

NUM



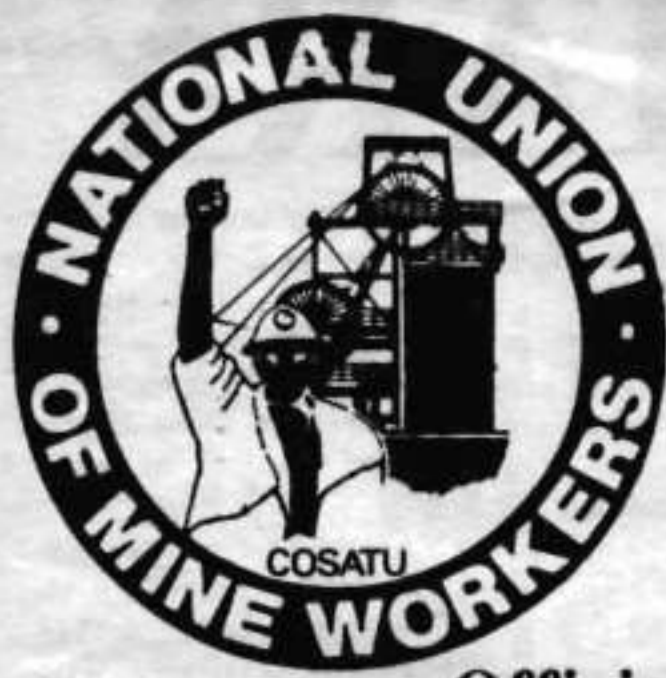
News

STRIKE SPECIAL

August 9, 1987



NOW IS THE HOUR!



NUM NEWS

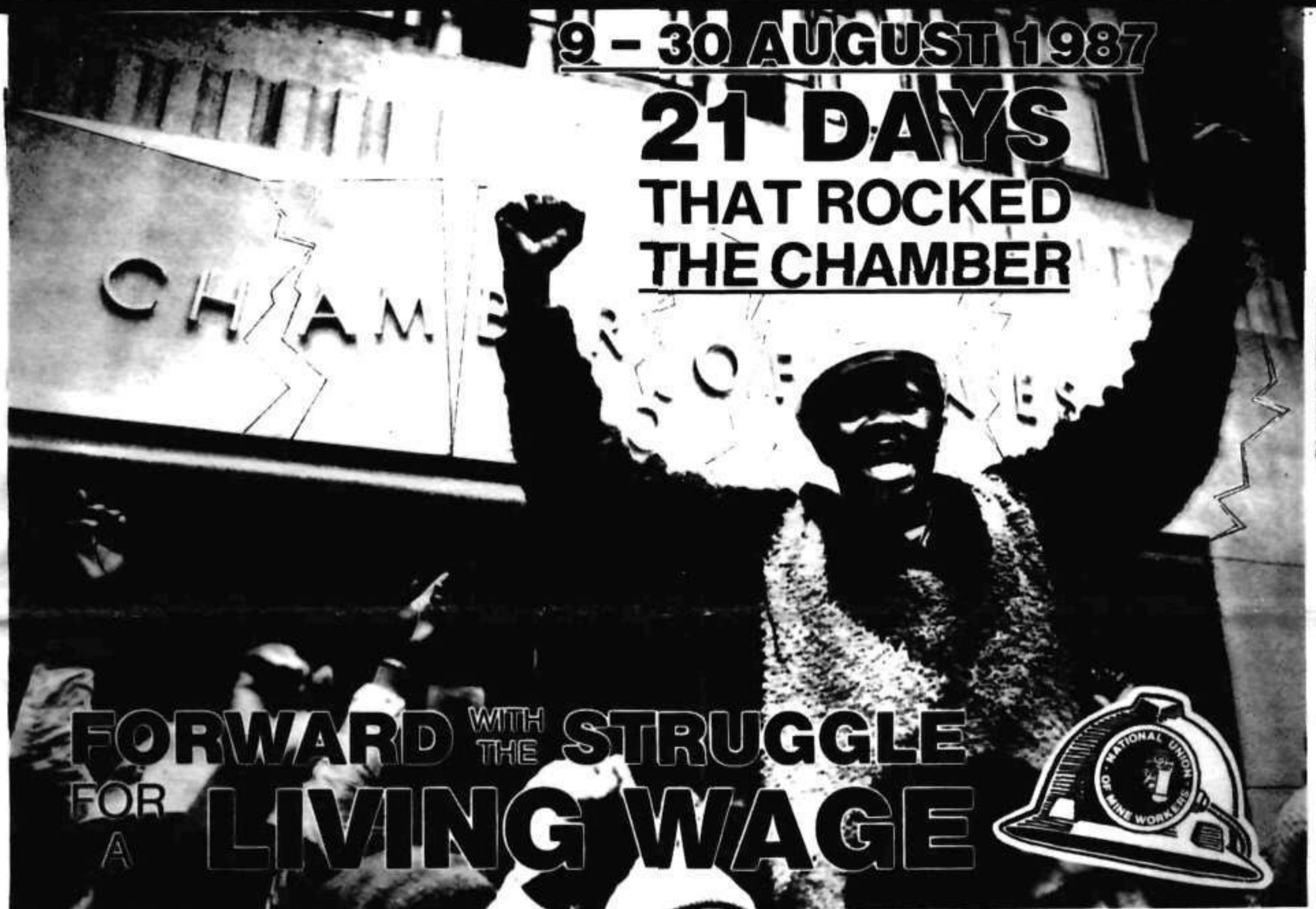


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Official Newsletter of the National Union of Mineworkers

9 - 30 AUGUST 1987

21 DAYS THAT ROCKED THE CHAMBER



FORWARD WITH THE STRUGGLE FOR A LIVING WAGE



The strike by 360 000 mineworkers ended in the same disciplined way as it started when agreement was reached with the Chamber of Mines on wages and conditions of employment.

ATTEMPTS TO BREAK THE STRIKE

Despite all attempts by the Chamber and its allies - the State and big business - to break the strike, they failed in the end.

These attempts included:

- Sending out false pamphlets, telling workers that the strike was off.
- Forcing workers underground at gunpoint at Vaal Reefs, Harmony and Western Deep Levels.
- Assaults of individuals and groups of workers by mine security and police.
- Raids on union offices.
- Bomb scares.
- Arrests and detention of stewards, including the

entire regional leadership of Klerksdorp.

In total 11 mineworkers died, 500 were injured and over 400 were arrested. This unmasked the ruthless nature of management.

UNITY AND DISCIPLINE

Despite these attacks the union's strike stewards stuck strictly to the union's strike rules. The discipline and unity throughout the strike laid a firm foundation for a Living Wage campaign in 1988.

LESSONS OF THE STRIKE

As Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the union, put it:

"This struggle was only the dress rehearsal for the struggle in 1988, it has laid a golden foundation for the future."

The strike proved beyond any

doubt that the union enjoyed the support of the workers. It also showed that NUM can continue to strike as long as it wants to. It also showed that the union has an effective and disciplined leadership, at all levels.

The Chamber thought that the union did not have workers' support. They also thought that if the strike did take place, it would only last 48 hours. This proved a costly mistake for them and became a three-week nightmare.

In fact, the Chamber lost well over R250 million during the strike. That is almost twice the amount of the union's wage demand. The Chamber was willing to go all out to destroy the union, but it underestimated the discipline of the mineworkers. In the end, they started dismissing thousands of workers, shaft by shaft, in an attempt to demoralise workers and hopefully break the strike.

But this still did not break the determination of workers, although it was clear that management of the mines was determined to dismiss all the workers.

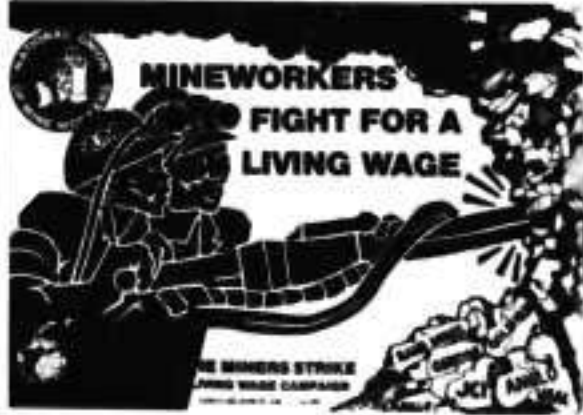
It was necessary to defend the union because we were not only up against management, but also the State. Our main task became defending workers' jobs, and fighting the dismissals.

LIVING WAGE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

The union remains confident that the strike was an important victory for the mineworkers, COSATU and the workers of South Africa. The strike remains part of a wider struggle and continuing strategy for dealing with the Chamber.

Our struggle for a living wage continues and in 1988 more significant gains will be made.

STRIKE DIARY



More than 340 000 mineworkers were involved in the biggest legal strike in the labour history of S.A. Our demand for a living wage is a legitimate demand. We produce the wealth in our country. We are the ones who suffer most.

The Chamber remained stubborn. Instead of listening to our demands, the mining bosses responded with violence to break our strike.

The bosses used their private army, the mine security, backed up by the SAP to shoot at our members. They used rubber bullets, teargas and sjamboks on unarmed workers. Many workers were injured and hundreds were arrested by the police. Still our strike remained strong.

When 40,000 of our members had been dismissed the union decided, through discussion in its structures, to end the strike.

The strike was an important victory for mineworkers. We proved that we have built an organisation that can withstand the vicious attack of the mine bosses. We are determined to continue the struggle for a living wage.

9 August 1987

•70 000 nightshift workers strike at 44 gold and coal mines.

•Fake pamphlets were distributed in Klerksdorp informing workers that the strike was called off.

•Eight members were detained at Vaal Reefs.

•At Harmony strikers were allegedly forced underground at gunpoint. Workers then staged an underground sit-in.

•Mine security allegedly attacked workers at Kinross.

10 August 1987

•Total number of workers on strike grows to 340 000.

•Newspapers reports that white workers receive R80 per shift for scabbing.

•800 workers at Rietspruit join the strike.

•Fifteen workers arrested at Westonaria for allegedly blocking the street.

•The Assistant Hostel Manager allegedly tried to organise a faction fight at Matla Coal. He was reprimanded.

12 August 1987

•Seventy eight members of the regional strike committee in Klerksdorp were arrested by the SAP

•115 workers were arrested at various mines.

•Four workers injured at President Steyn.

•Workers at Unisel, Ergo, Springfield, New Clydesdale joined the strike.

13 August 1987



•Five workers injured at Bracken by rubber bullets.

•Birdshot was allegedly fired at workers at Lorraine.

11 August 1987

•About 7 000 workers at Stilfontein join the strike.

•Bomb scare at the Klerksdorp office.

•Ergo workers evicted from the company premises. Twenty-three workers injured and arrested

•The strike spreads to Consolidated Murchison, Rand Refinery, Phoenix

Colliery, East Daggafontein, Simmergo, Luipardsvlei.

•Workers at Saaiplaas were allegedly attacked by teamleaders organised by management.

•Six workers detained at Leslie.

14 August 1987

•Mine security backed by SAP allegedly attacked 700 singing workers at Western Deep Levels. Seventy-eight workers were injured, one seriously.

•At Optimum twenty-seven workers were injured when birdshot was allegedly fired.

•Mine security stormed the union office at Kriel and held one worker.

15 August 1987



•Twenty-four injured at Vaal Reefs and Matla Coal. Three workers hospitalised.

•Sixty-three workers arrested at Western Deep South.

16 August 1987

•The Labour Monitoring Group estimates that the

mines have lost up to R93 million.

•At Nufcor 104 started their strike.

•Sixty-three workers from Western Deep Levels released on bail of R200 each.

•National strike committee meets in Johannesburg and decide that the strike will continue.

17 August 1987

•Anglo met with the union to discuss violence during the strike.

18 August 1987

•Talks with Anglo breaks down when workers at President Steyn were allegedly attacked by the SAP. Fifteen were injured.

20 August 1987

•Workers at Vaal Reefs

No.6 shaft refused to accept management's ultimatum. About 2000 were locked out. Similar threats were received at Western Holdings No.1. The workers decided that all the workers will go home if management carry out its threat.

STRIKE SUPPORT COMMITTEE

On the eve of the big strike by mineworkers 22 organisations met to form the NUM STRIKE SUPPORT COMMITTEE.

The following progressive organisations participate :

UDF, SAYCO, FEDTRAW, NAMDA, SCA, NECC, SOSCO, SANSCO, NUSAS, TIC, JODAC, HWA, VAAL CIVIC, DESCOM, IKAGENG CIVIC, LENASIA YOUTH, NEUSA, and others.

More meetings were held and a co-ordinating committee was elected. The task of the support committee was to assist with transport, medical services for injured miners, accommodation, provision of food, publicity and monitoring of the strike. Comrades from SAYCO and SANSCO provided very valuable security services at the union's head office.

The UDF sent a telex to P.W. Botha demanding that they refrain from intervening in the strike. The UDF also telexed the Chamber calling on the Chamber to meet the legitimate demands of the miners.

The Unemployed Workers Co-ordinating Committee (UWCC) issued a pamphlet calling on the unemployed workers not to scab on the striking miners.

Organisations donated foodstuffs, blankets and money. These donations included: Soweto Civic Association - R1000 NECC - R2000 NUSAS and SANSCO - R3023,79

Support for the strike grew day by day.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS WISHES TO THANK ALL THE ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY.



NOW IS THE HOUR!

THE time has arrived. We cannot turn back.

Every mineworker must move to the frontline and join the battle for a living wage NOW!

Strike action must take place on every mine.

The Chamber of Mines has clearly shown that it will not pay us a decent wage. It has shown that it is only concerned about profit, and making the bosses rich — while we get poorer.

The only way to bring pressure on the Chamber of Mines is to strike on all the gold and coal mines.

The bosses have said that if we go on strike, they will not increase our wages.

We also know that mine managements have started their own mobilisation so that they can crush our strike.

They have threatened to:

- * Dismiss us.
- * Close the mines if we strike.
- * Use mine security against us.
- * Starve us.

We also know that mine managements are well supported by the present state of emergency. This gives wide powers to the police and military, who

have been placed on full alert.

But comrades, let us not be scared by these threats.

The bosses are making these threats because they know we are united, disciplined and ready for action. They are worried about the action we are going to take on August 9.

They are worried because they will:

- * Face the biggest wage strike in this country's history.
- * Lose millions of rand in profit because gold and coal production will stop.
- * Learn that workers

fully support their union in its struggle for a living wage.

Comrades, let us not be scared by the Chamber of Mines.

Our strike is legal.

We have voted in our thousands to go on strike.

This is our only weapon now that the Chamber has rejected all the union's attempts to reach a settlement.

Our struggle for a living wage will be put back many years if we let the Chamber continue to pay us poverty wages.

We must fight for our demands!