

UDF PRESS STATEMENT 27/8/87

**CHAMBER OF MINES MUST NEGOTIATE**

It is becoming rapidly clear that the Chamber of Mines is intent on using all possible methods to break the NUM strike - mass dismissals, forcing the miners down the shafts at gunpoint, brutal assaults at the hands of the paramilitary mine security, and close co-operation with the South African Police.

Despite the channels of negotiation opened up by the NUM, it seems that Anglo-American prefers to resort to traditional white "baasskap" and strike-breaking with the collusion of the government.

The Chamber is not serious when it comes to negotiations - the main issue is wages, and despite the NUM having dropped their demand from a 30 percent increase to a 27 percent increase, it has refused to come to realistic terms with the union. The mine bosses are being totally intransigent in their refusal to consider the wage question.

The only conclusions that can be drawn are that the Chamber and Anglo-American hopes to weaken the NUM and the position of the striking mine workers through mass dismissals. It wants to place the union in a position of weakness, or even destroy it entirely, before it is prepared to come to the negotiating table.

The UDF wishes to place on record its strongest condemnation of the methods currently being used by Anglo-American against thousands of their employees. Anglo-American has never had a good track record when it comes to the welfare of its employees, and it is obvious that it is resisting every step of the way when it comes to basic improvements in wages and living conditions.

The UDF has already shown its support for the mineworkers in a number of ways. Our affiliates are sitting on strike support committees and are raising money, collecting food and helping with transport. We have also called for overseas solidarity actions.

But if Anglo-American continues in its strike-breaking methods, and is not prepared to talk to the NUM, and not prepared to talk to the UDF (as indicated in its reply to a telex on the part of the UDF requesting a meeting), then all we can do is to urge strong national solidarity action on the part of the unions and communities. We will encourage national solidarity strikes and stayaway actions by the communities in support of the mineworkers.

Issued by the UDF's National Executive Committee