

STRIKE BACK!

PROFITS

The mining houses have made huge profits this year. Gold Fields, for example showed a record aggregate after tax of R229 million, despite the lower earnings caused by the decreased gold production. Workers underground, however, are earning as little as R166 per month and those above ground are earning even less than this. According to Manoko Nchwe, some of these workers are earning only R135 per month.

The negative response of mine owners to the demands of NUM led to a dispute arising and strike preparations being made by NUM. This strike was to encompass all mining houses in South Africa, and was to be launched on the 25th August.

As the strike day neared, mining houses panicked and called for urgent meetings with NUM. These meetings took place on the 21st and 27th August. Interesting developments occurred at the meetings. Most sig-

nificantly, mine owners' unity succumbed to worker pressure as individual mining houses scurried to settle with NUM.

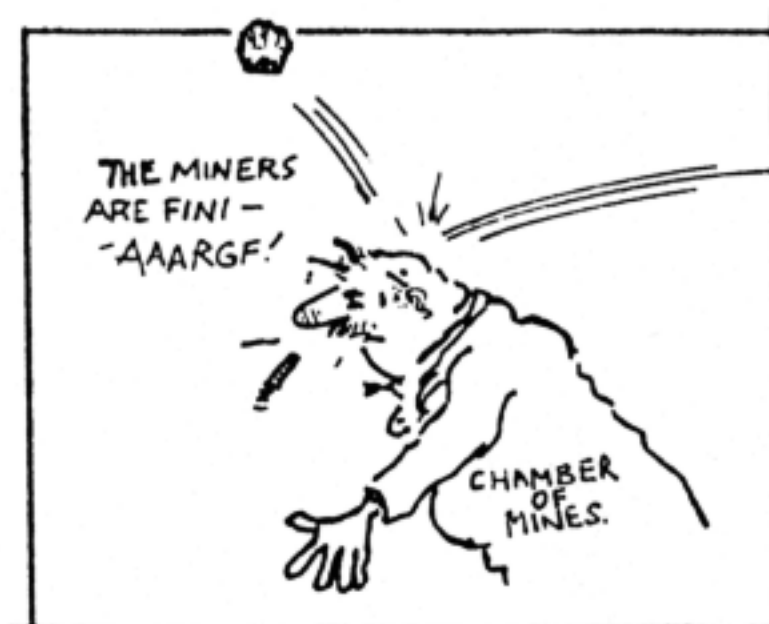
The split in the Chamber of Mines clearly reflected the effects of worker power - those that succumbed are mining houses where NUM is at its strongest (eg. Anglo American settled for between 17% and 19%) and those that did not, are those where NUM is weaker (eg. Gencor offered 14% and 19%).

THE STRIKE

On the 1st September, 28 000 miners came out on strike at Transvaal Navigation Collieries, Matla, Marievale, Beatrix, Blinkpan and Deelkraal. Harassment by the bosses and the state was stepped up immediately. The telephones at NUM's headquarters were cut. Although the strike was legal, unionists were not allowed access to the mines. There was a heavy

police presence on the mines and surrounding areas. Miners were forced to work at gunpoint. Hundreds were injured by rubber bullets, sjambokking and teargas. Thousands of mines were denied food and water.

By the second day of the strike, about 6500 workers were dismissed, many forcibly transported to the human dumping grounds - the homelands. The National Executive Committee of NUM decided to suspend the strike in order to protect workers from dismissal and evictions. (See briefs for NUM Strike Support Committee)



METALWORKERS

*PLANT LEVEL BARGAINING

- * a minimum "living wage" of R3,50 per hour and a 50c across the board increase;
- * May Day to be a paid holiday;
- * employers to double their contribution to the industry's pension fund. This to be invested in black housing;
- * four weeks paid holiday (presently 3 weeks);
- * maternity leave.

The following demands were made in response to mounting retrenchments:

- * increased overtime rates to curb overtime working
- * a reduction of 5 hours on the working week to 40 hours
- * retrenchment pay calculated on the basis of 4 weeks wages for every year of service.



DEMAND