

# Even the bannings couldn't stop May Day

MAY DAY 1987 meant a small but important victory for South African mineworkers.

After years of demanding May Day as a paid worker holiday, the Chamber of Mines backed down and agreed that May Day should be paid holiday for miners.

Thousands of mine-workers were able to spend May Day doing what workers in other parts of the world are allowed to do — celebrating their victories.

Their celebrations were not quite as joyful as in other parts of the world, however, as managements and the state refused to allow permission for open-air May Day rallies or marches.

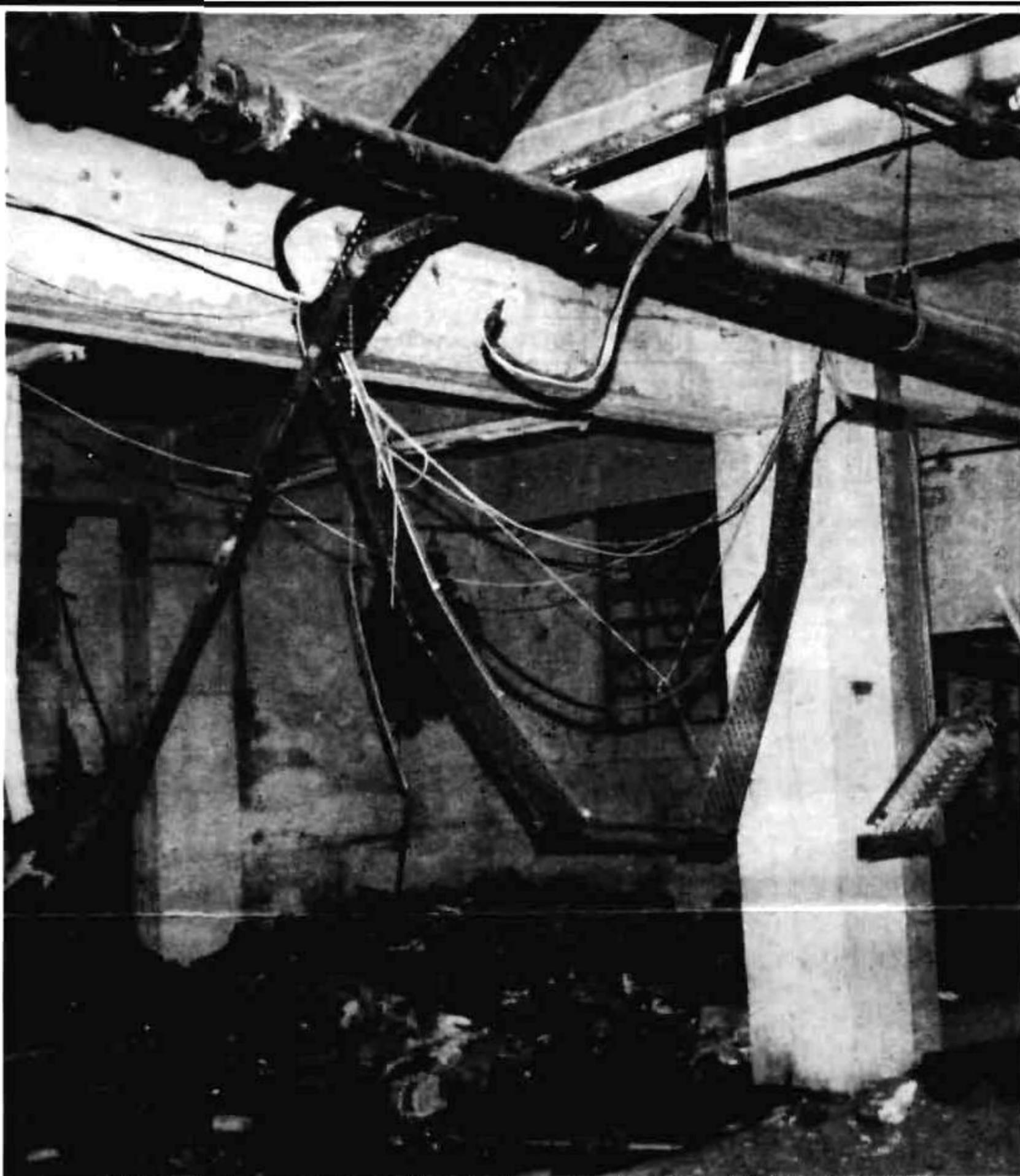
This refusal applied to workers throughout the country, and it was only in Cape Town that they were able to hold an open-air rally after a special court application.

More than 6 000 workers turned up for the rally, which featured several speakers — and a soccer match between teams called Mandela United and Mpetha Spurs.

Several indoor meetings were held throughout the city, as well as in other parts of the country such as Port Elizabeth and Durban. The only rally held in the Johannesburg area was in Lenasia near Soweto, which was attended by more than 600 people.

Several hundred workers also attended a May Day church service in Soshanguve.

A huge rally was also held in Windhoek's Katatura township.



THE DAMAGE: The basement of Cosatu House after the recent bomb blast which ripped through the building.

## It's war on the workers

"ANTI-UNION forces have declared war on the working class."

That was how one union organiser described the cowardly bomb attack on Cosatu House earlier this month.

which ripped through several floors of Cosatu's national head office.

The building — which houses 11 Cosatu affiliates — will

probably have to be demolished, according to Cosatu.

Members unions are presently searching Johannesburg for office space.

Some are sharing with other unions.

No-one has claimed responsibility for the bomb blasts, which left a hole three metres deep and seven metres wide in the building's foundations.

However, workers are in no doubt that whoever planted the bombs was aiming at damaging the organisation of workers throughout the country.

But as Cosatu said in a

statement afterwards: "The people who did this are mistaken if they think such an attack will stop workers from campaigning for what is theirs."

"We have said repeatedly that our strength is not in our building or our resources — it is in the workers' hearts and minds."

The attack on Cosatu House came just a week after a police siege of the building in what they claimed was an attempt to track down "criminals".

According to an announcement at the time, the police were searching for people they believed were responsible for necklacing four

SA Transport Services workers.

Twelve people were arrested during the siege — none of whom had been brought to court at the time of going to press.

Just one week earlier police had also sealed off the building — this time in search of people who had taken part in a workers' demonstration at the nearby Doornfontein station.

Police occupied the building for several hours, searching offices and the basement.

Both raids were condemned by union movements throughout the world.

### NUM Natal organiser killed

INKATHA's United Workers' Union of SA (Uwusa) has been barred by the courts from attacking National Union of mineworkers members in Natal.

The Natal supreme court made the restriction on Uwusa after a vicious attack on NUM's Vryheid offices, in which

organiser Comrade Bhekuyise Ntshangase was killed.

NUM member Comrade Phumlam Mdletshe said his colleague was murdered by well-known Uwusa members, who had been heavily armed.

"I know the killers and can definitely identify them as Uwusa members

because they have been recruiting on the mine — some of them actually work there," he said.

NUM condemned the cold-blooded murder of its northern Natal organiser, and made a supreme court application to prevent further attacks. The application was granted.

