**.

The Western Province Motor Assemblers Union (**WPMWU**) was formed in 1961 by workers at Austen Motors and Chrysler. It affiliated to **TUCSA** and until 1972 operated like any **TUCSA** union. As Cde Natie Gantana, one of NUMSA's oldest members remembers:

"Over this period the union had a sad history because it had a sad executive. It was recognised by law and the company but it didn't operate in the workers' interests. The leaders were management guys. They were like 'Sir' guys. The shop stewards were senior blokes - inspectors and charge hands and the blue overall guys never qualified to be shop stewards."

It took a small group of members from the late 1960s to 1972 to persuade members that the only way to get a "real" union was to get rid of the executive.



NUMSA
INSIMBI AYIGOBI



10TH YEAR RALLY-24 MAY COME AND CELEBRATE!