MINING - ACCIDENTS

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Foam fires - SA has details on mine deaths

Weekend Argus
Correspondent
DURBAN — Warnings about the dangers of the foam shaft-lining which appears to have been responsible for the Kuroos mine disaster are available in South Africa. The foam has caused deaths in mining accidents elsewhere before.

At least 177 miners died this week after the polyurethane lining ignited at Kuroos gold mine at Evander, east of Johannesburg.

It was the worst gold mine disaster in South Africa.

In the United States, 10 mine fires have involved the foam, which was first introduced in the early 1960s.

The American National Materials Advisory Board investigated the foam and other polymers and recommended that they be replaced with safer materials. The report by the committee — comprising a large number of experts — was published in 1980. A copy is obtainable at the Johannesburg reference library.

It says the foam is flammable and subject to spontaneous combustion and its decomposition represents a significant toxic hazard.

Yet, on Thursday a spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said “Polyurethane and other products used in mines have until now been regarded by mines as safe.”

And on Friday the heads of Gencor, which owns Kuroos, said they were not aware of any tests on the polyurethane which lined the shaft.

But in another interview in which he was asked why the mine ignored warnings about the product, Dr Con Faucconner, Gencor’s head of mining, metallurgical and medical services, said he had known of the possible dangers of the foam.

“Thats why the mine used a polyurethane material that was treated with flame retardant chemicals. Perhaps these chemicals have deteriorated over a period of time,” he said.

The American report says that although various substances are added to the foam to control its fire risk, high surface heat can “almost instantaneously turn it into flammable gases.”

The executive chairman of Gencor, Mr Derek Keys, said at a press conference that the group had thought it was operating at a “reasonably safe level.” This accident had made us think otherwise and we were going back to our safety programme and will reconsider every aspect of it.

A spokesman for the Underground Officials’ Association said the safety of the foam had never been queried.

In spite of a recommended deadline by the Government Engineer for the introduction of life-saving, self-rescue masks on gold mines by this year and coal mines by last year, the Chamber of Mines is still in the “testing” stage.

A top mining engineer said the masks, which give wearers a 30-minute oxygen supply, could have averted the loss of so many lives at Kuroos. But Gencor says local conditions require a special adaptation and extensive research.

Meanwhile, the polyurethane foam is being removed from the mine.
JOHANNESBURG -- The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is to bring in international mining experts to help in the judicial inquiry into the Kinross mining disaster.

The union's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said the union would soon bring in mining experts from Britain and Germany.

The Chamber of Mines said yesterday the South African mining industry would be happy to open its doors to any team of international mine safety experts.

The chamber was responding to an announcement from Bonn that the West German Foreign Minister, Dr Hans Dietrich Genscher, had asked the South African Government to permit a commission of deep-level mine experts to inspect the Kinross Mine to determine if poor safety standards contributed to the disaster there this week.

However, according to a report late last night, Mr Ramaphosa said Gencor, the owners of the mine, had refused NUM's mining experts access to the Kinross mine to conduct an inspection.

He said that on the day after the accident Gencor had agreed to allow NUM experts from Germany, Sweden and Great Britain to inspect the mine.

Yesterday afternoon "they called us to say they could not see their way clear for our experts to inspect the mine. The experts were already on standby to visit the mine he said.

Mr Ramaphosa also accused Gencor of "going against their promise" to stop production at Kinross mine.

He said workers had been "compelled" to go underground on Thursday but yesterday refused to do so.

The NUM has called for a national day of mourning on October 1 to honour the 177 victims.

Mr Ramaphosa said the union had approached the chamber to close all mines on October 1. He said NUM members would still observe the day should the chamber refuse.
Miners crushed in shaft accident

JOHANNESBURG—Six black gold miners were crushed to death when a plummeting kibble fell on top of them at the foot of an 800 m ventilation shaft at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine yesterday.

At least four of the rest of the 32-man team were seriously injured. They were rescued and admitted to Robinson Hospital.

— The chairman of the owners of the mine, Johannesburg Consolidated Investments, Mr. Gordon Waddell, said the empty kibble (a huge bucket used for carrying men and equipment up and down a shaft) was on its way up to ground level when the heavy steel cable support-
sing it broke, weighed down the kibble and caused it to crash to the bottom.

"We're still not exactly sure what happened, but an inquiry will be held," he said.

The men were trapped for eight hours before the hout winder drum was repaired and an emergency kibble lowered a rescue boat down the shaft.

Mr. Waddell said rescue operations were proceeding slowly because the dead and injured had to be lifted through a narrow opening above the kibble.

The shaft is being constructed by a company called Shafters — (Sups)
Five feared dead in mine shaft accident

MICK COLLINS

FIVE men were feared dead and many more injured in an accident at the Randfontein Estate Gold Mine yesterday.

Rescue workers were still battling late yesterday to free the remainder of 32 men trapped underground.

The accident happened when a kibble crashed 800m down the shaft on the men working below.

Mine spokesman Gordon Waddell said: "Over 120 tons of steel rope also crashed down."

"We are lucky our feared casualties are not worse."

The injuries appear serious. With that amount of steel falling many of the shaft-sinkers lost arms and legs.

The shaft is being sunk by a private concern, Shaft Sinkers Pty (Ltd)."
Six killed in mine disaster

Own Correspondent (212)

JOHANNESBURG. — At least six men were killed and an undisclosed number injured yesterday in an accident at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine, west of Johannesburg, company officials said.

The accident occurred during shaft-sinking operations.

Rescue workers were still toiling late last night to free many of the injured, trapped about 800m underground.

The accident happened at 7.45am yesterday when an empty kibble went out of control and crashed down the shaft on to 32 men.

By 7pm yesterday, 17 miners had been brought to the surface and rescue operations were continuing.

A spokesman said progress was slow as only one kibble was in operation, which could accommodate only two stretchers at a time.

Rescuers were being hampered by 120 tons of steel cable which had also fallen down the shaft.
Equipment used in the autopsies of the 177 Kinross mine disaster victims was acceptable, the Department of Health has said.

In a statement made yesterday, it said: "The Department of National Health and Population Development took note of the Press reports surrounding the post-mortem examinations and is investigating the allegations made therein."

The department said it had been established that the equipment used in the post-mortems was acceptable equipment used for all post-mortem examinations.

All findings would be made available as evidence at the time of the inquest, the statement said. — Sapa
Kinross autopsy equipment 'acceptable'

PRETORIA — Equipment used in carrying out autopsies on the miners who died in the Kinross mine on September 16 was "acceptable", the Department of Health said yesterday.

Rejecting reports "in respect of anomalies during post-mortem examinations on the victims of the Kinross mine disaster," the department said:

"The department took notice of the press reports surrounding the post-mortem examinations which followed the Kinross mine disaster and is investigating the allegations made therein."

It added "At this stage it has already been established that the equipment used in carrying out the post-mortems was acceptable equipment used for all post-mortem examinations." All findings would be made available as evidence at the time of the inquest — Sapa
Gas, batons after Machel meeting

 OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG — Teargas was fired and hundreds of students were baton-charged yesterday at the University of the Witwatersrand after a memorial meeting honouring Mozambique's President Samora Machel.

The meeting, held in the Great Hall, was addressed by UDF president Mrs Albertina Sisulu, Mr Aubrey Mokoena of the Release Mandela Campaign and the Rev Frank Chikane of the UDF.

After the meeting, students singing freedom songs marched towards the entrance of Wits, but were confronted by police who ordered them to disperse.

Professor Mervyn Shear, deputy vice-chancellor in charge of Student Affairs, tried in vain to mediate between students and the police before the baton charge.

At the lunch-time meeting, Mrs Sisulu said the death of Mr Machel was not only a tragic event but a "setback for the struggle".

"We did not see Samora as a foreign leader, or head of an African state, but one of our own commanders in our struggle against racism and exploitation," she said.

Mr Chikane said Mr Machel had died under "mysterious and controversial" circumstances.

He said blacks were "getting impatient" for change and called on South Africans and Mozambicans to resist the "aggression of Pretoria."
Pathologist didn’t want NUM report published

A pathologist retained by lawyers acting for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), who prepared a report on the manner in which autopsies were conducted on some Kinross mine victims, says he never intended the report to become public.

Dr J B C Botha, the state pathologist of Namibia, has instructed the union’s lawyers to make it clear that the report was written on the expectation that it be passed on to the relevant government authorities. He did not intend it to become part of public debate.

The union, which commissioned the report from Dr Botha and referred it to the Department of National Health and the Government Mining Engineer, took the decision to make the report public after certain pronouncements made this week by Gencor, owners of the mine.

“Dr Botha would have preferred for the matter to remain departmental until the outcome of any judicial proceedings,” said union lawyers.
GENCOR must close the No 2 shaft at Kinross gold mine until there’s been an enquiry into the two fires. National Union of Mineworkers general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday.

Ramaphosa was commenting on this week’s fires at the No 2 shaft, when 2 000 workers were brought to the surface.

Last month 177 miners died in an underground fire at the mine, sparking an outcry at safety conditions underground. Gencor confirmed that 2 000 workers had to be evacuated following “two separate and minor fire incidents of unknown origin” at the mine’s No 2 shaft.

Ramaphosa said workers’ lives are “continually being endangered because of management’s neglect of safety standards.”

He reiterated NUM’s call for a judicial commission of inquiry into the safety standards at Kinross mine “with the participation of international safety experts as proposed by the European Community’s Foreign Ministers”.

In a statement, Gencor said there was no danger at the mine and nobody was affected. It said the men were taken to the surface because of last month’s accident at the mine.

The fires, which occurred on the 15th level, were in short sections of a rubber cover of an overhead electric locomotive line, the statement said.

According to the statement, the cause of the fires was not known.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Mines dismissed charges by Britain’s Granada television program that the safety rating system used in SA mines is “bogus” and is not widely used elsewhere

Chamber Mine Safety Division head Anthony Gill said bogus is “an ugly word to give to something which prevents people being killed.”

The program also said the mine’s safety system

 introduced with the assistance of the US Loss Control Institute was not used in European mines and was employed by only a few mines in the US.

Gill said the system, known as the International Safety Rating System, was used by the Canadian mining industry, the world’s second largest.

The ISR was also used in Chile and in about 35 mines in Australia.

“It is used in some major mining areas around the world. In other words, it works well,” he said.

The system had been adapted for local conditions since its introduction, Gill said.

He said that, in the first six months of 1986, South African collieries admitted by the chamber had recorded 0.24 fatalities for every 1 000 workers, compared with 0.64 internationally and 0.62 in the US, the world’s largest coal producer.
Govt moves on Kinross autopsies

JOHANNESBURG – The National Health Minister, Dr Willie van Niekerk, has called for details of alleged deficiencies in post-mortems on Kinross mine-disaster victims. "Until I am satisfied with the facts I cannot comment," he added yesterday.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for a government inquiry into autopsies on 33 bodies at the Springs mortuary on September 22. The 33 were among the 177 who died in a fire at the mine on September 16.

A Granada Television film on the Kinross disaster was screened in Britain this week, claiming bodies had been stacked and industrial bolt cutters used during post-mortems in Springs.

Gencor, owners of Kinross, said the film appeared to contain unfounded, unsubstantiated and biased statements. Mr Bruce Evans, chief executive of Gencor's gold and uranium division, also said reports on the way the autopsies were carried out were "blatant untruths".

Yesterday Mr Evans said he still believed the film contained a number of biased and unfounded statements but that Gencor's information about the manner in which autopsies were carried out appeared to have been "incorrect".

Dr J B C Botha, state pathologist of Namibia, who represented NUM at the Springs post-mortem, found serious deficiencies in the equipment.

Dr Botha said in a report to the union's lawyers that bodies were stacked on top of each other, resulting in post-mortem injuries which were difficult to distinguish from pre-death injuries.

He also found the bodies had not been refrigerated, decomposition had set in and industrial bolt cutters had been used.
MINISTER CALLS FOR AUTOPSY ROW DETAILS

JOHANNESBURG—The National Health Minister, Dr Willie van Niekerk, said yesterday he had called for details of alleged deficiencies regarding certain postmortems on Kinross mine disaster victims.

"Until I am au fait with the facts I cannot comment," he said.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for an urgent inquiry by the department and the Government mining engineer into the way in which postmortems were carried out on 33 bodies at the Springs mortuary on September 22.

The 33 were among the 177 who died in a fire at the mine on September 16. Other postmortems were carried out at Bethal and Standerton.

Attention focused on the postmortems in Springs after a Granada Television film on the Kinross disaster was screened in Britain this week. The film claimed bodies had been stacked on top of one another and that industrial bolt cutters had been used during postmortems.

Gencor, owners of Kinross, said the film appeared to contain a number of unfounded, unsubstantiated and biased statements. Mr Bruce Evans, chief executive of Gencor's gold and uranium division, also said reports were "blatant untruths."

Yesterday Mr Evans said he still believed the film contained a number of biased and unfounded statements but that Gencor's information about the manner in which postmortems were carried out appeared to have been "incorrect."

Dr J B C Botha, the State pathologist of South West Africa, who represented the union at the postmortems in Springs, found serious deficiencies in the equipment available to perform the postmortems.
Minister wants facts

Political Correspondent

Health Minister Dr Wilhe van Niekerk has called for details of alleged irregularities during autopsies on Kinross mine fire victims.

He said today newspaper reports had alerted him but he could not comment until he was acquainted with the facts.

Sheryl Raine reports that the National Union of Mineworkers has requested an urgent investigation by the Department of Health and the Government mining engineer.

Dr JBC Botha, the Namibian pathologist who represented the union at the autopsies, said he found serious deficiencies in the equipment available to perform the examinations.

He said bodies were stacked due to lack of space, causing injuries difficult to distinguish from pre-death wounds.

"The bodies had not been refrigerated and many had begun to decompose."

Gencor, owners of Kinross, said allegations that bodies had been stacked and industrial bolt-cutters used during the autopsies were "blatant untruths".

"Gencor was asked to comment on Dr Botha's claims but has not responded."
Disaster mine autopsies row

JOHANNESBURG — A storm of protest has erupted over the way in which autopsies were carried out on some black mineworkers who died in the Kinross gold mine disaster.

Lawyers acting on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers yesterday released a highly critical report written by the pathologist who represented the union in the postmortem process, claiming serious deficiencies in the equipment used and the tests carried out.

'Concern about the matter in which the autopsies were carried out and a request for an urgent investigation were conveyed to the Department of National Health and Population Development, as well as the Government Mining Enquiry,' said a spokesman for the law firm of Cheadle, Thomson and Hayson.

'The union's pathologist, Dr J B C Botha, who is also the State Pathologist of South West Africa, reported the following in respect of autopsies performed on 23 victims of the disaster at the State mortuary in Springs on September 22.

Stacked up

'The bodies had not been adequately preserved prior to autopsy and in many, decomposition had already commenced. I do not know where the bodies had been stored as there was, to the best of my knowledge, only one refrigerator facility for 24 bodies.

'The bodies were stacked on top of each other in four piles on the floor because of the inadequate space available. This resulted in postmortem injuries which were at times exceedingly difficult to distinguish from antemortem lesions.

'The mortuary is inadequately equipped for the performance of autopsies. Skulls are opened with an agricultural bow saw as no electric saw is available, while bolt cutters are used to open the thorax as cartridge shears have not been provided. The scale provided for weighing organs is both obsolete and broken while the mortuary staff are expected to weigh the bodies on an antiquated scale, calibrated in pounds and ounces, of the type used to weigh bags of grain.

Inexplicable

'No specimen containers were available for the taking of blood or tissue samples.

'The Kinross mine accident was of national importance and may have far-reaching implications for the South African mining industry. I therefore find it inexplicable that the postmortem examinations of the victims were not performed with more thought and co-ordination.'

'Dr Botha said that he believed all the bodies should have been transferred to a central point with adequate facilities.

'A State pathologist should have been appointed to supervise and co-ordinate the autopsies by representatives of the National Centre of Occupational Health and the Department of Manpower.

'Details of the positions of the bodies when found in the mine and circumstances of the accident should have been given to the people conducting the autopsies.'

'Blood samples should have been obtained from all the deceased and not just a random few so that a systematic analysis of the toxic gases in selected victims from different parts of the mine shaft could be performed.'

'A spokesman for Gencor said last night they were studying the allegations and a statement would probably be issued sometime today. However, he said he wanted to point out that autopsies were performed by the health authorities and not the mine.

'A television film shown in Britain last week said bodies of black mineworkers were piled on top of one another and industrial bolt cutters were used to carry out autopsies.

In response to the television allegations, Gencor said 'We find it distasteful that anyone should go to such lengths to sensationalise this tragic accident and cause further distress to the families of the victims.' — (Sapa)
Autopsies on 33 Kinross victims were 'deficient'

JOHANNESBURG — A storm of protest has erupted over the way in which autopsies were carried out on some black mineworkers who died in the Kinross mine disaster which claimed 177 lives.

Lawyers acting on behalf of the National Union of Mineworkers yesterday released a highly critical report written by the pathologist who represented the union in the post-mortem process claiming “serious deficiencies”.

“Concern about the manner in which the autopsies were carried out and a request for an urgent investigation were conveyed to the Department of National Health and Population Development, as well as the government mining engineer this week,” said a spokesman for the law firm.

“In the light of developments, this week the union has instructed us to release the pathologist’s report before receiving an official reply from the authorities.”

The union’s pathologist, Dr J B C Botha, the State pathologist of Namibia, reported in respect of autopsies performed on 32 victims of the disaster at the State mortuary in Springs on September 22.

“The bodies had not been adequately preserved prior to autopsy and in many, decomposition had already commenced. I do not know where the bodies had been stored as the Springs mortuary has, to the best of my knowledge, only refrigeration facilities for 24 bodies.

“The bodies were stacked on top of each other in four piles on the floor because of the inadequate space available. This resulted in post-mortem injuries which were at times exceedingly difficult to distinguish from ante-mortem lesions.

“The mortuary is inadequately equipped for the performance of autopsies. Skulls were opened with an agricultural bow saw as no electric saw is available, while bolt cutters are used as cartilage shears have not been provided. The scale for weighing organs is both obsolete and broken while the mortuary staff are expected to weigh the bodies on an antiquated scale, calibrated in pounds and ounces, of the type used to weigh bags of grain.

“No specimen containers were available for the taking of blood or tissue samples.

“The Kinross mine accident was of national importance and may have far-reaching implications for the South African mining industry. I therefore find it inexplicable that the post-mortem examinations of the victims were not performed with more thought and co-ordination.”

Comment from Gencor, owners of Kinross, on the allegations was not available. Neither was comment available from the Department of National Health and Population Development.

The NUM has demanded the closure of the Number Two shaft at the Kinross mine, where two underground fires on Wednesday forced the evacuation of 2,000 mineworkers. The fires broke out at the 15th level, the scene of last month’s disaster — Sapa
Gencor: electric fault caused fires

JOHANNESBURG — Wednesday’s two fires in Shaft Two at Kinross gold mine were caused by an electrical fault in the overhead trolley line that caused the rubber insulation shroud to burn, a statement from a Gencor executive, Mr. Bruce Evans, said yesterday.

Gencor said the fault “had been rectified” and the trolley line was in operation by yesterday evening.

“It has been confirmed that the minor amounts of smoke involved contained no toxic gases,” the statement said.

Gencor described the fires as “minor.”

Both Wednesday night’s and yesterday’s shifts had returned underground and work in the shaft “proceeds as normal.”

No cause for further delay or disruption of operation was foreseen, the statement said.

A National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) spokesman said the union had called on Gencor to close the number Two Shaft where the fires caused the evacuation of 2,000 workers yesterday.

The NUM spokesman confirmed that workers had gone underground on Wednesday and yesterday morning.

Protests have erupted over the way in which autopsies were carried out on some mineworkers who died in the Kinross gold mine disaster.

Lawyers acting on behalf of the NUM yesterday released a critical report written by the pathologist who represented the union in the post-mortem process, claiming serious deficiencies in the equipment used and the tests carried out.

Concerns about the matter in which the autopsies were carried out and a request for an urgent investigation were conveyed to the Department of National Health and Population Development, as well as the government mining engineer this week, said a spokesman for the law firm Cheadle, Thomson and Hayson.

“In the light of developments this week the union has instructed us to release the pathologist’s report before receiving an official reply from the authorities.”

Comment on the allegations was not available from Gencor - Sapa
Kinross autopsies: Bodies found decomposed

The bodies of 33 victims of the Kinross Mine disaster were found stacked on top of each other in four piles on the floor when a pathologist conducted autopsies at the Springs State Mortuary last month.

In a report submitted to lawyers for the National Union of Mineworkers, the state pathologist said the bodies had not been adequately preserved prior to the autopsy and in many decomposition had already commenced.

Dr. JBC Botha had sharp words in his report for the conditions of the bodies and the facilities available to him for the post-mortem.

"I do not know where the bodies had been stored as the Springs Mortuary has, to the best of my knowledge, only refrigeration facilities for 24 bodies," he said.

The stacking of bodies on top of each other "resulted in post-mortem injuries which were at times exceedingly difficult to distinguish from ante-mortem lesions.

"The mortuary is totally inadequately equipped for the performance of autopsies, skulls are opened with an agricultural bow saw as no electric saw is available while bolt cutters are used to open the thorax as carriages shears have not been provided."

The scale provided for weighing organs is both obsolete and broken while the mortuary staff is expected to weigh bodies on an antiquated scale, calibrated in pounds and ounces, of the type used to weigh bags of grain,

He described the facilities as "unacceptable" and "not conducive to the performance of thorough autopsies.

"The Kinross mine accident is of national importance and may have far-reaching implications for the South African mining industry. I therefore find it inexplicable that the post-mortem examinations of the victims were not performed with more thought and coordination."

The bodies were those of 33 of the 177 miners who died when a fire broke out at the Gencor-owned Kinross mine recently. The same mine was evacuated again this week when two small fires broke out in the number 15 shaft.

It was reported last night that miners had returned to work following the two fires on Wednesday.

The fires were caused by an electrical fault due to moisture in the overhead trolley line, causing rubber insulation to burn, a Gencor representative said.

"Work in the shaft now proceeds as normal and no cause for further delays or disruption of operations is foreseen," he said.
SOME 750 workers will be allowed to take up their jobs in SA as a result of the recent talks between the Chamber of Mines and government on the recruitment ban on workers from Mozambique.

But this seems to be the only concession granted after a week of talks.

The first official statement released by the chamber after the talks said the 750 Mozambican workers had been recruited at the time of the government ban but were not permitted to enter SA.

The chamber's President, E P Gush said: "As a result of these negotiations, clarity on this issue has been obtained and some 750 mine workers who were affected will now be permitted to enter SA and take up their jobs."

Gush said the chamber had been discussing the situation with the SA government since last week.

Chamber spokesmen have not said whether they are expecting further concessions or whether talks will continue.

Gush also made the announcement at a function at East Rand Proprietary Mines Ltd (ERPM) in Boksburg.

DOMINIQUE GILBERT

He said: "For the best part of the past 100 years Mozambique has been one of the most important sources of labour for SA's gold mines and wages earned on the gold mines have been the main source of foreign earning for Mozambique.

"It is a matter of great regret therefore that this relationship between our mining industry and the people of Mozambique has been threatened because certain political organisations are exploiting a situation of considerable volatility and of considerable weakness in the Mozambican government's position on the one hand and the sustained pressure being encountered by the SA government on the other."

He said all South Africans should be aware of the very great debt owed to the hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans who have worked on the mines and helped sustain the industry in difficult times.

Gush said Mozambicans had formed a large proportion of the ERPM workforce from its inception 93 years ago, as they did on other Witwatersrand mines, especially the Central Witwatersrand mines, many of which have long since closed.

"Today Mozambicans constitute about 43% of ERPM's workforce," he said.

"I would also like all Mozambican mine workers in our industry to know that we appreciate them as people and as workers."
Emergency at Kinross

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — About 2,000 men were evacuated yesterday when underground fires triggered an emergency at the Kinross mine, scene of South Africa’s worst gold mine disaster.

The men were brought to the surface following “two separate and minor fire incidents of unknown origin”, according to a statement from the General Mining Union Corporation.
Miners evacuated after fires at Kinross

Mercury Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG—About 2,000 miners were evacuated from the No 2 Shaft at Kinross gold mine at 11 a.m. yesterday after two separate and minor fires broke out at 15 Level near the scene of last month's disaster in which 177 people died.

A Gencor spokesman said the fires were extinguished immediately and that workers were not in any danger. However, in view of possible employee sensitivity after last month's disaster, the shaft's entire workforce was removed to the surface.

The cause of the fires has not been established. According to the spokesman, the rubber cover of overhead electric locomotive lines ignited and a small amount of smoke entered some underground workings.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) last night said it was 'deeply shocked' at the incident, and called for the closure of No 2 Shaft at Kinross until the inquiry into last month's disaster was concluded. The Gencor spokesman, however, said he did not see why operations should not resume almost immediately.
Chamber of Mines rejects claim on safety measures

JOHANNESBURG — The Chamber of Mines has dismissed charges by a British television company that the safety rating system used in South African mines is “bogus” — and is not widely used elsewhere.

“Bogus is an ugly word to give to something which prevents people being killed,” said the head of the chamber’s mine safety division, Mr. Anthony Gill.

Since the introduction of the safety system in the late 1970s, injuries on South African mines had halved — and there had been a “dramatic” drop in the number of fatalities, Mr. Gill said.

He was reacting to the screening this week by Britain’s Granada television of a programme blaming the Kinross mine disaster on management negligence — and describing the safety rating used by South African mines as “bogus.”

The programme also said the system introduced with the assistance of the United States Loss Control Institute, was not used in European mines and was employed by only a few mines in the US.

Mr. Gill said the system, known as the International Safety Rating system (ISR), was used by the Canadian mining industry, which was the world’s second largest.

The ISR was also used in Chile and in about 35 mines in Australia.

He said that in the first six months of 1986, South African collieries administered by the chamber had recorded 0.24 fatalities per 1,000 workers, compared with 0.62 for all South African collieries and 0.82 in the US, the world’s largest coal producer.

On member gold mines, the fatality rate was 0.61 per 1,000 workers, “a more than significant reduction” on the figure before introduction of the system, according to Mr. Gill.

Sapa
Criticism of mine safety standards slammed

JOHANNESBURG—The Chamber of Mines has dismissed charges by a British television company that the safety rating system used in South African mines is 'bogus' and is not widely used elsewhere.

'Bogus is an ugly word to give to something which prevents people being killed,' said Mr Anthony Gill, head of the chamber's mine safety division.

Since the introduction of the safety system in the late 1970s, injuries on South African mines had halved and there had been a 'dramatic' drop in the number of fatalities, Mr Gill said.

Not used

He was reacting to the screening on Monday night by Britain's Granada television of a programme blaming the Kinross mine disaster on management negligence and describing the safety rating used by South African mines as 'bogus'.

The programme also said the system, introduced with the assistance of the U.S. Loss Control Institute, was not used in European mines and was employed by only a few mines in the U.S.

Mr Gill said the system, known as the International Safety Rating system, was used by the Canadian mining industry, which was the world's second largest.

The ISR was also used in Chile and in about 30 mines in Australia.

Works

'It is used in some major mining areas around the world. In other words, it works well,' he said.

The system had been adapted for local conditions since its introduction.

He said that in the first six months of 1986 South African collieries administered by the chamber had recorded 0.94 fatalities for each 1000 workers, compared with 0.64 internationally and 0.62 in the U.S., the world's largest coal producer.

On member gold mines, the fatality rate was 0.81 for each 1000 workers, 'a more than significant reduction,' he said, the figure before introduction of the system, according to Mr Gill. (Sapa)
One dead, 25 hurt in accidents at refineries

By Mike Siluma

A worker died and more than 25 had medical attention after accidents at two East Rand platinum refineries yesterday.

Gencor confirmed that Mr G C Fourie (49), a process operator, died — apparently from a heart attack — after the accident at the Impala plant and 25 other workers were kept under observation for a few hours.

Two other employees involved in the accident were still in hospital today.

A Gencor spokesman said a spill of processing liquid was involved but the accident had minimal effect on production.

At Matthey Rustenburg Refineries, Wadeville, eight workers were affected by chlorine fumes from a burst pipe, the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) reported.

CWIU spokesman Miss Chris Bonner said eight workers were affected and three of them were sent to hospital.

Miss Bonner said evacuation procedures at the plant were inadequate and had been raised with management about a month ago. Nothing had been done to correct the situation.

She said tight security at the plant allowed only security personnel to open exits. Workers, wanting to escape would not be able to do so because they had to wait for security men to open the doors.

A company spokesman confirmed the accident but declined to comment on the allegations about evacuation procedures.

The spokesman said three workers were affected.

Late editions of The Star yesterday wrongly reported Miss Bonner's comments about safety as concerning the Impala refinery. In fact she was referring to the situation at Matthey Rustenburg.
Maize dust inferno victim dies

By Abel Mabelane

One of 13 people injured when maize-meal powder exploded at the Jabula Food factory in Springs has died.

Colleagues identified her as Ms Ellen Madonsela (25).

She suffered third-degree burns and died in the Far East Rand Hospital, where the injured were taken after the explosion on Monday.

Two of those hurt have been discharged. The remaining 10, some still in critical condition, were transferred to a Johannesburg hospital.

Springs fire chief Mr Johan Venter said the explosion was caused by static electricity igniting the fine powder suspended in the air.

Mr Jabu Ngwenya, who escaped with burns on the wrist and temple, told The Star: "I was in the mill tower when the explosion occurred. There was a loud bang followed by thick black smoke and fire."

"We all ran for the exit and in the process almost tripped over each other in our rush to get away from the inferno."

The building where the explosion occurred was badly damaged.
Genkor's donation is 'blood money'

NUM line on Kinross 'hostile'

THE National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) response to the Kinross mine disaster has been marked by uncompromising hostility towards Gencor — owner of Kinross — and the mining industry in general.

Union spokesmen have described the accident in harsh terms and referred to Gencor's donation of R2m to a trust fund for families of victims as "blood money".

The union criticised arrangements made by the company for union-appointed experts to investigate the scene of the accident, and alleged that Kinross miners wanting to attend a memorial meeting a week after the accident were forced to work at gunpoint.

There is also a belief that NUM orchestrated the disruption of the memorial meeting organised by the company.

The accident and its aftermath have placed severe strains on a relationship which had been at a low ebb for more than a year. The dismissals of NUM members at Gencor mines during the 1985 wage strike, and the mass dismissals at Impala Platinum in January this year, led the union to cite Gencor as an "enemy company" at its annual conference in April.

Ironically, the disaster occurred only 16 days after a new top-management team — which appears to support a less hard-line industrial relations approach — took over the reins at Gencor.

There is a feeling within Gencor management that many NUM statements since the disaster have over-stepped the line between a legitimate expression of anger and an attempt to make political capital of the disaster.

"We understand the union's anguish at the deaths. But they do not have a monopoly on it. Kinross was an unmitigated disaster for us too," says Gencor corporate services director Naas Steenkamp.

Steenkamp says Gencor does not plan to respond specifically to recent union statements. "Gencor has signalled that it views the union as a legitimate interested party regarding safety matters, and would like calm and reasoned interaction with it on these issues," he says.

He believes the two should have a "co-operative" relationship on safety matters, rather than using the issue for "scoring points over one another in public."
We won't stand for another Kinross ever

By MOTO RABELE

"There was no need for any of the 177 miners to have died in Kinross gold mine," SA Council of Churches general secretary Bevere Naula told his mourners who gathered at Cosatu Hall in Johannesburg on Wednesday.

"It must never happen again," he told the crowd at the emotional service.

Naula called on the government to allow experts to conduct a thorough investigation into the mine disaster.

"We must find out what went wrong," he said.

The service was characterized by the singing of freedom songs and the clanging of cymbals.

Choirs of "Down with capitalism," a song of mourning, and "Up with the workers," were the order of the day.

Naula added: "We must never stand for another Kinross ever."
ON Wednesday South Africa's black miners made history. According to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) about 325,000 miners responded to their call for a day of mourning for the 177 miners who died in the Kinsley disaster two weeks ago. Management put the figure at 250,000.

Either way, it was — by far — the biggest-ever stayaway in the mining industry, the biggest-ever stayaway in any one industry, and the most impressive response to a safety issue by the South African union movement.

It was a clear articulation of the feelings of black miners towards the dangers of the mines where hundreds of workers die and thousands are injured every year.

The stayaway went ahead in spite of the fact that the mining houses, with the exception of Gencor, opposed the day of mourning and proposed a five minute silence instead.

Anglo American, in particular, blew it. They issued an opportunity to co-operate with the NUM and its own workers, forcing black miners to take the day off without permission and creating an unnecessary conflict.

On the other hand, several hundred thousand members of Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) affiliates engaged in unprecedented solidarity action, arranging various stoppages, memorial meetings and demonstrations.

The Metal and Allied Workers' Union, for instance, said that 56 of its 60 organised factories took some form of action, while members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union at Sasol held a three-hour memorial meeting on Wednesday morning.

Whatever the figure, the biggest boycott

By PHILIP VAN NIEKERK

The stayaway was a barometer of the NUM's ability to mobilise its huge membership of more than 300,000, which has mushroomed in the brief four years of the union's existence. It proved that it is not simply a paper membership.

The sheer size of the stayaway poses an interesting contrast with the 1983 half-hour stoppage after the Itobane disaster — the NUM's first industrial action — which was supported by about 30,000 workers.

Wednesday's stayaway was organised in less than two weeks and the NUM claimed virtually their entire membership responded to the call.

The question that has to be asked is whether the NUM could mobilise as much support as it was able to on Wednesday for action around other pressing issues such as the current wage talks with the Chamber of Mines, the sanctions question and the political action.

The NUM's central committee is to debate policy on sanctions this weekend, while the deadlocked annual pay talks are about to enter mediation, a last attempt to find a negotiated solution and prevent a strike in the industry.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa told a press conference on Wednesday that the stayaway was a "demonstration" of what workers would be prepared to do on an issue which "affects them as closely as safety and political rights.

"I think that this stayaway just speaks for itself," he said. "Management should take heed that the NUM is prepared to take up any issue be it wages, political issues, be it safety, and it could mobilise workers around any issue, virtually."

Asked about the debate on sanctions, Ramaphosa said: "It would hesitate to even suggest what the decision of our central committee would be."

Pressed further, he said the NUM would debate the possibility of cutting gold production, thus restricting the country's ability to weather sanctions.

He said they would also be discussing the "whole question of sanctions and how the workers and the union should respond, not only to sanctions affecting coal but to sanctions affecting gold."

The NUM's support for sanctions has met with considerable scepticism inside the industry where management does not believe the NUM will be able to mobilise workers over an issue which would mean sacrificing jobs.

Job security ranks alongside wages and safety as an issue close to the hearts of black miners.

Indeed the NUM has so far been unable to mobilise substantial support for non-workplace issues. Both the May Day and June 16 stayaways received negligible support among black miners, who ignored calls by the NUM.

This indicates at the very least that the kind of issue the NUM chooses to mobilise around is crucial to the success of the action.

Which is why the government's oft-repeated threat to repatriate foreign miners in retaliation against sanctions could be the site of political action for the NUM.

The warnings — uttered by the government as part of a political game of sanctions one-upmanship — have threatened the job security of thousands of miners.

Meanwhile, as a barometer, Wednesday's stayaway revealed that the heart of the NUM's support remains at Anglo American's Free State gold fields.

According to management, the only Anglo gold miners who did not go out were three shifts at Vaal Reefs, one at Western Deep Levels and one at President Steyn.

Support for the stayaway was extremely high at Anglo gold mines, as was to be expected.

Other key areas of union support were the collieries centred at the migrant town of Witbank, Tshibote Ferrochrome and the chrome mines in the north-eastern Transvaal, centred on the strong union township of Eerste Geluk, and the Cape diamond fields.

The most notable exceptions were the mines in the Gold Fields Group, which has succeeded Gencor as the toughest run in the industry, the collieries of Natal, and Rand Mines' Blyvoor芦tsicht, the home of Cosatu president and NUM vice-president.

Elizbar Barnay
Miners want right to sit on safety bodies

THE National Union of Mineworkers has demanded to sit on the two groups set up by the Chamber of Mines to investigate the Kinross Mine Disaster, which claimed 177 miners lives two weeks ago.

Speaking at a memorial service held at the Congress of South African Trade Unions' Hall in Johannesburg on Wednesday, the NUM's Health and Safety Officer, Hazy Sibanyoni, said the commissions would otherwise just be "another talk-shop whose results won't see the light of day".

The Chamber recently announced that it would set up a Hazardous Material Unit to look into materials used underground and a Multi-Disciplinary Task Force consisting of experts who will investigate and make recommendations for greater protection of miners in the event of accidents on the mines.

Sibanyoni also announced that the NUM would set up a commission to study the long term effects of the polyurethane chemical fumes which killed the miners.

He said the objectives of the commission are to identify workers' respiratory impairment as a result of exposure to the chemicals (isocyanates), to get compensation for workers with diseases resulting from exposure, and a description of the long term effects of exposure.

He called on Gencor to ensure alternative jobs, without loss of earnings, to those workers unfit to work underground as a result of the fire.

He said Gencor and the Chamber of Mines should give the NUM access at all times to keep contact with workers exposed to the fire.

The affected workers should be given proper medical care at the mine's expense he said.

Sibanyoni also urged Gencor and the Chamber to give the NUM all information on substances used underground and to spend more money on safety. They should also recognise safety stewards, "as they are the only alternative power."

"We hope that the Chamber's pledge to compensate the miners will not be used as an excuse to dismiss workers. The survivors of the inferno are not yet out of danger. Isocyanates are known to be dangerous and have long term effects. These workers could develop chronic lung diseases."

The more than 500 people who crammed into the hall ululated and chanted freedom songs as several miners and NUM officials carried a black coffin onto the stage at the start of the service.

Cosatu's general secretary, Jay Naidoo, said safety in the mines is the prerogative of the white miner. Racism was rampant on the mines he said. "During rescue operations separate ambulances were ferrying the dead and injured to different hospitals."

By SIBANYONI NYAKA
Who will succeed P W Botha?

P W Botha's decision to step down after 20 years as Cape leader of the National Party (NP) will undoubtedly intensify the struggle among aspirant successors to the State presidency.

His move, announced at the Cape NP congress in East London this week, clearly aimed to give Cape NP chairman Chris Heunis — who was elected leader to replace him — a stronger base from which to make his running for the top job.

It is also the clearest indication yet that Botha is seriously considering retiring. Some observers believe he may step down within the next 18 months.

Botha gave pressure of duties as the main reason for his decision to quit as Cape leader, but it was clearly also a strategic move to help Heunis.

Rivals for the presidency are now expected to draw their battle lines even more clearly.

Transvaal NP leader F W de Klerk remains the firm favourite. Heunis, now with the apparent public blessing of Botha, must rank second, with Gerrit Viljoen running third — although he could be chosen as a compromise between de Klerk and Heunis to avoid a party rift. Pik Botha looks very much an outsider at this stage.

Indications of de Klerk's preparations for the leadership struggle include his insistence that constituencies be redelimited before the next general election. Transvaal has more than half the country's 3m white voters, and some gerrymandering of previously loaded platteland seats must be a priority for de Klerk given the Right's strength in them.

The new delimitation could give the Transvaal up to 10 new seats, the Cape could lose about six. In theory, this would give De Klerk a possible 10 extra caucus votes and deprive Heunis of six. Obviously, some Transvaal seats could go to opposition parties, but de Klerk is apparently willing to take that chance.

Heunis is now expected to become more high profile than ever, while de Klerk, who seems to prefer low-key working behind the scenes, is likely to step up his lobbying campaign as well.

While Viljoen and Pik Botha are not the major contenders, their supporters could be crucial to the final outcome — in much the same way that Pik Botha's supporters backed P W Botha to keep Connie Mulder out in the last party leadership contest.

Heunis' biggest problem is likely to be his relative unpopularity in caucus, which chooses the party leader. He is also the architect of government's exoteric reform programme, which seems to be crumbling.

P W Botha's decision to step down as Cape leader and, by implication, give his backing to Heunis, might help his position.

But de Klerk remains the man most likely to succeed.

KINROSS DISASTER

The call for a day of mourning in the mining industry on October 1 to mark the deaths of 177 miners in the Kinross disaster, was expected to receive massive backing as the FM went to press.

Preparations for the commemoration by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), which called on all mineworkers to observe the day, appeared to be well advanced on Tuesday.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), the United Democratic Front and the National Education Crisis Committee backed NUM's stand.

According to Cosatu, most of its affiliates called on their members to stage hour-long services, with some pushing for two-hour services at factories where they have a strong presence. The worker federation has demanded that no employees should suffer loss of pay or be victimised for participating in the commemorations.

On Tuesday, the Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries announced that all stores in the area would close at 1pm "in a show of solidarity" with NUM. NUM's call has been favourably received by Gencor, the owners of the mine, which has indicated its willingness to allow employees on gold and coal mines to take a day's paid leave to mourn their colleagues.

The Chamber of Mines announced that its members would observe five minutes of silence — "the universal and time-honoured method of paying respect to the dead" — at noon on Wednesday. It was not clear whether the chamber's response would provoke a showdown with NUM.

Meanwhile, the disaster continues to be a source of conflict between NUM and Gencor. The union's most recent complaints relate to the underground operation of the accident, which Gencor arranged on Monday. NUM representatives were accompanied by two foreign mine safety experts.

Although the visit was useful, says NUM, its worth was diminished because the only interested party in the mining industry. We received requests from many trade unions which wanted to know more about what happened at Kinross. We sincerely and honestly tried to afford all the visitors the opportunity to talk to management and, afterwards, over snacks, they had full opportunity to speak to senior Gencor directors as well. If anybody wants further investigation or discussion, they are welcome to contact us.

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INJURED during a service at Winkelhaak Mine when "Gencor mine management sent in the (mine) police who teargassed the workers"

Mr Harry Hill, spokesman for Gencor, said mine security used teargas to disperse "illegal meeting" at Winkelhaak Mine after numerous requests had been made for the workers to disperse.

• In Cape Town, workers at between 30 and 40 Cosatu-organized factories are believed to have held work stoppages ranging from five minutes to an hour, although unions were last night still awaiting reports from their branches for accurate figures.

In the Cape Town docks, about 350 members of the Transport and General Workers' Union observed stoppages, while at Nampak Paper, about 70 workers stopped work from 12:45pm to 1:45pm.

At Nampak Recycling the hour-long stoppage was taken at 7:30am by all 144 workers at the factory, a spokesman for the factory confirmed.

• Memorial services were held at the universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape.

About 1,000 students attended a joint National Union of South African Students (Nusas) and Azanian Students' Organization (Azaso) lunchtime meeting at the Wits Blackburn Memorial Hall atUCT, while Dr Allan Boesak spoke at UWC.

High-school children from Athlone, Guguletu, Nyanga and Langa attended the memorial services at UCT and UWC at the invitation of the universities, and the UCT meeting was also addressed by Cosatu and United Democratic Front speakers.

• The University of the Witwatersrand officially observed a minute's silence at noon in sympathy with the miners' families. Lecturers were asked by the university administration to interrupt their lectures for this purpose.

• In Port Elizabeth, a preliminary survey of Cosatu-organized workplaces showed that workers at almost 50 percent of them had observed the stoppage.

• In Natal, workers at most Cosatu-organized factories stopped work at midday, although no immediate figures were available as unions awaited reports from their branches.

• In Durban last night, a large crowd attended a special prayer service for the Kinross disaster victims.

• About 35 senior Gencor management personnel held a short prayer service at lunchtime to mark the official day of mourning. Gencor's executive chairman, Mr Derek Keys, concluded: "God bless Africa, guard her children and her rulers and give her peace" — Staff Reporters, Own Correspondent, Sapa and UPI
MOTIVATION

In 1946, 60,000 black miners out of 350,000 struck for five days for higher wages. Significantly, part of their motivation was a high accident rate.

"Since the formation of the NUM there have been strikes in pursuit of wage claims in 1984 and 1985 with 70,000 and up to 40,000 being involved respectively.

"Although the strikes focused on wages, health and safety issues have figured prominently in negotiations with the Chamber of Mines."

"For example, during the 1986 negotiations, agreement was reached that employers would increase the allowance to cover the cost of transporting the bodies of dead miners back home."

"Yesterday's strike involved between 250,000 and 275,000 people and is the largest ever to occur."

"There had been a number of big mine accidents which had received publicity but by far the most deaths -- on average 600 to 800 a year -- occurred in small, fatal accidents."

"It is not then surprising that NUM has declared health and safety a priority for the union."

A feature of the emerging black trade union movement was the ability of certain unions to organize stoppages on a national scale.

According to LMG figures, yesterday's stoppage was the largest national industrial stoppage yet to take place."
600,000 observed stayaway, say unions

By Mike Siluma

About 600,000 workers in various sectors of the economy yesterday responded to the call for a day of mourning to honour the victims of the Kioros mine disaster, according to union leaders and officials.

Yesterday was described as the biggest ‘stayaway’ in South Africa's history.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had called on miners to stay away from work for the whole day to show their respect for the victims of the Kioros mine disaster.

A spokesman for the NUM said that about 190,000 workers had been on strike since the disaster, and that the number was expected to rise to about 300,000 by the end of the day.

The National Union of Metalworkers (NUM) had also called for a general strike, and about 200,000 workers were expected to participate.

The strike was caused by the death of 177 workers in the Kioros mine disaster.

The NUM said that the strike would continue until the government promised to implement the recommendations made by the National Commission of Inquiry into the Kioros mine disaster.

The strike was expected to disrupt economic activity in South Africa for the next few days.

JUDGE FOR YOUR'S

"Walk into any Joshua Doore Store and see the difference.
With better quality, bigger range and always the best possible value, I can give you exactly what you want — more than ever before. And this is only the beginning...

AFTER ALL WHAT ARE UNCLE'S FOR."

R17m goes to Kioros families

More than R17 million has been allocated for the dependants of the 177 people who died in the Kioros mine disaster, according to the Rand Mines Company.

The company said that the money would be used to support the families of the victims, and that the process of distributing the money would begin immediately.

The company also said that it would be providing psychological support to the families of the victims, and that it would be working with the government to ensure that the families received the support they needed.

The company said that it was committed to ensuring that the families of the victims received the support they deserved, and that it would continue to work with the government to ensure that the families received the support they needed.

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Dispatch Correspondents
PORT ELIZABETH — Township pupils staged a mass stayaway yesterday to commemorate the death of 177 gold miners killed in the Kinross disaster two weeks ago.

The Labour Monitoring Group (LMG) of the industrial relations unit at the University of Port Elizabeth reported a varied response in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage to work stoppages called for by the Council of South African Trades Unions (Cosatu).

The LMG said a preliminary survey of Cosatu-organised workplaces in Port Elizabeth showed workers at almost 50 per cent of them had observed a work stoppage.

In Uitenhage, workers at the majority of Cosatu-organised workplaces responded to the call.

The Universities of Cape Town (UCT) and the Western Cape (UWC) also held memorial meetings yesterday in commemoration of the mining disaster.

About 1,000 students attended a joint National Union of South African Students and Azanian Students Organisation meeting in the Molly Blackburn Memorial Hall at UCT, while Dr Allan Boesak spoke at UWC.

Workers at many factories in Natal heeded a call by the Congress of South African Students and stopped work at midday.

Several Indian-owned shops in the Grey Street complex in Durban also shut down between 12 and 1 pm in response to a call by the Natal Indian Congress for solidarity with the National Union of Mineworkers, which demanded October 1 be declared a national day of mourning.
Expert questions safety at Kinross

ALAN FINE

A SWEDISH expert invited to SA by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to assist investigations into the Kinross Mines disaster has attributed the accident to a failure of the mine's safety system, a function he sees as the responsibility of management. He also questioned the use of polyurethane foam underground.

Dr Peter Westerholm, medical adviser to Sweden's trade union federation — the LO — made these comments after a visit to the mine on Monday, together with a number of other labour representatives.

Westerholm said that, based on what he has been told of the fire, he expects the cause of most of the deaths to be found to be asphyxiation and exposure to cyanide and carbon monoxide fumes normally given off by burning polyurethane foam.

He says visitors were specifically asked not to remove samples of the foam from the mine because the matter is under official investigation. However, Westerholm says he didn't consider this a major problem because he assumes the material will be subjected to "major and valid tests" prior to the inquiry.

According to Westerholm, in Scandinavia the foam is considered to be combustible. "We try to avoid the use of any plastic material underground as far as possible," he says. Westerholm says that mines cannot rely entirely on devices like breathing equipment and fire extinguishers to avoid accidents.

For him the key is a comprehensive safety system, which should include training, education, equipment maintenance, adequate routines for the handling of materials (like fuels) and the existence of escape routes and alarm systems.

There must also be adequate work practices designed for welding and cutting operations, responsible for about 30% of mine accidents in Sweden.

The NUM, meanwhile, has objected to the conditions under which Monday's visit to the Kinross Mines by labour and management representatives was conducted. It says the visit was too long after the accident, was hastily conducted, the group was too large and little opportunity for questioning mine management.
More than 130 000 mineworkers in the Free State and Western Transvaal were observing a day of mourning today for those killed in the Kinross disaster.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) call was also supported by black unions and political organisations.

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said more than 120 000 workers in the Free State (which employs about 180 000) had not reported for work, and 34 000 out of about 40 000 stayed away at Vaal Reefs near Klerksdorp.

Other mines affected included Beatrix, President Brand, Western Holdings, Eritela, Saaplaas and President Stean, all in the Free State. About 5 000 miners stayed away in Kimberley.

Organisations which pledged support in various ways included the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), to which the NUM is affiliated, the United Democratic Front (UDF), the African Miners' and Allied Workers' Union, Soweto businessmen, the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (Azapo) and the Azanian Students' Organisation (Azaso).

Gencor, owners of Kinross, said workers wishing to stay away could apply for a day's leave. The Chamber of Mines made a similar offer and suggested five minutes' silence at all member mines.

Unions affiliated to Cosatu were holding hour-long commemorative services, with some strongly-organised member unions opting for two hours.

A commemoration service was being held at the Cosatu headquarters in Johannesburg today. In Port Elizabeth, Cosatu members were stopping work for three hours, in East London for an hour and in Uitenhage for 30 minutes.

Cosatu has demanded no lost pay or victimisation for taking part in commemorations.

The UDF said it stood by the NUM and Cosatu over their demand that unions be given a say in all matters related to miners' health and safety.

Mr Sydney Mahlangu, secretary of the Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said Soweto stores would close from 1 pm.

Azapo publicity secretary Mr Muntu Nyetsa said the organisation offered its support and called on all students to support and observe the day "in whatever way they deem fit on their campus."
NUM sees Kinross, but 'too late'

Health and safety experts representing the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) were taken down Kinross Gold Mine at Evander yesterday, but said the inspection was of limited use because of the time which had lapsed since the accident which killed 177 men.

NUM Press Officer Mr Marcel Golding said 15 days had lapsed since the fire, and the site underground had been cleared substantially.

The visit had been "hastily conducted, and the union's technical advisers did not even have the opportunity to take basic measurements on the site", Mr Golding claimed.

He added that the NUM team formed part of a larger delegation of 60 people, and this also hampered the union's investigations, he said.

He said it was a fundamental problem for the union that its experts depended on company permission for in loco underground inspections at Kinross.

"This state of affairs clearly impairs the union's ability to prepare for an inquiry, and to protect the interests of workers in regard to health and safety."

Mr Harry Hill, spokesman for Gencor, which owns Kinross, confirmed the visit.

"It was part of an open day for representatives of various unions and other organisations."

He declined to comment on the NUM complaints.
Samuels accused of ‘sensation’

Mercury Reporter

THE row between the House of Delegates and the Teachers’ Association of South Africa, Tasa, over ‘political interference’ in Indian education, took a new turn yesterday.

Mr Amchond Rajbansi, Chairman of the Ministers’ Council in the House, accused Tasa president Pat Samuels of trying to create a sensation to embarrass the House of Delegates with facts he will not be able to substantiate.

‘In respect of the 1967 school calendar, it was Mr Samuels who took it to the politicians after he was not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director and now he is complaining about political interference.

‘He is guilty of dragging the politicians into an administrative matter.

‘The call for a judicial commission is one of his regular sensations, and I think Tasa should search itself and ask itself whether there is too much politics and less work on educational matters in Tasa itself.

‘The fact that Mr Samuels writes letters directly to the minister and not to the executive director goes a long way to make some people think about politics interfering with day-to-day matters.

‘There are many teachers who are concerned about Tasa’s political role and they have repeatedly requested us to recognise another teacher’s body that will deal with the interest of teachers and education generally.’

Purpose

He said the day-to-day administration of education was left in the hands of the head of the administration of education.

‘I think that teachers must now seriously examine Tasa’s political role as compared to the purpose for which it was established.

‘Mr Samuels said it was a pity Mr Rajbansi had misunderstood Tasa’s conference resolution, which basically attacked not only the House of Delegates but the tricameral parliamentary system.

‘He said there had also been erosion of the Director of Education’s powers only 60 cm clearance on either side.

The Winterberg, a Safmarine container vessel, was damaged when its bulbous bow was ripped open when it struck an object while coming into port late last week.

Although it will give him more time to tend his roses, play bowls and travel, Mr Hansen, who was appointed chief dockmaster 18 years ago, is keen to leave the shipyard to get into the dry dock.

Mr Hansen’s successor has not yet been named

Cosatu unions to mourn mine victims

JOHANNESBURG—Unions belonging to the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) will remember tomorrow the miners who died in the Koinoss disaster, the organisation said in a statement yesterday.

The National Union of Mine-workers (NUM) has called a day of mourning and all its members nationally will not be going down the mines tomorrow.

Some unions are pushing for a two-hour service.

Cosatu said all unions were demanding that no worker suffer loss of pay or victimisation for taking part in commemoration activities.

Soweto businessmen have agreed to close their stores ‘in a show of solidarity’ with the NUM’s day of mourning.

In a statement, Mr Sydney Mahlanga, secretary of the Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said all stores would in the area would close at 1 pm ‘in a show of solidarity’.

(Sapo)

Martin far out ahead

CAPE TOWN—South African yachtsman John Martin is all on his own as he heads for Cape Town with the rest of the BOC Round-the-World Race fleet now well behind him.

Martin was 111 miles ahead of the second placed yacht on Friday, and has increased his lead to 277 miles over the past two days. According to the latest position report, Martin is just over 2,000 miles from Cape Town, the first race stop. 

(Sapo)
THOUSANDS of miners are expected to attend a memorial service at the Kinross gold mine near Evander tomorrow, where 177 miners died a fortnight ago.

The Chamber of Mines has said its members will allow their workforce to participate in a five-minute period of silence to be observed in honour of the dead miners at noon tomorrow.

The Chamber, writing in its mouthpiece, Mining Sun, said it acknowledged that the Kinross disaster was a very serious accident "which had profoundly shocked employees and managements" throughout the industry.

Production is expected to come to a halt at a number of mines as black miners observe the Num call for a day of mourning.

Num has said its members will stay away from work for the whole day as a sign of respect for the dead Kinross miners.

Gencor, which manages the Kinross mine, is to allow mineworkers 'who wish to do so' to take a day's leave to go to Evander tomorrow to mourn the victims of the disaster.

The United Democratic Front has pledged its support to the Num in whatever call it makes to mourn and pay homage to those miners who died in Kinross.

The Congress of SA Trade Unions, Num and UDF were due to meet late yesterday, to discuss arrangements for tomorrow's day of mourning.

The Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) has supported the call for a day of mourning. The organisation would observe this day "knowing that tens of thousands of our people have died in the mines forced to dig for a living". Azapo said in a statement yesterday.

"The sadness we feel at the death of so many of our kind is increased by the knowledge that their death could have been avoided had the necessary precautions been taken to ensure the safety of the mine," the statement read.

- Black workers – including domestic workers - were told at all Port Elizabeth township bus stops yesterday morning to stay away from work on Wednesday, October 1.
JOHANNESBURG — Affiliates of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) are to remember the 177 victims of the Kinross mine disaster tomorrow, Cosatu announced yesterday.

Most of its affiliates were calling on workers to hold an hour-long service, it said in a statement, but a number of unions were pushing for a two-hour service in strongly organised factories.

The unions were demanding workers did not suffer pay losses or victimisation for taking part in commemoration activities.

Earlier, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) called a day of mourning and its members are set to stop work tomorrow.

Soweto businessmen are to close their stores "in a show of solidarity" with the NUM day of mourning.

The secretary of the Greater Soweto Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Mr Sydney Mahlangu, said in a statement all stores in the area would close at 1 pm — Sapa
Chamber defends its use of polyurethane foam as only one component leading to the Kinross mine disaster and the death of 177 miners, says the Chamber of Mines.

At a weekend Press conference, the chamber said heat and air were two other components which would have contributed to the tragedy.

The chamber confirmed that Kinross was the third SA mine fire in which the sealant foam was involved.

The mining industry has been slated for not following overseas examples by outlawing underground use of the foam.

Defending its continued use, chamber executive Kennedy Maxwell said polyurethane was one of more than 20 inflammable substances used underground.

A large party of mine-safety experts is scheduled to visit Kinross today to investigate the location, reports ALAN FINE.

A Gencor spokesman said the group would include Chamber of Mines representatives as well as experts and officials of mining-industry unions, including the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the Mineworkers' Union.

The NUM's national executive met yesterday to consider its attitude towards the chamber's proposed arrangements for October 1, the day the NUM has declared a day of mourning for the Kinross victims.
Safety experts to visit Kinross

JOHANNESBURG — A large party of mine safety experts is scheduled to visit the Kinross gold mine today to investigate the location of the September 16 disaster in which 177 miners died.

A spokesman for Gencor, the owners of the mine, said the group would include representatives of the Chamber of Mines as well as experts and officials of mining industry trade unions, including the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the Mine Surface Officials’ Association and the white Mineworkers’ Union.

Two overseas experts invited to SA by the NUM — a Briton, Mr Hubert Eisner, and Mr Peter Westerholm of Sweden — will be in the group.

In a related development, the NUM national executive met last night to consider its attitude towards Gencor’s and the chamber’s proposed arrangements for October 1.

Gencor said it would permit any employee to take a day’s leave on Wednesday, while other chamber members said they would observe five minutes silence from noon. However, the NUM called on its members throughout the industry not to work at all on Wednesday.

In a statement, the chamber stressed that heat and air had also contributed to the underground tragedy and said the use of polyurethane foam should be seen in perspective — DDC.
MINE TRAGEDY AFTERMATH

Kinross officials face the Press

Mercury Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG—Gen- cor executive chairman Derek Keys, other senior company personnel, and Kinross mine manager Kobus Olivier faced a barrage of questions on the Kinross disaster at a Press conference yesterday.

Much of the questioning revolved around the fall of the mine's international safety rating from five to three stars in June, and the use of the polyurethane foam thought to be responsible for the emission of deadly fumes believed responsible for many of the fatalities.

Mr. Olivier and the group's head of mining, metallurgical and medical services, Mr. Con Fauconnier, explained that Kinross's safety rating had fallen two-and-a-half months ago, after an inspection by the mine safety division of the Chamber of Mines.

The inspection adjudged that Kinross's procedures had fallen below the 80% rating level in three of the 21 elements used to determine levels of safety standards.

Mr. Olivier said steps were taken to correct the situation within a week of receiving the chamber's report. None of the reported deficiencies was related to the events that caused the accident, he added.

Company spokesmen declined to comment on circumstances directly surrounding the accident, on the grounds that it was for the official inquiry to determine the precise cause.

Sapa reports that the National Union of Mineworkers has called for a national day of mourning on October 1 to honour the 177 miners who died at the mine.

Accidents in South African coal mines had killed more than 48 000 workers and seriously injured more than 1 000 000 since the beginning of the century, a study released in Geneva yesterday said ...

(Sapa-Reuters)
Safety experts to visit mine of death today

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG - Safety specialists representing the National Union of Mineworkers are among a party of experts who will today inspect the Kinross gold mine, where 177 people died in a fire two weeks ago.

Also in the party will be officials of the NUM, the white Mineworkers' Union and the Chamber of Mines.

The experts include Dr. Hubert Eisner of Britain and Mr. Peter Westerholm of Sweden.

Dr. Eisner, a guest of the NUM, was earlier refused access to the mine.

DAY OF MOURNING

- The NUM is going ahead with plans to commemorate those who died in the disaster.

The union has called for a day of mourning on October 1. It originally asked for a nationwide shutdown of the mining industry for a day.

The Chamber of Mines and Gencor said employees wanting to attend the commemoration may take a day's leave.
By MNOB BALELA

"YOU hold the golden key to liberation," Winnie Mandela told thousands of miners at Secunda's Empatikana memorial stadium last week.

"Your freedom, our freedom and the freedom of all Black people have been won only on the basis of our willingness to die, fight, shed blood and sweat. You hold the golden key to our freedom."

She was addressing a memorial service for the 177 miners killed at Kromdraai last year. The miners still die, she said. "But the miners who died were true fighters. They were the true and honest serv- ers of this nation."

"We accept this challenge," she said, "to fight for the liberation of the country. We will continue to fight for our freedom and the freedom of all Black people in this country."

"We will not rest until we have achieved our goal."

Mandela urged the miners to continue fighting for their rights.

"If we don't fight for our rights, we will be fighting for nothing," she said. "We must continue to struggle until we achieve our goal."

"We must be prepared to fight for our rights, even if it means giving our lives."

The miners agreed to continue their struggle until they achieved their goal.

"We will not rest until we have achieved our goal," they vowed.

"We will continue to fight for our freedom and the freedom of all Black people in this country."
Winnie Mandela told the 15 000 mourners at the memorial service that the workers were the "power of this land".
Welkom marchers ‘removed’

The workers, members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), had joined the union call to stay away from work and mourning those killed in the Kinross mine disaster.

A spokesman for Police Headquarters in Pretoria, Major Steve Venter, said the workers had marched from the town shouting and waving placards. He said the workers had not been arrested but rather “removed” from the town.

Earlier reports alleged that 150 miners were arrested after marching from the President Stein mine to the union’s offices.

Thousands of mineworkers in the Free State and Western Transvaal observed the day of mourning.

According to NUM general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, more than 120,000 workers in the Free State (which employs about 180,000) had not reported for work. Various trade unions and other bodies observed the day of mourning.

A single coffin draped in black was used to symbolise the 177 miners killed in the Kinross mine disaster during a commemoration service in Johannesburg yesterday. The service included a number of worker slogans and songs. Picture by Ali Kau.

YOU’VE GOT AN UNCLE IN THE FURNITURE BI


By CAS ST LEGER

THIS was the moment when the unpleasant face of township politics invaded a memorial service for the Kinross dead.

The open-air service on Monday was disrupted by angry chanting miners and ugly mob scenes as pulpitis and refreshment tents were destroyed and ransacked.

Meanwhile, open house is to be held tomorrow at the mine scene of last week's underground tragedy in which 177 miners died. All interested parties — but not the Press — have been invited to inspect the scene of the disaster.

After a stormy week, with relationships between the owners of Kinross, Gencor and the Chamber of Mines on the one hand, and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) on the other, at their lowest ebb, the union regards granting of an "open day" as a victory — albeit a belated one.

We hope it is in response to the NUM's request but we're disappointed it has come late in the day," the NUM information officer, Mr. Marcel Golding, said yesterday.

The NUM organised its own memorial service for the Kinross victims at Emblevle near Secunda on Wednesday, attended by 5,000 and addressed by Mrs. Winnie Mandela.

On Thursday, the NUM general secretary, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, said that a British "expert," Dr. Herbert Eshner, invited by the NUM to inspect Kinross in response to the Chamber of Mines' invitation to overseas experts to visit South Africa's deep-level mines, had been denied access by Gencor.

Now Dr. Eshner, a former director of the British Explosion and Flame Laboratory, which is specifically involved in investigating mine fires, will join the NUM party of six, led by president Mr. James Mdlalose and Mr. Ramaphosa, due at Kinross's fatal No 2 shaft at 10am tomorrow.
Gencor aware of foam danger

By Sheryl Raine

Gencor, owners of the Kinross mine where 117 men died last week, says it was aware of the potential dangers of polyurethane foam.

The Chamber of Mines technical adviser revealed this week that several circulars concerning the dangers of polyurethane foam materials had been circulated to chamber members over the past 18 years.

The chamber also said that in May 1977 information concerning a fire at Gencor’s Buffelsfontein gold mine was distributed after the flammable materials underground were identified as polystyrene and polyurethane.

A Gencor spokesman confirmed that Gencor was aware these were potentially dangerous but said in all mines, a large number of potentially dangerous materials had to be used.

Asked if Gencor took any steps regarding the use of polyurethane and whether, after the Buffelsfontein fire in 1977, the company acted on the information circulated about polystyrene and polyurethane, the spokesman said: “Yes. As with other potentially dangerous materials their use was restricted . . . and precautions were taken to manage the risk. At Kinross, for reasons that still have to be established, these proved tragically inadequate and this has prompted Gencor to re-assess its safety practices and procedures with regard to flammable materials completely.”
Support miners' call — PAC

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania has called on all African patriots and all their organisations to fully support the National Union of Mineworkers' call for a day of mourning for the Klerksdorp gold-miners' victims on October 1.

The PAC was reacting to the call made by NUM that on October 1 there will be a day of mourning for the 177 miners who died at the mine last week.

The NUM has also called for a Commission of Inquiry into the deaths of the miners.

On Tuesday a British mining expert, Dr Herbert Elsner, who is in the country for a week at the invitation of NUM, was refused permission to inspect the disaster at gold mine by Gencor officials.

The NUM is expecting two other experts from overseas to inspect the gold mine.
Chamber replies to NUM’s safety allegations

By Sheryl Raine

The Chamber of Mines says it is committed to the safety of the mining industry's employees and is prepared to collaborate with representative employee organizations in bringing about and maintaining the safest mining conditions possible.

The Chamber has taken the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to task over allegations in the union's mining safety book, “A Thousand Ways to Die”.

Statistics do not support union allegations

The Chamber of Mines has taken the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to task over allegations in the union’s mining safety book, “A Thousand Ways to Die”.

Statistics did not support the book’s allegations, a chamber spokesman said.

Allegations included:
- Black team leaders are doing the work of white miners but are not adequately trained for the work.
- Production bonuses paid to white miners induce them to maintain production at the expense of safety.

But the chamber spokesman said that statistical evidence shows that since 1978, when exemptions were introduced to allow team leaders to do certain aspects of white miners’ work, the fatality rate has fallen by 36 percent and the injury rate by 58 percent.

Delegation of safety responsibilities to black team leaders may have contributed to steady improving safety performance.

On production bonuses, the spokesman said “Accidents disrupt mining operations and therefore production, on which miners’ contract earnings depend.”

High productivity is more compatible with safe mining practices. This is borne out in South Africa where gold mines attaining five-star status, the highest ISR (International Safety Rating), have recorded commensurate increases in productivity.

The chamber rejected NUM allegations that black workers were inadequately trained and challenged the union to produce evidence to support such assertions.

The chamber said it had to share research findings on “green projects” with the NUM.

The chamber also said that it had introduced a statement by NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa that it was time to “take control of the mines to ensure no more miners fell victim to accidents,” did not inspire confidence.

It added that claims that 17 workers were sacked from West Driefontein were unfounded and that conditions were later reinstated by the Industrial Court were a “blatant distortion”.

Another expert, in South Africa as guest of the NUM, Dr Herbert Isser, said on arrival here that he had seen nothing to suggest that they were any less safe than their American and European counterparts.

The opinion of these experts would seem to contradict a literal interpretation of the NUM booklet which is propagandistic in tone and contains emotional generalisations, unconfirmed comment and numerous unsubstantiated allegations.

The chamber suggested that the NUM should remove the book from its list of preferred reading material.

The预防Accidents Committee of which the NUM was a member, for proper consideration.

The committee, which was formed in 1913 with the purpose of creating safer working conditions, is the proper channel for the union to raise its concerns if it really wants to contribute to a positive manner towards the safety of its members.

Ironically the NUM has served on the committee for 18 months and has raised only five issues regarding safety. All these issues have been or are being addressed by the chamber.
Gencor agrees to NUM day of mourning

By PHILIP MAYNARD

In the wake of last week's Kromoss mining disaster in which 177 workers died, Gencor has agreed to the National Union of Mineworkers' request for a day of mourning next Wednesday, October 1.

And the other mining houses have agreed to grant five minutes of silence throughout the industry on Wednesday for the dead miners.

At a meeting between the NUM and the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg yesterday, the Chamber also agreed to submit their deadlocked wage dispute to mediation.

An NUM representative said that the Chamber's decision to adhere to the day of mourning — which meant all the company's mines would close — was "realistic" under the circumstances.

The NUM and the Chamber were extremely angry at the disaster and had been hit by the blow.

The NUM several executive committees met this weekend and passed the Chamber's offer of five minutes throughout the industry.

However, NUM president James Motlatsi told a union meeting in the industry yesterday that the NUM would take the day off.

Motlatsi said the NUM would accept the Chamber's offer of five minutes, "but this is not satisfactory to the NUM."

The NUM's call for a five-minute strike has been supported by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Casa) and the United Democratic Front and other community groups.

A Casa representative told workers yesterday that the NUM's offer would be accepted and that the union would continue with the five-minute strike.

The Chamber's offer of five minutes was made yesterday and was accepted by the NUM.

The Chamber's offer was made to stop the ongoing wage dispute and to prevent a five-minute strike from breaking out.

The Chamber's offer was accepted by the NUM and the union agreed to accept the five-minute strike, which was expected to affect the entire industry.

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The Chamber's offer was accepted by the NUM and the union agreed to accept the five-minute strike, which was expected to affect the entire industry.
MINE SAFETY

Lessons from Kinross

"Until Tuesday we thought we were winning the battle against mine fatalities and the record will show that there were objective grounds supporting that belief. This has been blown away and it's start-again and think-again time in Gencor safety management."

A grim-faced Derek Keys said this last Friday at a press conference where several top Gencor executives answered questions about the Kinross gold mine disaster. Keys told the media: "We owe it to the living to critically re-examine our existing procedures and materials throughout the group with a view to ensuring as far as humanly possible that such a tragic occurrence — on any scale — cannot occur again."

Gencor’s new executive chairman could hardly have said anything else about the worst accident in South African gold mining history, which killed 177 miners and injured over 200. Regardless of where blame for the accident is finally placed — and it will be for the official inquiry to determine that — the fact is that, despite a plethora of rules and regulations for ensuring mine safety, something went very wrong at Kinross last Tuesday. This is a sobering consideration not just for Gencor, but for the mining industry as a whole.

The tragedy at Kinross has focused the spotlight on SA’s mining safety standards. Commendably, Gencor management has shown extreme sensitivity over the issue, and the industry as a whole has expressed determination that the disaster should never be repeated.

Days after the event, details are still somewhat sketchy. But the general consensus is that the disaster was precipitated when a welding operation in a tunnel on the 15th level of the mine went awry, igniting a 600-metre length of polyurethane foam coating noxious fumes from this, and the PVC insulation on a power cable, which the mine’s ventilation system helped spread, killed the miners.

Like the fire itself, the incident sparked a chain reaction in the industry. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has made a great deal of capital from the disclosure that Kinross’s rating in the International Safety Rating System (ISRS) dropped from five stars to three at the last audit in June.

The union has also called on mineworkers to observe October 1 as a day of mourning. It claims that Gencor has reneged on a public undertaking to allow a group of overseas experts, invited to SA by NUM, access to the mine. Gencor says it is still telling NUM about such a visit.

Much controversy about the incident centres on the polyurethane foam coating, which was applied in 1980 to prevent corrosion. Polyurethane is known to be a hazardous substance, and has reportedly been banned by mining authorities in some countries.

Management says that the compound was used at Kinross on the understanding that it was flameproof. Events, however, showed that it certainly was not fire-resistant. And Gencor has not been able to say whether any tests on the compound were conducted before it was introduced into the mine.

Chamber sources say the mining industry has been aware of the hazards associated with polyurethanes since at least 1981. Gencor, according to Con Faasoomer, head of its mining, metallurgical and medical services, has not used the compound for general application since that year.

But polyurethanes are still used for chilled water pipe insulation, for ventilation control, and for sealing off areas during fire-fighting. It is not at all clear how much polyurethane material there is in South African mines.

Clearly, as the chamber said last week, the Kinross disaster has thrown "a huge question mark" over its con-
continued usage

The Knoss disaster happened days after the chamber triumphantly released figures for the first six months of 1986 showing that mining fatalities and reportable accidents had dropped to record lows. For the first time fatalities on gold mines dropped to 0.88 per thousand people employed, prompting Colin Fenton, chairman of the mine safety division, to proclaim "We have now achieved one of our major goals — to bring the gold mine rate below the psychologically important level of one per thousand."

The accident has altered that picture dramatically, renewing a long-standing debate over the merits of the ISRS. The ISRS, which has been specifically adapted for South African mines, enables managers to determine the effectiveness of loss control programmes by measuring certain criteria. Critics claim that the ISRS is fatally flawed. The chamber, however, stoutly defends it.

Questions have also been raised about whether the miners would have had a greater chance of survival had they been equipped with self-rescuers, portable "aqualungs" providing individual air supplies to miners in an emergency. They were not, and now there are recommendations.

The FM understands that the recommendation of the chamber's committee, the Chamber Research Organisation has since 1983 been engaged in investigation into the desirability of introducing self-rescuers on the mines.

A year later, in the wake of the Hlabane colliery disaster, the Government Mining Engineer (GME) signalled that he intended amending the Mines and Works Act to make it compulsory for all persons working underground to carry self-rescuers capable of supplying air for half an hour, an advance on existing self-rescuer technology. Initially, the GME set the end of 1985 as a target date for collieries to be equipped, the end of this year as the target date for gold mines, and the end of next year for other mines.

According to the chamber's technical adviser, David Gaynor, the GME subsequently dropped the deadlines when it became apparent that sufficient quantities of approved self-rescuers would not be available in time. Saying instead, they would be introduced to specific mines and works when he deemed fit.

In point of fact, says Gaynor, only two manufacturers have come up with suitable units so far. He expects that with some minor modifications, the models will be approved for use soon.

The accident also aroused international concern — not all of which has been appreciated by government Foreign Minister Pik Botha, who appeared quite put out by the telegram of condolence sent by West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, which suggested that German experts might able make some constructive suggestions. Botha's response was to invite Genscher himself to visit SA, saying Genscher was apparently not aware of the high standards of safety in the mining industry.

Industry sources expect that it could take as long as a year for the inquiry to come out with its findings. That will do little to answer the questions the accident has raised, or improve relations between NUM and Government.

Against this background, government would do well to consider speeding up the process — a delay of 12 months will not be in anybody's interest.

Reported accidents in SA are more serious than cold statistics suggest. An accident only becomes "reportable" (including in statistics) if it prevents a man from returning to work in 14 days. In the US, by contrast, it becomes reportable if it prevents the man from doing his next shift, while in Britain the period is three days.

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**How we rate against the US and the UK**

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**MONITORING MINE SAFETY**

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Source: Chamber of Mines

FINANCIAL MAIL SEPTEMBER 26 1986

37
Miners remember the

The Klerksdorp Gold Mine disaster, which claimed 177 lives, has spawned what appears to be the first employers' and workers' commemoration event for 20 years in South Africa's gold mining industry.

The event, held at the Klerksdorp Gold Mine, is a testament to the ongoing struggle for justice and remembrance of those who lost their lives.

The miners' families and community members were joined by representatives from various mining companies and trade unions in remembering the tragedy.

The event was marked by speeches, prayers, and tributes to the fallen miners. It was a somber occasion, reflecting on the sacrifices made and the need for continued efforts to improve mining safety and conditions.

A Miner holds a placard showing the miner's casualty toll.

A Miner's daughter listens intently to the speeches.

Charles I silver and gilt handmade tankard. With hinged lid. Maker's mark 'WM'. Created in 1597. Sold in London recently for £2,000.
PART of the crowd which attended the memorial service at Secunda.

THE general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa (right), listens to speeches during the service.

Mrs WINNIE Mandela was one of the speakers.

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Amstel Lager: Slow brewed, extra matured. Created for the connoisseur and sold all over the world. For a little more than the ordinary beer.
Disaster mine's owners to review safety practices

JOHANNESBURG — Gencor, owner of the Kinross mine where 177 were killed last week in an underground fire, was fully aware of the potential dangers of polyurethane foam which was applied to a 600m stretch of haulage in the mine.

The polyurethane foam is believed to have emitted poisonous gases which played a significant role in the tragedy.

The Chamber of Mines' technical adviser disclosed this week that several circulars concerning the dangers of polyurethane foam materials had been circulated to chamber members over the last 18 years.

The chamber also said that in May 1977 information concerning a fire at Gencor's Buffelsfontein gold mine was distributed after the flammable materials underground were identified as polystyrene and polyurethane.

No substitutes

Asked if Gencor had received the chamber's circulars, a Gencor spokesman said "Yes, Gencor was aware that these were potentially dangerous materials. In all mines, a large number of potentially dangerous materials have to be used because there are no adequate substitutes. These include timber, paints, diesoline, conveyor belts, rubber hoses and tyres."

 Asked if Gencor took any steps as regards the use of polyurethane materials on its mines and whether, after the Buffelsfontein fire in 1977, the company acted in any way on the information circulated about the two flammable materials, the spokesman said "Yes. As with other potentially dangerous materials, their use was restricted to specialised applications and precautions were taken to manage the risk."

Inadequate

"At Kinross, for reasons that still have to be established, these proved tragically inadequate and this has prompted Gencor to re-assess its safety practices and procedures with regard to flammable materials completely."

The Chamber of Mines announced today the mining industry would observe five minutes silence from noon on October 1 to mourn the deaths of the victims of the Kinross mine disaster.

More than 600,000 mining men and women will cease their activities for five minutes as a mark of respect. — The Argus Correspondent and Sapa
600 000 to pay respects

GENCOR, owners of the Kinross gold mine where 177 men died in last week's disaster, has decided to per-
mit all employees who wish to do so to take a day's leave on October 1 to mourne their colleagues.
The Chamber of Mines has said that all 99 of its member mines will observe a five-minute silence from noon on the
same day.

This comes after a call by the National
Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for Oc-
tober 1 to be declared a day of mourning on
which mining operations should cease.
The chamber says that at noon on
October 1 "more than 600 000 mining
men and women will cease their activi-
ties for five minutes to pay their respects
to their colleagues.

"Chamber members support the call
that the 177 men who died be mourned."
GENCOR employees' leave will be taken
from the leave standing to their credit.
The arrangements were conveyed to
NUM representatives at a meeting yester-
day. Union spokesman Marcel Gold-
ing said the matter would be discussed
by the NUM's national executive com-
mittee today.
He said the NUM was disappointed the
chamber had only partially met its call.

In an attempt to break the deadlock in
their annual wage negotiations, the
chamber and NUM have agreed to refer
the dispute to mediation.

They are to ask Independent Mediation
Services of SA (Immsa) to supply a
mediator.

Deadlock was reached last Friday
with the chamber offering wage in-
creases from 18% to 22% in response to
the NUM's 26% across-the-board de-
mend. Also in dispute is the NUM's de-
mend for a paid holiday on June 16 and
details of income security for miners
injured in accidents.
WASHINGTON — An American miners' union is raising funds for families of victims of the Kinross gold mine disaster, and union leaders are offering their help in improving safety in South African mines.

A spokesman for the union, the United Mine Workers of America, said there appeared to be enthusiastic response to the appeal — much of it coming from coal mining communities in West Virginia.

He declined to say how much had been raised so far, but noted that money had been sent in the past by the UMWA to the SA Miners Aid Fund.

The new appeal for funds was an extension of that effort.

Union leaders said the tragedy underscored the urgent need for sanctions against South Africa.

It was only when black SA mineworkers were free to choose their own government that full, necessary protection for them would be instituted.

**Tragedy**

UMWA president Mr. Richard Trumka said: “This tragedy clearly demonstrates the unacceptable working conditions to which SA mine workers are exposed on a daily basis, and the blatant disregard the mining companies and the SA Government have for the health and safety of these workers.

The UMWA fully supports the call by the National Union of Mine Workers of SA for a comprehensive commission of inquiry into this disaster and the working conditions of South Africa's mines in general.

**Changes**

"Clearly, dramatic changes must be made in designing and enforcing proper safety standards that will protect the miners in that industry."

Mr. Trumka said the UMWA offered whatever assistance it could to the National Union of Mine Workers of SA, including its expertise in mine safety and health.
Mine victims named

JOHANNESBURG — The names of 168 miners killed in the Kinross mining disaster were released yesterday.

Among them are 44 from Transkei, four from Ciskei and four from the Eastern Cape. A mine spokesman said the names of another two Transkeians were being withheld until confirmation was received that their next of kin had been informed.

About 5,000 miners braved heat and clouds of dust near Kinross yesterday to hear union and community leaders pay tribute to the disaster victims — and berate the mining industry for low safety levels and unequal pay.

The speakers included the NUM president, Mr. James Motlatse, the NUM general secretary, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, and anti-apartheid activist Winnie Mandela.
Commemoration service for Kinross dead passes quietly

Workers demand more control of mine safety

By Mike Siluma and Mudini Mauha

Speakers at yesterday's commemoration service for the 177 miners who died in last week's Kinross disaster demanded increased worker control of safety matters on the mines.

The service was organised by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and held at Emakhandla township, near Secunda.

The speakers repeatedly expressed the workers' determination to stop work next Wednesday to mourn the Kinross dead.

NUM leader Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said: "We will not allow a single miner to die because we care about each other. Our message to the Chamber of Mines is that, from today, we will not allow workers to be killed as they were at Kinross."

Mrs Winnie Mandela, wife of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who was mobbed by chanting workers, reminded them that next week's proposed stoppage was just the beginning of the long battle against the "racists" in Pretoria.

'Only five were whites'

"The gas that killed our brothers in that tragedy was not used by two countries who are Pretoria's closest allies — Britain and the United States. Pretoria used that gas because it does not care about workers' lives. Out of 177 dead only five were whites," she said.

Pretoria's actions had shown the time for talking was over.

"We accept the challenge," said Mrs Mandela.

Money derived from gold and diamonds dug up by workers was used by the State to buy guns, bullets and uniforms and freedom would only come the day miners stopped digging gold.

Workers at the service chanted slogans such as "Down with Le Grange's dogs" and sang songs praising Mr Ramaphosa and ANC leaders Mr Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela.

Miners in the crowd at the Embakhandla Stadium, near Secunda, yesterday raised placards at the memorial service for the 177 miners killed in the Kinross mine disaster last week.

The service went without incident despite the attendance of thousands of miners and many police. Police in helicopters circled the stadium and towards the end of the service, gave dispersing workers five minutes to leave.
HUNDREDS of K razón miners were prevented "at gunpoint" from attending a memorial service in honour of their 177 dead colleagues, a National Union of Mineworkers official told a gathering yesterday.

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa told the memorial service, held at Secunda's Embalenhle Stadium, most of the K raison miners could not attend the service because they were "escorted at gunpoint to resume duty underground."

The NUM official told about 10 000 people — mostly miners — attending the service that the time had come for black workers to take control of the mining industry.

• Gencor spokesman, Mr Harry Hill, responding to the "gun incident", said miners had been told they were free to return to work.

"However, a number of workers negotiated with management to provide a safety escort to accompany them underground in fear of being prevented from resuming duty," he said.
Kinross miners
mob Winnie Mandela

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Mrs Winnie Mandela was mobbed by Kinross miners as she arrived to address them at an Eastern Transvaal township stadium yesterday.

Mrs Mandela said at the meeting, “It is the gold you dig that buys the Caspars, uniforms and guns.”

The Embalenhe stadium meeting, attended by some 3000 miners, was called by the National Union of Mineworkers to commemorate the deaths of the 177 victims of last week’s disaster.

The NUM general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, alleged that some Kinross miners had been prevented from attending the meeting. He claimed they had been forced to work at gunpoint yesterday. Gencor denied this.

He said, “The time has come to ensure no more miners fall victim to accidents.”

Mr Ramaphosa said messages of sympathy and support had been received from the UDF, the South African Congress of Trade Unions in Lusaka, union organizations in the UK, Ghana, Chile, Zimbabwe, Zambia and West Germany, and from the prime ministers of Sweden and Australia.

Gencor has denied Kinross miners were forced to work yesterday. A spokesman said that all Gencor employees wishing to attend the meeting were permitted to do so.

A large police contingent kept watch outside the stadium. As people began leaving at the end of the meeting they were warned to disperse by police in a helicopter. The police addressed the crowd through the helicopter’s loudspeaker.

Mrs Winnie Mandela is greeted by miners as she arrives at a stadium near Secunda yesterday.
Miners told to refuse to work

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa alleged that some Kinross miners had been prevented from attending the meeting. He said they had been forced to work at gunpoint yesterday.

He said: "The time has come to take control of the mines so as to ensure no more miners fall victim to accidents."

And he demanded that polyurethane foam, thought to be responsible for many of the Kinross deaths, be removed immediately from all mines.

Ramaphosa said union-appointed medical experts would be examining survivors of the accident. And NUM would ensure that those whose health had been affected by the inhalation of fumes would be compensated.

Messages of sympathy and support had been received from the United Democratic Front (UDF), the SA Congress of Trade Unions in Lusaka, union organisations in the UK, Ghana, Chile, Zimbabwe, Zambia and West Germany, and from the Prime Ministers of Sweden and Australia.

Winnie Mandela, the only non-union speaker at the meeting, was mobbed as she arrived at the stadium by car. Man-
A thousand ways to die

4600 gold miners killed in accidents this century
accidents is having to work in working places that are not safe. Many accidents should not happen and do not need to happen.

White miners spend little time in the stope these days. In many instances they do not do what the law requires, they do not make safe or carry out inspections, no longer mark off drill holes and remove misfires and don't work with explosives.

Black team leaders are doing the work of white miners without the necessary training for the jobs. Team leaders do not have the same authority as white miners and cannot tell their teams to leave the working place if it is dangerous.

The government has said the laws will change in 1987 but the NUM is concerned about training for team leaders and their authority.

In terms of the Mines and Works Act, white miners are supposed to make safe dangerous conditions. Team leaders seldom call the white miner in charge because they "know he will not come and if he does, he will say Work now, complain later."

The mines use threats and punishment to make the work go faster. If hats fall off easily in dangerous conditions, workers say they need stronger boots with steel toe caps and foot guards.

Miners in Britain are all issued with steel-capped boots and failing to wear them is a firing offence.

Most workers say training for new workers is not good enough. Mineworkers believe the bosses are in a hurry to send them underground. Most cannot speak Fanagalo properly when they go underground.

**Bill of rights**

The NUM has drawn up a bill of rights which includes the right to:

- Elect safety stewards and safety committees
- Refuse dangerous work
- Call and go with inspectors on all inspections without loss of pay
- Proper health and safety training
- All information on health and safety
- Protection from punishment when demanding rights
- A say in the running of the mine and all future plans.

US miners raise funds for Kinross

**The Argus Foreign Service**

WASHINGTON — An American miners' union is raising funds for families of victims of the Kinross gold mine disaster, and union leaders are offering their help in improving safety in SA mines.

A spokesman for the union, the United Mine Workers of America, said there appeared to be enthusiastic response to the appeal — much of it coming from coal mining communities in West Virginia.

UMWA president Mr Richard Trumka said "This tragedy clearly demonstrates the unacceptable working conditions to which SA mine workers are exposed on a daily basis."

"The UMWA fully supports the call by the National Union of Mine Workers of SA for a comprehensive commission of inquiry into this disaster and the working conditions of South Africa's mines in general."

"Clearly, dramatic changes must be made in designing and enforcing proper safety standards that will protect the miners in that industry."

Mr Trumka said the union offered whatever assistance it could to the National Union of Mine Workers of SA, including its expertise in mine safety and health.

Substance 'banned on British mines'

**The Argus Correspondent**

JOHANNESBURG — It was "inconceivable" that South African mines should not know about the danger of polyurethane, the substance that is considered responsible for causing the death of scores of miners in the Kinross gold mine fire last week, a British fire and explosives expert said.

Dr Herbert Eisner — who worked at the Explosion Flame Laboratory of the British Health and Safety executive, one of the biggest such laboratories in Europe, before his retirement in 1981 — said "they should have known about it, even without any official notification."

Polyurethane was outlawed in British mines in 1968, he said.

Dr Eisner was speaking at a Press conference this week. He came to South Africa at the request of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), but has so far been refused access to the site of the Kinross mine disaster.

Dr Eisner is due to be joined by two more experts, from Sweden and Germany — but the South African Department of Home Affairs "apparently does not want to give a visa" to the Swede, Dr Peter Westerholm, said Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, NUM general secretary.
NUM shaft steward arrested at Kinross

A senior shaft steward of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at the Kinross Mine has been arrested after an incident at the mine.

“We understand there was an alleged assault on the Kinross mine on Monday afternoon after which an employee was hospitalised. The employee has laid a charge of assault against another employee. This is a matter between two employees,” a spokesman for Gencor said.
46,000 miners have died, claims NUM

Since 1982, mine safety has ceased to be an issue exclusively debated by the mining houses and high-powered academics. It has become a top priority of the biggest trade union in the country, the National Union of Mineworkers, which has launched a national safety campaign SHERYL RAINIE reports.

Forty-six thousand workers have died in accidents in the gold mines in South Africa this century, according to a safety booklet issued by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

The booklet is entitled “A Thousand Ways to Die — the Struggle for Safety in the Gold Mines.” It was released on Friday, four days after the Kournoos gold mine disaster which claimed 177 lives.

The publication, to be circulated among miners, is part of the NUM’s national mining safety and training campaign. It is based on information gathered in interviews with 66 long-serving union leaders and drillers, who work at the rock face on four gold mines.

Apart from the 46,000 workers who died, the NUM said, “nobody knows how many hundreds of thousands of workers have been crippled and hurt or have died young from various diseases.”

In the period 1973 to 1984, more than 50,000 miners were killed in South African mines, according to the International Labour Organisation.

In recent years, the mining industry has boasted dramatic declines in fatality and injury rates.

Latest Chamber of Mines figures show that, in the first six months of this year, accident rates fell to record lows. The latest fatality rate for every 1,000 underground workers is 0.08, an improvement of nearly 18 percent over the previous figure of 1.63 for 1,000 and a 40 percent improvement in the past decade.

Nevertheless, the NUM believes more can be done about safety on the mines.

“Since the NUM started in 1982, the struggle for safety has been on the top of its list,” says the union’s booklet.

In its talks about pressure burns and rock falls and other dangers, including noise, alleged poor training and the production bonus which, it says, spurs those in charge to sacrifice safety for production.

‘Trouble and hardship’

The booklet contains interviews with NUM general secretary Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa and NUM president Mr. James Motlatu.

“Since Johannesburg was born, more than 50,000 workers have been killed in the gold mines,” says Mr. Ramaphosa. “For thousands of people, Johannesburg means struggle and trouble and hardship.”

“We will not rest as long as our people are dying underground. For us, every death is one too many.”

Mr. Motlatu, who comes from Lesotho, has worked on the mines since 1976. He was trapped underground after a rock burst at Western Deep Levels gold mine in 1974 and suffered a fractured skull.

In his interview he said the mining companies did not spend enough money on safety because “they want bigger profits.”

He said, “When I visited Sweden, I saw they don’t use wooden props — they use special hydraulic props. In Germany, they support all the headings with steel and cement. Our headings are not supported unless the place is very dangerous. The mines must also spend more money on ventilation. Workers get dizzy and sick from bad ventilation — and then they have accidents.”

“The bosses give each other stars for safety. A mine with four stars sounds like a good, safe mine. But this is not so. For example, the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg has four stars. In 1983, 53 workers were killed in the mine. In 1984, 53 workers were killed.”

He wished to see the mine owners agree to full-time union safety stewards and safety committees.

Mr. Motlatu said the Chamber of Mines, funded by the mining houses, spent some of its money trying to find ways to make the mines safer each year.

“But the chamber spends a lot more time and money finding ways to get more gold out of the ground and how to make more money.”

He accused the Chamber of “keeping secrets.”

“They do not share what they know with other people. The NUM asked to see 45 of their safety reports, to help with our own report. The chamber refused.”
Payout for Bereaved

MARITIME AFRICA NEWS SERVICE

MBABANE — The families of the 14 Swazi miners killed in the Kinross disaster are to receive the financial equivalent of two years' pay.

The Employment Bureau for Africa (Teba) representative in Mbabane, Mr John Olivier, said yesterday that, in the case of victims who had large families, this payment might be increased.

He said relatives had been informed of the deaths but the official list of all 177 killed in the disaster would be released in a general list by Gencor.
Cwiu still waiting for mine inquiry

WITH all parties anxiously awaiting the inquiry into the Kinross mine disaster, another mine accident inquiry has yet to be finalised more than a year after the event.

On August 12 last year, 30 miners died in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Middelburg Colliery near Secunda. The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (Cwiu), which represents most of the mine's 8700 workers, said yesterday it was contemplating legal action.

However, Government Mining Engineer Badie Badenhorst said his department submitted information to the AG of the Transvaal soon after the accident.

A spokesman for the AG's office said he received the documentation only about a week ago from the Occupational Safety Court prosecutor. A decision should be taken within two weeks.
THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has accused Gencor of obstructing attempts by a British health and safety expert to visit the Kinross gold mine, scene of last week's disaster.

The expert, Dr Herbert Eisner, arrived in SA yesterday on an expected one-week visit.

NUM legal representative Clive Thompson told a Press conference last night that, after an initial blunt refusal, Gencor had now agreed in principle to Eisner's investigation But the company has refused to specify a time and date.

Eisner previously assisted the NUM in the inquiry into the Hlobane colliery disaster in 1983.

Eisner said that in visits to several mines during an earlier trip, he had seen nothing to suggest SA mines were any less safe than their American and European counterparts. The same applies to rules and regulations for local mines.

But, he added, it is a question of "accident experience". SA gold mining conditions are not comparable with mines anywhere else in the world.

Polyurethane foam, thought to be responsible for many of the Kinross deaths, had been banned from British mines since the late '50s, he said. "All other combustibles" are also banned.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said the NUM has also invited a Swedish expert, Dr Peter Westerholm, to assist in investigations. A German expert is expected to complete the team.

Ramaphosa told the Press conference that two top NUM officials had been detained near Kinross yesterday. One had been released after being questioned about arrangements for today's planned commemoration meeting. Ramaphosa expects that most of the 25 000 workers from five mines in the vicinity will attend.

Late last night Gencor denied it was hedging on the question of the visit by Eisner to the mine. "We have asked the union to wait until the memorial services are over. We are busy formulating an invitation to a number of overseas experts, including the NUM's. And we have agreed with the union that we will talk further about the matter," said spokesman Harry Bill.
JOHANNESBURG — A British fire and explosives expert, who has so far been refused access to the site of the Kenross mine disaster, said it was "inconceivable" that South African mines were unaware of the dangers of polyurethane.

The substance was outlawed in the United Kingdom in the late 1960s, Dr. Herbert Esner, here at the request of the National Union of Miners (NUM), said at a press conference in Johannesburg last night.

"South Africa regularly attends a biannual world mining conference. There is much collaboration between the mining bodies and the recommendations are generally adopted by other countries," he said.

The president of NUM, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, said the Forestry Minister, Mr. P.K. Botha, the State President, Mr. P.W. Botha, and the Chamber of Mines had invited "any international expert in mines to conduct an inspection" of the mine, where 177 miners were killed in a fire last week.

"Now Gencor says they are not prepared to allow anyone to visit the underground works of the place of the accident," Mr. Ramaphosa said.

Dr. Esner will be joined by two more experts from Sweden and Germany. The Swiss, Dr. Peter Vesterholm, has not yet been granted a visa to SA.

NUM attorney Mr. Clive Tothompson said he was still negotiating with Gencor attorneys for the team to go underground.

Mr. Ramaphosa said legal action would follow the inquiry and investigations were under way to track down a United States firm, Moby, which the union believes was a parent company of a local subsidiary who supplied polyurethane to the mine. The company could be held responsible for the deaths of the miners, he said.

At Secunda today a large portion of the crowd of several thousand people attending a memorial service for the 177 dead miners, rose and cheered as Mrs. Winnie Mandela arrived at the stadium — Sapa.
Kinross rips out polyurethane

Lethal foam warnings not fully heeded

THE Kinross mine disaster — in which 177 men died — might have been avoided had the mine management fully heeded repeated warnings from the Chamber of Mines on the hazards of polyurethane foam.

The Chamber of Mines has for 18 years repeatedly highlighted the perils and potential toxicity of polyurethane foam when used underground.

Most mining houses have reduced its use to limited sealing applications only.

Kinross used the foam over a 600m area of No 2 Shaft's 15 level.

Gencor spokesman Harry Hill pointed out that Kinross had a shaft area of about 350km, so its application could well be considered limited.

Polyurethane foam is used by gold mines for sealing chilled water columns, sealing off small fires temporarily and filling cracks in ventilation doors.


He added that subsequent discussions on the use of polyurethane and the fire dangers of the foam were held with the safety, environmental and ventilation subcommittees of the chamber.

Gaynor said that, while the chamber had kept the industry informed of the perils of the foam, responsibility for its use must rest with mine managers and not the industry.

Since the disaster at Kinross, Rand Mines has ordered the foam be removed from its mines.

Gencor, Goldfields, Anglo American and Anglovaal are assessing the extent to which the substance has been applied underground and will probably also insist it be stripped from their mines.

Last night Anglo American Corporation said the mines it administered used a polyurethane mixture which reduced the flammability of the foam and risk of generating carbon monoxide.

Gencor spokesman Con Fanconner said the substance was being removed from the Kinross mine. Other mines in the Gencor stable are examining old locations to determine who's the substance had been used.
Kinross ignored chamber’s warning

JOHANNESBURG — The Kinross mine disaster — in which 177 men died — might have been avoided had the mine management fully heeded repeated warnings from the Chamber of Mines.

It has for 18 years repeatedly highlighted the perils and potential toxicity of polyurethane foam when used underground.

Most mining houses have reduced its use to limited sealing applications.

Kinross used the foam over a 600 metre area of No. 2 Shaft’s 15 level.

Gencor spokesman Harry Hill pointed out that Kinross had a shaft area of about 350 kilometres, so its application could well be considered limited.

Polyurethane foam is used by gold mines for sealing chilled water columns, sealing off small fires temporarily and filling cracks in ventilation doors.

The chamber distributed information on the substance’s hazards in 1968, 1969 and 1973. In 1970 an article, “The dangers of polyurethane foam”, was circulated, says chamber technical adviser, Mr. David Gaynor.

He said that subsequent discussions on the use of polyurethane and the fire dangers of the foam were held with the safety, environmental and ventilation subcommittees of the chamber.

Mr. Gaynor said that, while the chamber had kept the industry informed of the perils of the foam, responsibility for its use must rest with mine managers.

• The chamber said today it would not discuss safety at the Kinross Mine, with the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) as it is “dealing with the National Union of Mineworkers on that issue,” a spokesman said.

He said the chamber was also dealing with the NUM on a memorial service for the dead.

The NUM has called for a national day of mourning for the dead on October 1, and the spokesman said today the chamber had “so far not made any decision” concerning the call.

Following the mine disaster, the United Democratic Front (UDF) said it had joined the NUM and Cosatu in holding the owners of the Kinross gold mine — Gencor — responsible for the deaths.

The UDF also pledged its support to the NUM in “whatever call it makes to mourn and pay homage to those gallant miners who died.”

• Rand Mines has ordered its mines to remove all polyurethane foam materials. — Sapa —
Protection for mine welder?

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The mine worker whose welding started the underground fire that resulted in 177 deaths at the Kinross gold mine is "alive and well" and may be under police protection.

It is understood the man, who has not been identified, is being protected against possible retribution.

A senior Gencor spokesman, Mr Dawie de Beer, said: "I can confirm that the man is alive and well. He may be under police protection but I am not aware of it — not as a result of our request."

Sapa reports that about 2,000 black miners at the Kinross mine held a short service and meeting yesterday after their refusal to participate in a company-organized memorial service for the miners who died in last Tuesday's underground blaze.

Meanwhile, it has emerged that the mine disaster might have been avoided had the mine management fully heeded repeated warnings from the Chamber of Mines on the hazards of polyurethane foam.

The chamber has for 18 years repeatedly highlighted the perils and potential toxicity of the foam when used underground.

Since the disaster at Kinross, Rand Mines has ordered the foam to be removed from its mines and other mining companies are expected to follow suit.
Miners boycott Kinross service

EVANDER — Thousands of workers at the Kinross mine held a short service and meeting yesterday after boycotting a company-organised memorial service for the 177 miners who died in an underground blaze last week.

At the start of the service, about 400 miners, chanting and singling, circled the area marked out for the proceedings.

When the Reverend J Noll started reading the lesson, all the miners in stands facing the makeshift pulpit left and joined the chanting crowd.

About 2000 miners stood to one side chanting they would not "pray with whites" as they had never done so before.

During the commotion, the service went on for the benefit of a handful of mostly white dignitaries.

The dissenting miners then converged on two refreshment tents and ransacked them, despite entreaties by National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) officials.

A few minor incidents of stone-throwing occurred before the miners, who were joined by about 500 other workers, regrouped at the site set aside for the service — with their backs to the damaged make-shift pulpit.

They were addressed by NUM officials and, after a short tribute to those who died in the country’s worst gold mine accident, were told a memorial service organised by the union would take place in Secunda tomorrow.

The miners were told to ask management how the dead were going to be buried and what transport arrangements had been made for the funerals.

They were also told all those who were involved in last week’s fire should not think they were safe from danger and should report for medical examinations.

Before the meeting ended, the NUM officials asked the men to put what sticks they were carrying down and not to interfere with any mine property as “the world is watching.”

Meanwhile, another major mining house has ordered its mines to remove all polyurethane foam underground and review fire-control procedures.

A spokesman for Rand Mines confirmed yesterday all standing fire-protection instructions were being reviewed and investigations were underway to find an alternative material to replace polyurethane foam.

“Rand Mines has standing instructions on a groupwide basis on fire prevention,” a company spokesman said “These are reviewed on an ongoing basis.”

“The particular polyurethane material referred to in the Kinross accident is used on the mines on quite a limited scale in the sense that it is used as lagging for cooled-water columns and is also used in sealing off ventilation systems in the event of fire.”

“In the light of what happened at Kinross an instruction has gone out that the limited amounts of this material have to be removed. Alternative materials are being investigated” — Sapa.

See also page 13.
UDF slams 'special' police

The United Democratic Front says the plan to send 1,000 "half-baked police" into the townships "deserves condemnation from all right-thinking South Africans."

"This is nothing more than an act of desperation on the part of a Government that has resolved that brute force is the only way out of its dilemma," said a statement released by the UDF.

The Government must be warned that this highly provocative move can never contribute towards peace in this country. Instead it will serve to convince more and more of our youth that the only way to defend themselves will be to arm themselves as well."

"In the end, the Government will have to carry full responsibility for any escalation in violence that this foolish move will encourage," the statement added.

Mines to consider closure call

The Chamber of Mines today expected to consider the call by the National Union of Mineworkers for a closure of the chamber's mines to mourn the Kinross mine disaster victims.

The NUM, declaring October 1 a national day of mourning, has called on members not to go to work on that day and for the chamber to close its mines. A chamber spokesman said it would probably discuss the NUM call today.

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa warned that should the chamber reject the union's request, workers would observe the day anyway.

Yesterday, the UDF said it pledged its support to the NUM in whatever call it made "to mourn and pay homage to those gallant miners who died in Kinross."

The NUM is to hold a memorial service for the Kinross victims at Secunda tomorrow.

US award for Jo'burg association

By Michael Chester

The radical moves launched several months ago by the Johannesburg Central Business District Association to make the city an open trade zone have won world acclaim.

In the United States last night, honours were showered on the association for its efforts to remove apartheid from city trade when it was awarded a special citation by the International Downtown Association at its annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

The citation was in recognition of its "sustained efforts to open trade, industry and commerce in Johannesburg's CBD to entrepreneurs of all races."

Its leadership role had in turn also benefited other CBDs and South Africa as a whole, the IDA added.

The Johannesburg CBD Association emerged as one of only eight organisations in the world to win special honours.

A woman's skull found in Sandton

Crime Staff

A woman's skull was found in a Limpopo Park, Sandton, tree plantation on June 10, close to the spot where the body of Airman Hendrik van Zyl, of the South African Air Force, was found last week.

Police said the two discoveries were not linked.

The skull was discovered by a horse-riding Government pathologists and it was said that of a woman aged between 18 and 20 years. She has not been identified.

She died of a bullet wound in the head, after which she was apparently decapitated.

A search of the area revealed no trace of the body, leading police to believe she was murdered elsewhere, probably about two years ago.

Anyone who can help the police investigation should telephone Detective Warrant Officer Oliver of the Brixton Murder and Robbery Squad at (011) 839-3322.
A huge crowd of singing, chanting miners disrupted yesterday's official Kinross memorial service for the 177 men killed in last week's mine disaster, before convening their own meeting.

Miners disrupt service for Kinross dead

By Jo-Anne Richardson

"We have never prayed with news, and we don't intend to start today," a Kinross miner told workers. He spoke through a hand-held loudspeaker to a huge crowd of miners gathered some distance from the mine's snubbed memorial service.

Yesterday's official service at shaft No 2 was intended to mourn the 177 killed in last week's disaster Gencor and mine management attended, but no National Union of Mineworkers' office-bearers were present.

The NUM say they were not invited, but Mr Harry Hill, spokesman for Gencor, said the union "was verbally invited".

FANAKALO

The prayer service began in Afrikaans "Speak fanakalo", called one or two voices from the crowd.

Shortly afterwards, a vast moving column of men waving branches and hard hats moved into the small arena. The praying voice of the Rev DS Nell disappeared altogether as hundreds of stamping feet and singing male voices passed by.

Various church ministers ignored the increasing commotion and continued the service. The crowd continued several times around the arena. Seated miners joined them on each round.

Gathering finally at the foot of a sandy embankment, they held their own meeting.

While the memorial service ground to a finish before rows of empty benches - a line of management and small numbers of scattered miners remained - the thousands-strong chanting crowd was momentarily without direction.

In the following full, crowds of men broke away and swirled over the refreshment tables, grabbing food and drink. "Comrades, what are you doing? Please, comrades, you're not to do like that," yelled a Lonmin shaft steward into his loudspeaker as the men moved away from the trampled sandwiches.

Within minutes of the prayer meeting ending, mine management disappeared. The crowd toppled the pulpit and its flower-covered backdrop as they filled the arena.

The newly-arrived NUM Safety Officer, Mr Hazzy Sibanyoni, addressed them on matters affecting them following the tragedy and reprimanded them for their behaviour.

All shifts would work today, he said, but a union memorial service would be held tomorrow when no-one would go underground.

He added: "Those were our brothers who died underground. You shouldn't do things as though you don't care."

Chamber of Mines knew of polyurethane foam danger

The Chamber of Mines has now admitted that several circulars warning of the dangers of using polyurethane foam underground were circulated from 1988 onwards.

At first the Chamber told The Star polyurethane had - until the Kinross disaster - been regarded as safe.

Immediately after the Kinross mining accident, The Star requested from the Chamber information on polyurethane foam and its use underground.

After 24 hours of investigation a Chamber spokesman replied:

"The polyurethane and other products used in mines have until now been regarded by mines as safe. But the Kinross tragedy clearly puts a huge question mark over this, which the Chamber of Mines research organisation will be investigating once their role in the events at Kinross is known."

Asked how widely the products were used in mines in South Africa, the spokesman replied: "It would be fair to say these substances are in general use in mines here and overseas."

Since then it has been established that the products have been banned in British coal mines since the early 80s and in the United States since 1989.

Asked whether in view of the disaster the Chamber would examine these products or check up on members who may have used the chemical sealers, he said: "It is a matter of priority."

Asked whether the Chamber had ever carried out any tests on the substances in their laboratories, the spokesman said: "No."

He also said the Chamber did not have the address of the local manufacturer of the product.

Now the Chamber's technical adviser, Mr David Gaynor, says that for the past 18 years the Chamber repeatedly warned about the potential toxicity of polyurethane foam underground.

Mr Gaynor said The Star's initial questions had not been put to him. He also said the Chamber had sufficient knowledge of the products to identify their hazards.

He said the polyurethane substances were used by gold mines for sealing chilled water columns and also to seal ventilation systems in the event of fire.

Mr Gaynor revealed that information on polyurethane hazards was circulated in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1992 and discussions about the substance, and dangers during fire, were held with the Chamber's safety, environmental and ventilation subcommittees.

After a fire at Gencor's biggest gold mine Buffelsfontein, in May 1977, polyurethane and polyurethane were identified as inflammable materials.
THE miner whose welding started the underground fire which resulted in 177 deaths at the Kinross gold mine is "alive and well", and may be under police protection.

It is understood the man, who has not been identified by mining officials, is being protected against possible retribution, but mine officials and police could not confirm this yesterday.

Gencor Corporate Communications GM Dawie de Beer said: "I can confirm that the man is alive and well. He may be under police protection, but I am not aware of it."

A National Mineworkers Union source in the area said he was aware the man was not injured in the disaster.

He said: "All I know is that we are concerned that he should be safe. I don't know whether he has police protection but he may have sought his own form of protection on his own initiative."
SA's mines are open for inspection

BRUSSELS — President P W Botha has said SA would welcome inspection of its mines, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) says.

Botha sent a telex to the Brussels-based union organisation after last week's disaster at Kurnes gold mine in which 177 miners died.

It said "Responsible representatives of all foreign governments and mining industries are welcome to visit our mining industry and ascertain for themselves what our safety standards, precautions and mechanisms entail".

ICFTU said Botha's telex to ICFTU general secretary John Vandervelden was in response to ICFTU's demand for an independent inquiry into the incident.

Botha's telex accused ICFTU of making a "cynical and insensitive attempt to lay the blame for the incident at the doors of (its) choice", the spokesman said.
Foam danger in mines highlighted

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The Chamber of Mines has admitted that several circulars warning of the dangers of using polyurethane foam underground were circulated from 1968 until now been regarded by mines as safe.

"But the Kinross tragedy clearly puts a huge question mark over this," the Chamber of Mines research organisation will be investigating once their role in the events at Kinross is known.

As asked whether, in view of the disaster at Kinross, the chamber intended to examine these products or check members who might have used these chemical sealers, the spokesman said "It is a matter of priority".

Now the chamber's technical adviser, Mr David Gaynor, says that for the past 10 years the chamber repeatedly warned about the danger of using polyurethane foam underground.

He said the polyurethane substances were used by gold mines for sealing chilled water columns.

Mr Gaynor said information on polyurethane hazards was circulated in 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1982 and discussed extensively within the chamber.
CALL FOR MOURNING

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for a work stoppage on October 1 on all mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines in memory of workers who died in the Kinross mine disaster.

At a Press conference, NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said an emergency national executive meeting of the union had decided to call on members to observe the day.

The union's request to the chamber was due to be conveyed by telefax.

"We expect them to agree to our request, but if they do not agree, our members will observe it," Mr Ramaphosa said.

Other unions belonging to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), to which the NUM is affiliated, would be approached on the October 1 call.

The chamber could not be reached for comment.

Mr Ramaphosa said the union had not been invited to a memorial service for the dead workers at Secunda on Wednesday.

Mr Ramaphosa said the union had not been invited to a management service for the Kinross victims, but would "obviously consider it".

"Reacting to the establishment of a fund to supplement compensation for the families of the dead workers, Mr Ramaphosa said the NUM had not been approached on that either, but would be willing to discuss participation if invited.

The union had long been fighting for the improvement of compensation for the mine workers, he pointed out.

Union members are to decide on a course of action regarding the access to Kinross Mine to a team of experts, due here on Monday to help during investigations.

Sapa reports that Gencor management denied that the NUM approached them to have the union's experts conduct an inspection at the Kinross Mine.

The NUM also claimed management was forcing workers at the Kinross mine to return to work, despite fears that the affected No 2 shaft was unsafe.

NUM safety officer Mr Hazzy Sibanyoni said workers who refused to go down the shaft were being threatened with docking of pay and disciplinary action.

Gencor has denied that Kinross workers were being forced to return to work.

Accidents on South African gold mines have killed more than 46 000 workers and seriously injured more than 1 million since the beginning of the century, according to a study released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva.

The study, commissioned by the NUM, said the fatality rate on the country's gold mines was among the highest in the world.

MORE lives could be lost in the mining industry unless mine workers "are able to exercise their right to determine that the work conditions they are exposed to are safe," the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union has warned.

Bancwu, which has members in the industry, said in a statement it had gathered information showing the Kinross gold mine disaster — which claimed 177 lives — could have been averted "had it not been for the carelessness of the local management and its safety officers".

The union is to decide on its role in a commission of inquiry into the disaster, publicity secretary Mr Motsumi Mokhune said.

"As the union has stated before, more lives could be lost unless workers are able to exercise their right to decide on whether the conditions they are exposed to are safe," the union said.

Miners must have right to decide — union

Memorial service in honour of the Kinross victims at the weekend.

The Canadian Embassy in Pretoria has sent a message of condolence to the National Union of Mineworkers.

The Azamani National Youth Unity has also expressed sympathy with families of the dead miners. "The entombment of workers in the mine is a clear manifestation of the cruel effect of a system of capitalism," the organisation said.

Meanwhile, a relief fund has been established by Specialised Exhibitions for the disaster victims. The company last week hosted a mining trade show at the National Exhibition Centre at Crown Mines.

More than R20 000 has already been donated to the fund, launched a day after the accident. Specialised Exhibitions have approached the Chamber of Mines to administer the fund.
NUM miners may strike in protest

THE National Union of Mineworkers executive held an urgent meeting late yesterday to discuss worker action in response to the Kinross catastrophe.

NUM sources said a work stoppage by the union's 250,000 members was one of the options being considered.

"It is clear there is mass dissatisfaction among mineworkers at working conditions," one source said.

"NUM has repeatedly called for improved safety, and incidents like Kinross only highlight the need for revisions."

The source pointed out that NUM organised a 30-minute work stoppage after the Hishane disaster, in which 68 miners died.

A NUM spokesman confirmed that the exec met yesterday to discuss "appropriate action."

Earlier this week NUM general-secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said NUM members were "very angry at the terrible disaster."

Ramaphosa said it was "anybody's guess" what action might be taken by the union.

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Danie Steyn who went underground with a government mine engineer and mine inspectors to assess the damage announced on Thursday that a judicial inquiry into the disaster will be held.
FISTS OF FURY
FOR THE MINES MINISTER

 Angry Kromm miners let their feelings show about this week's mine disaster when Mines Minister Danie Steyn arrived to see the damage

COALBROOK: THE WORST TRAGEDY EVER

The worst disaster ever in SA mining history happened on Monday, 21st of May, 1960, when 293 men died in the Coalbrook colliery. The rescue operation, which lasted 435 days, was the most extensive in South African mining history. It was a turning point in the history of the coal mining industry and had far-reaching implications for the economy and society of South Africa.

Lest we forget

Progressive Federal Party leader Colm Egenhorst has called for a national day of mourning to honor the 293 men who lost their lives in the Coalbrook disaster. He said that the tragedy must be remembered by all South Africans, and that we must learn from it to prevent such disasters in the future.

THE SMELL OF DEATH

By Derrick Lethaby

The smell of death is something that will never be forgotten.

For 23 years, Elia Mvubu worked in the mines but it is the disaster that will haunt him.

I came out of the ventilation shaft at level 15 and entered the main shaft. The smell of death was overpowering.

I saw bodies, and I could hear the screams of the trapped miners. I knew there was no way out, and I knew I was going to die.

I managed to find a corner where I could hide, and I prayed for my family. I knew they would be looking for me, and I hoped they would find me.

I was rescued after 435 days, but the smell of death will remain with me forever.

The families of the trapped miners were devastated.

ADISAT, the help families in the mining community, organized a memorial service for the 293 men who lost their lives.

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Danie Steyn apologized for the tragedy and promised that such an incident would not happen again.

The government has announced that there will be an independent inquiry into the disaster, and that all mining companies will be held accountable for the safety of their workers.

The price of survival profits

The Congolese Union of Mineworkers calls for an independent inquiry into the mining industry's profits.

The government has been accused of prioritizing profits over the safety of workers.

The union says that mining companies are making huge profits, while workers are struggling to make ends meet.

The government must ensure that workers are protected and that the mining industry is held accountable for its actions.

The families of the 293 miners who lost their lives are calling for justice and for the government to take responsibility for the disaster.

We must remember the 293 men who lost their lives in the Coalbrook disaster, and we must work together to prevent such incidents from happening again.
HIBLOANE: NUM JOINS THE FIGHT FOR MINE SAFETY

CP Reporter

WHEN 68 miners died in a methane gas explosion at the Hibloane colliery in September 1983, it made headlines globally. The disaster, the worst in South Africa's coal mining history, shocked the nation and galvanized the mining industry into action.

From the start, the inquiry and response assumed added importance with NUM's direct involvement. The union took a lead role in ensuring the safety of its members and in the investigation of the disaster.

The main cause of the disaster was identified as a methane gas explosion, which killed 68 miners. The inquiry revealed that the mine had been operating above its capacity and that there were issues with ventilation and safety measures.

The aftermath of the disaster saw a significant improvement in safety standards and regulations. NUM played a crucial role in ensuring that the lessons of the Hibloane disaster were not forgotten and that the mining industry learned from the tragedy.

The disaster highlighted the need for a stronger focus on mine safety in South Africa. It also underscored the importance of unions in advocating for the rights of workers and in ensuring that their voices are heard in the face of industrial accidents.
Miners' union wants to sue polyurethane supplier

The National Union of Mineworkers is on the trail of an American company believed to have supplied polyurethane to the Kinross mine, the union's general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said yesterday.

Mr Ramaphosa said legal action would follow the inquiry into the disaster and investigations were being made about the American firm, Mobay.

The union hoped to bring a lawsuit against Mobay if it was involved in supplying the foam.

"We believe Mobay came to South Africa several years ago and may have a subsidiary here," Mr Ramaphosa said.

Under American law the company could be held responsible for the deaths of the miners, he said.

It was inconceivable that South African mines did not know about the danger of polyurethane, a British fire and explosives expert said at a Press conference in Johannesburg yesterday.

The substance claimed the lives of scores of miners in the Kinross disaster last week.

Dr Herbert Essen, who was with the Explosion Flame Laboratory of the British Health and Safety executive, one of the biggest such laboratories in Europe, before his retirement in 1981, said:

"The mines would have known about it, even without any official notification."

Polyurethane has been outlawed in British mines since 1964, he said.

Dr Essen, in South Africa at the request of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), has been refused access to the site of the Kinross disaster.

This negates the mine management agreement, NUM's attorney Mr Clive Thompson said at the conference.

Refusal

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said Foreign Minister Mr Pak Bola and State President Mr F W Botha had invited any international expert in mines to conduct an inspection of the mine where 171 men were killed in a fire last week.

"Dr Essen arrived today and Gencor said they were not prepared to allow anyone to visit the underground workings of the place of the accident," Mr Ramaphosa said.

Their refusal indicates they have something to hide," Dr Essen is to be joined by two more experts from Sweden and Germany.

But the department of Home Affairs "apparently does not want to give a visa" to the Swede, Dr Peter Westerholm, said Mr Ramaphosa.

He said he was still negotiating with Gencor attorneys for the men to visit the site of the disaster.

Dr Essen will be in South Africa for a week, he said.
THE KINROSS DISASTER

AS thousands of miners were leaving for their first 1600m underground at Kinross on Tuesday a book high on the list of safety regulations was published by the National Union of Mineworkers.

A week ago, the book was published by the Union of Mineworkers and published at the time was in its last days of production. It was in the last days of production when the miners were told that the book would be delayed.

The book, "Safety in Mine Work," was published by the Union of Mineworkers and was published at the time was in its last days of production. It was in the last days of production when the miners were told that the book would be delayed.

CD Reporter

"Quoting from other research, the book emphasizes that the miners who were working at the time were not aware of the dangers and the book was in the last days of production when the miners were told that the book would be delayed."}

Mine's safety rating downgraded in 1985

KINROSS gold mine's safety procedures are already under fire after a new report was issued by the National Union of Mineworkers in June 1985. The report revealed that the mine's star safety rating was drastically downgraded last year.

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Man manager Koa Oliver admitted he had not read the report. The report said Oliver would not comment on the safety rating of the mine.

He said it had been downgraded because it was no longer being monitored by the government. The report also said the mine was no longer being monitored by the government. The report also said the mine was no longer being monitored by the government. The report also said the mine was no longer being monitored by the government. The report also said the mine was no longer being monitored by the government.

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The report also said the mine was no longer being monitored by the governm
By Mike Siluma, Sheryl Raine and Colleen Ryan

Facts are being revealed about the Kinross gold mine tragedy which are causing shock throughout the industry. They have raised serious questions about safety standards.

The owners of the mine admitted that they did not know whether polyurethane sealing foam suspected to have caused Tuesday’s disaster — in which 177 workers were killed by toxic fumes — had been tested for safety.

Heads of the General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor), which owns Kinross mine, told a Press conference that they were not aware of any tests on polyurethane used in the shaft where the accident occurred, according to Sapa.

They said the company tended to rely on tests conducted by overseas chemicals manufacturers.

Unprecedented admission

In an unprecedented admission, Gencor — South Africa’s second largest mining group and owners of the mine where the worst accident in gold mining history occurred — said a major rethink on safety was necessary.

The victims are believed to have died as a result of inhaling fatally poisonous fumes from burning sealants.

The Chamber of Mines has admitted that these substances have been used extensively in South Africa’s mines.

Gencor chairman Mr Derek Keys said yesterday at the Press conference that confidence about reducing deaths on his company’s mines had “been blown away”.

“It’s all over and we think again of the Gencor safety management,” he said.

Vital issues raised yesterday included:

• The chief suspect product in the Kinross disaster — a polyurethane insulating foam — had not been tested by the South African mining industry before being used underground, but was now being ripped out at the mine.

• The insulating foam has been banned in Britain for years, and an alternative insulator with a non-flammable base has been developed.

• Gencor has refused to give the product’s trade name, claiming it has not yet established the name.

(From the first intimation of the tragedy a brand name has been common knowledge, but the Press has withheld publication until an inquiry is held.)

• Despite a recommended deadline by the Government Engineer for the introduction of life-saving, self-rescue masks on gold mines by this year, and coal mines by last year, Chamber of Mines research is still in the “testing” stage.

A top mining engineer told The Star that these masks, which give miners a 30-minute oxygen supply, could have averted the loss of so many lives at Kinross.

In reply, Gencor’s head of mining, metallurgical and medical services, Dr Con Faessener, said conditions unique to mining in South Africa required a special adaptation of the masks used overseas and extensive research.

• An independent Government inspector had visited Kinross the day before the accident.

‘No extinguisher’

• Although permission has to be granted for operations such as welding underground, and a full inspection carried out by the welder concerned, the Kinross fire has been attributed to a “welding accident”.

Gencor officials at the Press conference refused to answer questions on any aspect relating to the welding incident, saying that it was under investigation.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) claimed there was no fire extinguisher at the scene of the accident.

But Gencor officials refused to comment, saying this was part of on-going investigations.

Mr Keys said “We owe it to the living to critically re-examine our existing procedures and materials throughout the group with a view to ensuring, as far as humanly possible, that such a tragic occurrence — on any scale — cannot occur again.” See Page 2.
NUM calls for day of mourning for mine victims

By Mike Siluma

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for a work stoppage on October 1 on all mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines in memory of workers who died in the Kinross mine disaster.

At a press conference yesterday, NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said an emergency national executive meeting of the union had decided to call on members to observe the day.

The union's request to the chamber was due to be conveyed by telex.

"We expect them to agree to our request, but if they do not our members will observe it," Mr Ramaphosa said.

Other unions belonging to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), to which the NUM is affiliated, would be approached on the October 1 call.

The chamber could not be reached for comment.

The NUM will hold a memorial service for the dead workers at Secunda on Wednesday.

Mr Ramaphosa said the union had not been invited to a management service for the Kinross victims, but would "obviously consider it".

Reacting to the establishment of a fund to supplement compensation for the families of the dead workers, Mr Ramaphosa said the NUM had not been approached on that either, but would be willing to discuss participation if invited.

The union had long been fighting for the improvement of compensation for the mineworkers, he pointed out.

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Sapa reports that Gencor management denied that the NUM approached them to have the union's experts conduct an inspection at the Kinross Mine.

The NUM also claimed management was forcing workers at the Kinross mine to return to work, despite fears that the affected No 2 shaft was unsafe.

NUM safety officer Mr Hazzy Sibanyoni said workers who refused to go down the shaft were being threatened with docking of pay and disciplinary action.

Gencor has denied that Kinross workers were being forced to return to work.

Accidents on South African gold mines have killed more than 46 000 workers and seriously injured more than 1 million since the beginning of the century, according to a study released yesterday by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva. The study, commissioned by the NUM, said the fatality rate on the country's gold mines was among the highest in the world. — Sapa-Reuters.
Inquest into mine rockfall deaths

By Sheryl Raine

A rockfall which killed 17 people at the ERPM gold mine near Boksburg last November will have a sequel this week in the Boksburg Magistrate's Court where an inquest into the deaths will be held.

In addition to those killed, 22 people were injured.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has briefed lawyers to attend the inquest and represent some of the families affected by the accident.

At the time of the accident Rand Mines, which owns ERPM, expressed concern about the declining safety record of the mine. The accident brought the death toll at ERPM from January 1965 to November 55.

Press files showed that only 37 of the total number of ERPM deaths had been made public by Rand Mines since December 1984.

Deputy chairman of Rand Mines gold division, Mr J R Forbes explained that the company did not believe it had an obligation to make public all deaths on the mine but that the company did respond to Press queries.

ERPM, which holds a four-star rating in terms of the Five Star International Safety Rating Scheme, recorded 52 dead in 1984, 35 dead in 1983, in 1982 there were 24 killed, in 1981 40 people died and in 1980 there were 39.

The mine is one of the deepest in the world.

Mr Forbes said Rand Mines was extremely concerned about fatalities and the safety record of the mine.

Everything was being done to improve safety, he said.
In recent years mine security control, particularly in riot and strike situations, has received much publicity. Sheryl Raine spoke to the manager of one of the country's largest mining security concerns about the image of his business.

Ensuring security on the mines in SA

As the new manager of Gold Fields Security, Mr Ian Pullar (45) has many tasks, one of which is keeping the public image of the mines' security systems in perspective.

Although the main focus of the company's attention is on theft and fraud and their prevention, it also has the infrequent task of riot control which gets the most publicity.

Since the birth of the National Union of Mineworkers and the advent of wage strikes on the mines, riot control has received considerable media attention — most of it negative.

Gold Fields Security is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gold Fields South Africa Limited, which employs about 5,000 people responsible for all facets of security on mines as far apart as Zululand and Okiep.

The company secures everything from asbestos to zinc, but does not secure diamonds nor does it handle security for JCI or Anglo American.

STAFF OFFICER

Mr Pullar has a police and military background and was until recently an operational staff officer of the SA Defence Force in Natal.

"Our principal aim is cost-effective protection of the assets of the mines at all times against unrest, theft, fraud or any activity that causes loss of production.

"Our biggest problem is controlling theft and fraud. We have a big investigation branch employing retired police officers whose considerable experience is put to good use."

"There are shrewd investigators who've seen virtually every trick in the book are drawn mainly from the Commercial Branch and the Gold Squad."

"On any particular mine the metallurgical department knows what the ore should yield. If the mine finds it is producing less than expected, it means that someone is stealing."

"That's when Gold Fields comes in to investigate, make recommendations, advise on security and to circulate valuable findings to other mines."

At the company's headquarters at the old Lupaardsvlei mine, near Krugersdorp, security personnel are trained and briefed.

"Every conceivable local and international security publication is filed in an impressive library to ensure that Gold Fields remains plugged in to the very latest in security methods — including crime prevention and detection as well as riot control."

There are some changes on the cards for riot control on the mines.

"The emphasis has always been on effective riot control with minimum injury to people and damage to property," says Mr Pullar.

GENERAL HARMLESS

"Teargas and water cannon are the methods he prefers because they are generally harmless but effective investigations are under way to manufacture a proper water cannon instead of the improvised versions used to date.

"We don't use ball ammunition under any circumstances to restore order during riot situations."

"At the moment the company is looking at new improved types of multi-purpose armour-plated vehicles which can be used for general security purposes as well as the transporting of payrolls and other valuable materials. They can also be used to protect security personnel during unrest and riots."

"We have been using converted commercial vehicles with limited armour-plating and bulletproof windows. We don't like the Casspir for our purposes. We have one or two on the mines which were purchased by the mines themselves. I feel they are too military. They are expensive and can be used for only one purpose on a few days of the year."

RIOT VEHICLES

"They were bought because unrest bursts into riots very quickly and the police are not always able to provide immediate support."

"We prefer to deal with situations as they arise but when life and property are threatened the mine manager may decide that the police are necessary."

"We are looking at some sophisticated locally produced riot vehicles which can be used for transporting people and which would have a psychological effect on troublemakers. People know that if there are anti-riot personnel inside the vehicle there will be action taken against rioters."

...
Mine officials contended safety rules, says inquiry
New mine safety campaign

By Sven Lunsche

The Chamber of Mines launched a new safety campaign on coal mines at a function in Ermelo on Friday.

Introducing the COncA (Concentration on critical areas) campaign, Mr Cohn Fenton, chairman of the mines safety division, said that the intention is to concentrate on areas where the potential for loss of human life is the greatest.

"COncA is a move away from the more generalised programmes of the past, but the correct identification of those high risk areas provides us with the opportunity of reducing the hazards and minimising the risks," he said.

The first critical area that has been identified is transport within the collieries. A package has been made available, comprising videos and fact sheets for middle management, team-leaders and operators, which covers safety aspects of coal-cutting, loading, shuttle car and tip operations.

Another area the Chamber will focus on will be rock falls. Campaigns on such critical areas as machinery, slipping and falling, electrical equipment, explosives and off-the-job safety will follow.

Mr Mike Hawarden, chairman of the collieries division of the Chamber of Mines, said that in 1985 the fatality rate of 0.49 per thousand in 1985 was the lowest ever for Chamber associated collieries and is a 37 percent decrease on the 1984 figure of 0.67. This represents a decrease of 16 people killed in mine accidents from 56 in 1984 to 40 last year.

For the South African coal mining industry as a whole, however, the picture still looks gloomy with a fatality rate of 0.77 per thousand. This was mainly the result of a serious methane explosion at a SASOL colliery.

The reportable injury rate has also been reduced. The figure for 1985 for Chamber collieries was 7.06, down on the 1984 figure of 7.81.

Both the fatality and injury rates have been reduced by about 66 percent over the past 10 years.
The fatality and reportable injury rates for gold, coal and all mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines reached new lows last year.

This is the second year in a row that new safety records have been set in the mining industry.

According to the Chamber of Mines an important milestone was reached last year with the reduction of the average fatality rate for all chamber mines to below one death for every 1,000 employees a year for the first time ever in a full year.

The overall average fatality rate for all mines was 0.59 deaths for every 1,000 workers which represents a 14 percent improvement compared with the 1984 figure of 1.04 fatalities for every 1,000.

A breakdown of the statistics shows that the fatality rate for gold mines was reduced by 12.7 percent to 1.03 fatalities for every 1,000 employees.

BIGGEST IMPROVEMENT

The biggest improvement was that achieved in the fatality rate for coal mines which recorded 0.42 deaths for every 1,000 workers and constitutes a 37 percent improvement over the 1984 figure of 0.67.

The reportable injury rate for all chamber mines, which has been more than halved during the past 10 years, was reduced by a further 5.5 percent last year to 21.56 injuries for every 1,000 workers.

The injury rate on gold mines last year was 25.08 injuries for every 1,000 workers compared with 27.06 for 1984. On coal mines the injury rate last year was 7.06 injuries for every 1,000 workers compared with 7.91 the previous year.

Commenting on the figures the president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr Clive Knebb, said: “The substantial reduction in the fatality rate to below one per 1,000 is particularly encouraging. The overall safety improvement can be attributed to the firm commitment on the part of the mines, the mining groups and the chamber to reduce accidents to an absolute minimum.”
MINING

Mining accidents at lowest ever

JOHANNESBURG — For the second year running, Chamber of Mines companies have achieved record safety performances.

Accident statistics for 1985 released by the chamber show the fatality and reportable injury rates for gold, coal and all mines reached new lows last year.

A notable milestone was the reduction of the fatality rate for all mines to below 1 for 1000 employees a year for the first time over a full year.

The actual figure of 0.89 for 1000 represents a 14.4 percent improvement over the 1984 figure of 1.04 for 1000.

The biggest percentage improvement was achieved in the fatality rate for coal mines, which at 0.42 a 1000 was 37.2 percent lower than the figure of 0.67 for 1984.

The fatality rate for gold mines was reduced by 12.7 per cent to 1.63 a 1000, while that for “other mines” was unchanged at 0.38 per 1000.

The reportable injury rate for all mines, which has been more than halved over the past 10 years, was reduced by a further 5.5 percent last year.

The injury rates for gold and coal mines were reduced by 7.3 and 9.6 percent respectively.

But major contributory factors were undoubtedly improved technology as a result of continuing research and development and the widespread adoption of loss control management techniques as embodied in the international safety rating system, says the chamber — Sapa.
quantities have been imported and (b) where have these substances been stored or disposed of.

(3) in respect of what date is this information furnished?

The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS AND TOURISM.

(1) (a) No 
(b) No 

(2) and (3) Fall away

The Labour Relations Act

(a) How many applications for the (i) establishment of conciliation boards in terms of section 35, and (ii) appointment of a mediator in terms of section 44, of the Labour Relations Act, No 28 of 1956 were (aa) made and (bb) approved in 1985 and (b) in respect of what percentage of the approved applications were the disputes settled, in each case?

The MINISTER OF MANPOWER:

(a) (i) (aa) 514 
(bb) 101 

(ii) (aa) Nil 
(bb) N nil 

(b) Conciliation Boards—27.7 per cent Mediators—22.3 per cent

(a) How many industrial accidents occurred in 1982 and (b) what was the total cost of these accidents to (i) the State, (ii) the Accident Fund and (iii) insurance companies?

(b) how many persons (i) applied for and (ii) received compensation in terms of the Workmen's Compensation Act, No 30 of 1941, and (b) what was the total amount paid out in compensation in this year;

(2) what was the total period for which the persons injured in such accidents were absent from work?

The MINISTER OF MANPOWER.

(1) (a) 289 052.
(b) (i) R 8 019 485.
(u) R68 155 338.
(m) R37 722 912.

(2) (a) (i) 296 714.
(u) 289 052.
(b) R124 500 952.

(3) 3 475 627 man days

(4) (a) 458 110
(u) 295 987
(m) 511 171

Note: The figures are as at 31 December 1985

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Andrew, Mr K M—

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Dalling, Mr D J—

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Now a blast-proof mining jack

By Stan Kennedy

Bosal Afrika has launched a blast-proof hydraulic jack which, it claims, will save the mining industry millions of rand a year in timber and man-hours.

In 1984, 22 million sq m were stopped in the country's gold mines, with the national timber bill for that year being more than R163 million.

Before drilling and blasting can take place at the stopes, the hanging wall has to be shored up with temporary supports — a job that takes many hours.

The traditional method uses timber poles, hand-wedged into position. In blasting, about 90 percent of the poles are blown out of position and destroyed and the ensuing shift has to repeat the shoring process before going into the stope.

"The Bosal hydraulic mine jack will change all this," said Mr. Doug Renece, managing director of Bosal's Jacks, Garage Equipment and Tools Division, during a tour of its Pretoria factory last week.

GREATER PROTECTION

"As well as offering greater security for miners, it will drastically cut the timber bill. The ease by which it can be installed will greatly reduce man-hours," Using the new jack, two men can shore up a 25-m stope face in 30 minutes, compared with the traditional method which takes up to four hours.

Tested by the Chamber of Mines and the Head Rock Mechanics Department, the jack is said to give greater protection than the hand-wedged props as it can withstand pressures of up to 20 tons both vertically and horizontally.

Bosal is the sole manufacturer of hydraulic jacks in Africa and about 50 percent of all cars have its jacks as original equipment.

Mr. Renece also said that the company had taken over Applied Power SA, a distributor and service centre for high-pressure hydraulic equipment and collision repair equipment for its American parent company Bosal had a licensing agreement which would enable it to manufacture a selected range of these products.
Self-rescue equipment on way for all miners

By Sven Lunsche

Gencor specialist mining supplies company Conway Johnson has finalised a sole distributor arrangement for marketing the safety product range of Kawasaki Safety Service Industries (KSS), a subsidiary of the giant Kawasaki Heavy Industries Limited of Japan.

First product from KSS to be marketed in South Africa is a compressed oxygen self-rescue unit for underground mining, to meet standards set by the Government Mining Engineer (GME).

In terms of safety legislation expected to be introduced soon, coal, gold and base metal mineral mines are to equip all underground workers with emergency breathing apparatus over the next three years.

According to Mr Kobus de Jonge, MD of Conway Johnson, the self-rescue market in South Africa is expected to be worth about R500 million over the next three years. The Conway-Kawasaki rescue goes on sale this week, but the product has not been finalised in all its aspects.

"While the preliminary requirements of the GME have been met, we still have to meet their final standards and those of the Chamber of Mines. We hope that these standards will be met within four to six months by new developments and improvements," Mr de Jonge said.

The safety requirements will be introduced in three phases - the coal mining industry will have to satisfy the safety standards this year, followed by the gold mining industry in the following year and the base metal mines will have to fulfil the safety requirements by the end of 1988. Conway-Johnson hopes to improve the design of self-rescue units with the introduction of each phase.

When the regulations are formally introduced every miner will be required to wear a self-rescue underground.
nouncements

Deaths

DOIG
Robby, died suddenly Thursday, 29th March, aged 64. Beloved husband of Madge. God bless and rest her soul.

DOIG
Robby, died suddenly Thursday, 29th March. Father of P.M. Merrick. Much loved and respected. Rest in peace. God be with you and bless you.

ERASMUS
Keynes, deceased. Rest in peace. Missed and loved. God be with you. Missed and loved. God be with you.

ERASMUS
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107 died in work accidents

Medical Reports

There were 105 deaths — 68 immediately fatal — in working accidents among black workers on Rand Mines gold mines in 1984 — a mortality rate of 1.6 per 1,000.

The mortality rate among black workers through working accidents in 1984 on Rand Mines coal mines was 0.3 per 1,000 — or two dead.

On the group's gold mines, 7,486 blacks were injured in accidents connected with work, an incidence of 115.5 per 1,000, and 3,969 were injured in accidents unconnected with work. Of the latter, 105 died.

These figures are contained in the Rand Mines annual medical report released last week.
Three killed
underground

Three black mineworkers were
ekilled in two separate accidents
at Rand Mines ERPM gold mine
at Boksburg early yesterday.

One of the men died at
2.30 am in a fall of ground
2,700 m below surface at the
mine’s L-incline section.

The other two were killed in a
pressure burst 3,200 m under-
ground on the 75th level of the
south-eastern section of the
mine at 3.30 am.

The names of the dead are
being withheld until their fami-
lies have been notified.

plain
spaghetti
500 g

Fatti’s & Mor
ready-cut
plain
macaroni
500 g

500 cm³

The new T-U-V

Tougher and more dependable
Van chuckles at hills even when
straight roads give full cover.

Packing and more fuel-
packed more punch,
and being from Toyota,
and low maintenance,
and being from Toyota,
and low maintenance,

The new T-U-V

Send the lowest priced half-ton
money. The surprisingly large
optional canopy. Bodywork and
against corrosion. Seats of
designed. Trimmed with new
And improved radial tyres for

keeps going right
lives at gold mine

Accidents claim 3

BY LEN MASEKO

Three black miners were killed in two separate accidents at the ERM mine in Bokburg yesterday. The names of the miners have not been released. The ERM mine is owned by the Harmony Gold Mining Co. Ltd.

The mine is located in the Vaal reef of the Witwatersrand basin. The mine has a workforce of about 10,000 workers. The mine has been operating for about 40 years.

The ERM mine is one of the largest gold mines in South Africa. The mine has produced over 200 million ounces of gold since its inception. The mine is owned by the Harmony Gold Mining Co. Ltd.

The mine has been facing financial difficulties in recent years. The mine has been struggling to meet its production targets. The mine has also been facing safety concerns.

The mine has been implementing various safety measures to improve the safety of its workers. The mine has also been investing in new technology to improve its productivity.

The mine has been facing labor disputes in recent years. The mine has been facing strikes by its workers over wages and working conditions.

The mine has been negotiating with the affected workers to reach a settlement. The mine has also been offering various incentives to its workers to stay on board.

The mine has been facing challenges in recruiting new workers due to the labor disputes. The mine has been facing challenges in retaining its existing workforce.

The mine has been facing challenges in meeting its production targets due to the labor disputes. The mine has been facing financial difficulties in recent years.

The mine has been facing challenges in implementing its safety measures. The mine has been facing challenges in improving the safety of its workers.

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The mine has been facing challenges in implementing its safety measures. The mine has been facing challenges in improving the safety of its workers.
8 coal miners hurt in methane gas fire

By Craig Kotze

Eight miners were injured in a methane gas fire at Sasol's Middelburg coal mine near Secunda yesterday.

A Secunda Collieries spokesman, Mr Stan Booth, said today the eight injured were admitted to the mine hospital and were in a stable condition. Their names have not yet been released.

Last August, 30 miners died and 29 were injured in a methane gas explosion at the Middelburg mine.

But Mr Booth stressed the latest incident was not an explosion but a fire.

He said "if it had been an explosion it would have caused massive damage and many deaths. But only 19 miners were in the area when the fire broke out."

After last year's blast, Sasol said it had been awarded five stars for safety standards under the International Institute of Loss Control's monitoring scheme.

Mr Booth said "Our safety record is as good as any and we are intensively concerned with safety."

But Ms Chris Boninger, Transvaal branch secretary of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, said the union was appalled at the second accident and seriously questioned Sasol's safety standards.
Nine killed in mine explosion

NINE workers died and 15 were injured yesterday in an underground explosion at Deelkraal gold mine, Goldfields said in a statement released in Johannesburg.

The condition of three of the injured is serious but not critical. The injured are all being treated at the Leslie Williams Memorial Hospital near Carletonville, the statement said.

The cause of the explosion, which occurred about 12.15pm yesterday in a development area and at a depth of 2 000 m, is still being investigated, the statement added without elaborating.

212 - 7/18/86
9 miners killed in blast

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Nine miners were killed and 13 injured in an underground explosion at DeKalbraal Mine near Carletonville yesterday, the management of Gold Fields, which owns the mine, announced.

According to a spokesman, the explosion occurred about 12:15 am yesterday, 2000m underground. Late yesterday afternoon senior mine officials went underground to investigate the cause of the explosion, a Gold Fields spokesman said.

"He was not yet sure what the cause was, but thought explosives used in normal mining might have exploded accidentally.

All the injured miners are being treated at the Leslie Williams Memorial Hospital near Carletonville."

The mine could not disclose the names of the dead as their families had not yet been informed, the spokesman said.

According to the Leslie Williams senior medical officer, Dr S S Booysen, four of the injured mine workers had been admitted to the intensive care unit.

"One is critical and three others with fractured skulls are in a stable condition," said Dr Booysen.

He also confirmed that a number of others had been admitted to other sections of the hospital and will remain for a "a few days"
Five 'fool's gold' miners killed, others trapped

Own Correspondent

DURBAN. — Five people have been killed and an unknown number are trapped in a tunnel on the banks of the Inzane River near Kranskop in northern Natal, following a rush of Zulu prospectors mining "fool's gold."

Brigadier A. J. M. Laas, Commissioner of Police for KwaZulu, said last night that KwaZulu police would work through the night to rescue the trapped miners.

Mining engineers had been called in to offer technical advice, but bulldozers and other heavy machinery were expected to reach the scene only early this morning because of the rugged terrain.

The brigadier, who flew to the scene by helicopter yesterday, said the site was highly dangerous for anyone more prospecting and those who went there under present circumstances were "asking for trouble."

Thousands of Zulus have flocked to the site in the past two weeks to seek their fortunes, but geologists and geologists have confirmed that what the prospectors are mining is only iron pyrites or "fool's gold."

Brigadier Laas said there was a deeply-held conviction among the people that the wealth at the site represented an ancestral fortune associated with the legendary King Shaka.

However, he said last night that the frenetic mood of the people had changed since the tragedy and many were now leaving the scene.

An ambulance and doctors were sent to the accident site yesterday by the authorities at Nkandla Hospital.

Five bodies had been recovered by late last night and a seriously injured victim was taken to the hospital.

A spokesman for the hospital said many more people were feared either dead or seriously injured.

Before yesterday's accident, two were killed and four injured in their fruitless search for gold.

Hundreds of women and children have been sleeping in the veld while their husbands mine the bank.
JOHANNESBURG — About 200 workers are feared to have died in one of South Africa's worst ever mining disasters.

A further 200 were later brought to the surface.

Prospects for the survival of the men trapped in the workings which cover two square kilometres were described as grim and deteriorating rapidly.

The fire quickly spread to "cables and other materials", according to Gencor.

Spokesmen said about 2000 miners were in the affected area at the time of the accident. Most had been evacuated immediately and many were under observation for the effects of toxic gas poisoning in nearby hospitals.

A further 3000 workers in unaffected areas had been evacuated as a precautionary measure, said a spokesman, Mr D J Ackerman.

Dr W F de Water acting medical superintendent for Evander Hospital, said 52 white miners had been admitted from 3pm all suffering from toxic gas poisoning.

"All but two are satisfactory and even the two who are more serious should be all right by tomorrow," he said.

Scores of ambulances were seen travelling to Shaft 2 until late last night where ten teams involving 146 people were working to rescue the trapped miners.

Mr Oliver said work was progressing slowly and that the bodies of dead miners were being slowly removed from the mine workings.

He told Sapa his hope was diminished for the survivors.

The official death toll was running "putrid".

He said 19 bodies had been brought to the surface and another 13 bodies had been confirmed dead. Mr Oliver said the rescue teams had no information about the fate of the remaining 90 people.

He said 132 teams had been sent to the mine but were not required because the rescue efforts were not needed.

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Mine disaster:

Dead: 235 hurt
Fire fades for missing 1 after Kinross blaze
Biggest mining tragedy since '60s

170 dead 235 hurt in mine disaster

Staff Reporters

The death toll in the Kinross Gold Mine disaster in the Eastern Transvaal has risen to 170.

Fourteen workers are still missing underground. Hopes for their survival are fading. There are 235 men in hospital.

The catastrophe is the worst gold mine disaster and the second worst mining accident in South Africa's history. As injured were ferried to the Evander Hospital early today a sobbing woman waiting for news of her husband said "I can't say what I feel. There's nothing to say - just to wait and wait."

Fire and poisonous gases swept through underground chambers in the massive, subterranean complex at 9:30 a.m. yesterday.

Toxic fumes from the fire 1.6 km underground spread over a 50 km area.

A spokesman for Gencon, Mr. Neil Ackerman, told The Star that 233 survivors were still receiving treatment. He said 186 of the dead were black migrant workers and the others white.

South Africa's worst mine disaster was at the Clydesdale Colliery near Coalbrook in 1960, when 435 miners died after a massive cave-in.

The general manager of Kinross, Mr. Kobus Olivier, said toxic fumes caused the deaths yesterday. "No one would have died if it weren't for the toxic substances, and no one died in the fire."

"We found the last person alive at 8 p.m. last night. We are not optimistic about the lives of the 14 others still missing."

In Evander Hospital, 52 whites are being treated, but none has serious injuries. In the nearby Winkelhaak Mine Hospital, 183 black miners are being "under observation."

When the fire broke out, 2,400 people were working underground and about 2,200 were evacuated successfully.

Addressing a press conference at the mine, Mr. Olivier explained how the deadly gas swept through the mine. "At times we have to seal certain areas, and make use of a sealing substance."

It is a liquid which turns into foam and is used to make water and air-tight seals.

"At the time of the accident, it was being sprayed on a tunnel wall to prevent corrosion."

There were flame-cutting operations going on to repair broken underground rail when a gas cylinder is said to have caught alight.

"Cables and other material caught fire."

The workers were overcome by toxic fumes from burning sealing substance.

A miner who was killed was on the 14th and 15th level. The lowest level on the mine is the 18th level, which is 1,600 meters underground.

The fire at Gencon's Kinross gold mine is the biggest mining disaster since South Africa since 435 coal miners were buried alive at the Clydesdale colliery in January 1960.

Tragically, it comes just one week after the Chinese massage parlor, "Shannan," was opened in Shanghai.

The country's worst mining disasters include:

- 1983, Hlobane, South Africa: 68 dead after a methane explosion.
- 1960, Clydesdale, South Africa: 435 dead after a coal mine collapse.
- 1978, Vaal Reef, South Africa: 41 dead in a mine fire.

In its defence, the mining industry points out that South African mining conditions are among the most dangerous in the world, especially in the depths at which ore is mined.
EVANDER — The official death toll in the Kinross gold mine fire has risen to 170, with 235 miners in hospital. Hopes are fading for 14 men still trapped underground, says mine management.

A shaft steward, Mr Patrick Nyokwana, said the bodies of six of the 14 "missing" men were brought to the surface this morning but a management spokesman was not able to confirm this.

If confirmed, this would bring the death toll to 176.

Earlier, the mine's general manager, Mr Kobus Olivier, said 235 miners were still in hospital and rescue teams had brought about 2 000 people to the surface.

"We are not really optimistic for the chances of survival of the 14 still trapped. Most of those brought up in the early hours of this morning were brought up dead," Mr Olivier said.

Two of the dead men were part of a proto team helping rescue miners from underground.

They were shift boss Mr Christoffel Johannes Dorfing, 27, who was married with two children, and Mr Stefaan Christoffel Adendorff, a surveyor, who had turned 27 yesterday. He had only been married two months.

The National Union of Mineworkers has called for a Commission of Inquiry into safety in the mining industry.

The Kinross accident was the worst since the 1960 cave-in at Coalbrook North Colliery near Sasolburg when 437 miners died.

A mine spokesman said many families were probably still unaware of the accident. Of the original 260 miners unaccounted for, 235 were migrant workers.

Most lived far away and notifying next of kin involved "a long and complicated process", he said.

The fire, which broke out at 9.30am yesterday, was apparently started by a welding accident.

--An acetylene cylinder caught fire and set alight underground cables and pipes," Mr Olivier said.

An anti-corrosive sealing substance was also burnt and caused a toxic reaction contaminating areas between the mine's No 1 and No 2 shafts and went to levels 15, 16, 17 and 18.

Mr Olivier said the fire and subsequent toxic fumes and smoke covered 56% of the mine's area.

--The fire, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide spread quickly underground," he said.

Some of the smoke and gas came to the surface.

Mr Olivier said the sealing substance which melted and exuded the killer fumes would never be used on his mine again.

He said the substance had been used on the mine for six years. It was a liquid which turned into a foam and a created water and air seal in areas where work was going on.

He said it took almost eight hours to extinguish the fire and the last of the gas and smoke was pumped out of the mine by late last night.

Mr Olivier said many of the men rescued "owed their lives to pockets of oxygen".

About 150 workers, operating in two-hour shifts, had brought 130 miners to the surface since midnight.

The mine, about 150 kilometres east of Johannesburg, was until recently the holder of the National Occupational Safety Institute's (Nosa) five-star rating, but had been downgraded to a three-star.

The National Union of Mineworkers' general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, arrived at Kinross early today and was to be taken on a tour to inspect the damage and to visit injured miners.

The disaster occurred on the same day that Chamber of Mines accident statistics were published, showing that in the first six months of this year the fatality rate for accidents on gold mines dropped below 1% per 1 000 workers for the first time. The figure -- 0.86 -- was 14.6% better than the previous low set in the first half of last year.

The disaster is bound to highlight a continuing controversy between the mines and the unions.

SA mining companies say their safety precautions are among the most stringent in the world.

Black mining unions have questioned the measures employed.

A recent International Labour Organisation report noted that despite significant improvements in safety, 8 500 miners were killed in SA mines between 1973 and 1984. — Sapa
JOHANNESBURG — The wife of a survivor of the Kinross mine tragedy today gave a chilling description of the horror and panic below ground when toxic gases swept through the mine.

Mrs Barbara Tarran told how her husband, Rul-ly, had described the scene:

"He said there were bodies piled up on the tracks, Men were lying with blood coming out of their mouths.

"My husband had to punch his friend in the chest to make him breathe again.

"He saw a lot of men fall down the shaft because they panicked when the cage came down and did not pick them up."

A tearful Mr J Oosthuizen said today he had identified his son-in-law's body at the mortuary.

"This is a terrible shock for the whole town — all those people dead."

Mr Isaiah Sipho, an underground worker who saw the accident happen, said "A worker was using the cutting torch, which broke and caused a big explosion.

"I only saw smoke and fire. I went as fast as I could down to a lower level to get away from the smoke."

"There I waited until we were taken out."

Mrs E M Le Roux, whose son Hannes is an underground worker on the level where the explosion occurred, said an oxygen cylinder exploded.

"Hannes said his first sensation was burning eyes, throat and nose because of the smoke being drawn into the mine through the fans. He ran away."

"When we got home late yesterday he complained of pains in his chest."

"We took him to hospital where he spent the night."

"More than 75 people were admitted to hospital."

"Several workers who were alive when the rescue teams reached them underground died on their way to emergency stations."

Mrs S E Venter said she went to the mine to deliver her husband's supper where she heard of the accident.

"This is going to be a black day in Evander. It really is a shocking business.‖ — Sapa
KINROSS — 1986
Dossier of death

THE fire at Gencor's KINROSS gold mine is the biggest mining disaster in South Africa since 435 coal miners were buried alive at the Clydesdale colliery in January 1960.

Ironically, it comes just one week after the Chamber of Mines announced that accident rates had fallen to record lows on gold mines.

As a country which draws vast wealth from the bowels of the earth, South Africa has recorded its tragical share of mining deaths over the decades.

A recent International Labour Organisation report noted that despite significant improvements in safety, 8,500 miners were killed in South African mines between 1973 and 1984.

In its defence, the mining industry points out that South African mining conditions are among the most dangerous in the world, one of reasons being the depths at which ore is mined. Further, the industry is, one of the biggest in the world, employing over 500,000 people.

"Gold mines which are members of the Chamber have reduced their fatality rate to below one for every 1,000 people employed," said the Chamber last week. The annual fatality rate of 0.85 for every 1,000 workers was a 14 percent improvement on figures for the previous year and a 40 percent improvement over the last decade.

KINROSS belongs to the Chamber of Mines.

THE country's worst mining disasters include:

- 1933 Klipsan colliery: 60 dead after a methane gas explosion. An inquest found the owners of the mine, Itoco, criminally responsible for the death of the miners. The National Union of Mineworkers emerged as a safety watchdog in the industry, and instigated civil actions against Iscor on behalf of the victims' families.

- 1950 Vaal Reefs: 31 dead in lift cage fall.

- 1957 Vaal Reefs: 41 dead in underground fire.

- 1977 Blyvooruitzicht gold mine: 32 dead.

- 1989 Buffelsfontein gold mine: 60 dead.

- 1990 Clydeville colliery in Caledon: 433 dead when the mine collapsed, burying miners alive. The disaster attracted worldwide attention and remains the greatest mining tragedy in South Africa's history. Rescue teams battled for weeks to reach trapped men, making boreholes and microphones in vain.

- 1982 ERFM gold mine: Over 50 dead.

In 1985, the Chamber announced with pride that the fatality rate for coal mines had dropped by 37 percent to 0.42 for every 1,000 workers. Latest figures for coal mines have not yet been announced.

The most serious gold mining catastrophe was recorded in 1900, when 152 workers drowned in a flooded mine.

According to a 1953 survey, mining accidents in the decade since 1973 killed 2,899 people and injured 23,000.

CHINA still holds the unenviable world's record for the largest number of people ever killed in a mining disaster.

- On April 20, 1942, 1,572 people died in a coal dust explosion at the Hohot coal mine.


- In the Senghenydd coal mine accident in South Wales in 1913, 445 men perished. Other major disasters:

- 1983 A landslide at a mountain gold mine killed 56 in the southern Philippines.

- 1984: Cave-in at the Hsin shan mine in northern Taiwan trapped and killed 72.

- 1983 Nearly 100 bodies recovered from Turkey's Armutluk Kandilli coal mine, part of which collapsed after a gas explosion.
Mine Inference
SAPA

13 DEAD IN MINE FIRE

SOWETO, Wednesday, September 17, 1997.
170 MINERS DIE

Hope fades as search continues for 14 still missing underground.
SERIOUS LIGHT

Mr Steyn said he was waiting for the report of a government team which was due to go down the mine for a preliminary investigation today.

“We see all accidents in a very serious light,” he said.

In Cape Town the leader of the Opposition, Mr Colin Eglin, said he was “deeply distressed” by the disaster.

He sent his condolences to families and friends of the victims.

“The disaster shows that in spite of modern technology, underground mining is a dangerous occupation,” said Mr Eglin.

“It reminds us of the debt we owe to those thousands of miners who go down deep underground daily to bring to the surface the gold on which the economic prosperity of our nation depends.”

INQUIRY

An investigation into the cause of the fire was launched last night by the Government Mining Engineer.

Gencor’s East Rand mine manager, Mr Kobus Olivier, said the inquiry was in accordance with the Mines and Works’ Act.

“At this stage I cannot say whether negligence caused the disaster,” he said — The Argus Correspondent and Sapa

The head gear above No 2 shaft at Kincross Mine where 170 miners were killed.

Trapped men ‘tried to flee from poisonous gas’

Johannesburg — Thirteen of the miners who died in the Kincross disaster probably tried to can use in their escape from the poisonous gases.

The men were trapped in a development area — a tunnel being blasted open — and therefore had no chance to escape, according to a member of the first rescue team into the mine.

He said he saw 13 bodies lying together and that he and his team mates could not get near them because they were running out of oxygen for their masks and had to return to the surface.

“I was convinced they were dead,” he said. “When we reached the scene — the 15th level of the mine — the fire was not yet out,” he said.

The poisonous carbonyl chloride gas released by a burning plastic substance, probably spread in minutes through three levels of the mine.

The ventilation system then distributed the gas.

Proto teams of the Chamber of Mines took turns throughout the night in an effort to bring the trapped workers to the surface — Sapa.

Mr Kobus Olivier said last night there is only a slim chance of rescuing those miners still trapped in pockets between No 1 and No 2 shafts.

He said 2,410 people had been rescued and many owed their lives to pockets of oxygen in the tunnels.

As the injured were ferried to Evander Hospital, the father of one of the miners sobbed. “I can’t say what I feel. There’s nothing to say — I just wait and wait.”

Sixteen proto teams were deployed from neighboring mines and today four teams were continuing the search.

Mine personnel were also assisting in the rescue, bringing to 150 the number of rescue workers still underground.

It is the second worst accident in South Africa’s mining history.

The worst was at Clydevale colliery, Randfontein, in 1960 when 403 miners died.

Disaster dossier — Page 14.

Pall of death, shock over disaster area

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — A pall of death and shock today hangs over Evander where 170 miners lost their lives in the worst mine disaster in 26 years.

Mr Isaiah Sipho, an underground worker who witnessed the accident, said, “About 9 a.m. yesterday a worker was using the cutting torch. The torch broke and caused a big explosion.”

“I only saw smoke and fire. I went as fast as I could down to a lower level to get away from the smoke. There I waited until about 1 p.m. when we were taken out.”

Mrs E M Leroux, whose son Hanes is an underground worker on the level where the explosion occurred, said an oxygen cylinder exploded.

BURNING EYES

“The packed foam, used to reinforce walls, started burning,” she said. “Hanes said his first sensation was burning eyes, throat and nose because of the smoke.”

“He and a colleague switched off the fans and ran away. When he got home late yesterday he complained of sharp pains in his chest.”

“We took him to hospital where he spent the night. More than 75 people were taken to hospital.”

“The building was much too small to accommodate all the injured. Some people had to lie outside.”

“HORRIBLE”

“Proto-workers told me the scene last night was horrible. Several workers, who were still alive when the proto teams reached them underground, died on their way to emergency stations.”

Mrs E Venter said she went to the mine to deliver her husband’s supper and she heard about the accident.

“This is going to be a black day in Evander. Everyone is shocked.”

At the mine today, red-eyed families waited in cars for news about trapped miners.
MORE THAN 230 men were still trapped early this morning nearly two kilometres underground by clouds of spreading toxic gas in the Kinross gold mine fire horror. At least 15 men have died so far.

Twelve rescue teams numbering 72 men were battling against time in the early hours to find survivors. Late last night 193 miners were being treated in several hospitals in the area.

Prospects for the survival of the men trapped in the workings which cover 2 sq km were described as grim and deteriorating rapidly.

The disaster — one of South Africa’s worst — began about 9.30am yesterday when a welding accident caused a fire in a tunnel connecting the mine’s two major shafts at a level of 1620m.

The fire quickly spread to “cables and other materials,” according to mine-owners Gencor.

Extremely poisonous gas — possibly cyanide-based — was released as plastic materials were burned in a major connection tunnel on the 15th level between No 1 and No 2 shafts. The fire was extinguished later during the day but the poison cloud continued to sink into the depths of the mine.

Gencor spokesmen said about 2 200 miners were in the affected area at the time of the accident. Most had been evacuated immediately and many were under observation for the effects of toxic gas poisoning in nearby hospitals.

A further 3 000 workers in unaffected areas had been evacuated as a precautionary measure, said Gencor spokesman Mr D J Ackerman.

He did not know how many of the miners killed were black or white.

Dr W P de Water, acting medical superintendent at Evander hospital, said 92 white miners had been admitted from 9am, all suffering from toxic gas poisoning.

“All but two are satisfactory and even the two who are more seriously should be all right by tomorrow,” he said.

The fire was the worst mining accident since the Hobane colliery disaster which killed 83 workers in September 1983. Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, said last night:

He told Sapa his union regarded the accident “in a serious light” and had sent a team of officials to investigate the fire.

“Our union will have to take some decision about...
Mine horror

This accident. The accident rate on our mines is getting out of hand," he said.

"These types of accidents where workers are killed through factors that can be avoided by management are becoming totally unacceptable."

The union will release a statement about the accident as soon as its investigating team has made its report.

Health and safety has been a major focus of the NUM's activities since it began organising on gold and coal mines in the early 1980s.

But recently released Chamber of Mines accident statistics show that in the first six months of this year the fatality rate for accidents on gold mines has dropped below one percent per 1,000 workers for the first time.

The figure — 0.88 — was 14.6 percent better than the previous low set in the first half of last year.

The reportable injury rate, halved over the past 10 years, was reduced by a further 14 percent to 18.41 per 1,000.

This followed record safety achievements in 1985.

The chamber's figures showed the mining industry was improving its safety record despite the difficulties associated with increasing depths and scale of operations.
**Towns wait for latest news**

**Staff Reporters**

THE mining communities of Kinross, Evander and Secunda waited anxiously last night as hope diminished for husbands, friends and relatives still trapped underground at Kinross mine.

The overpowering impression gained from numerous interviews was that most residents had little idea of what was going on at the mine.

Top executives from Gencor's head office, including Mr. Karl Nettcher, head of the Gold Division, rushed to Kinross last night as the extent of the disaster became known. They were still on site as the Cape Times went to press.

Late last night, a Gencor public relations officer, Mr. D.J. Ackerman, said that a special media office had been set up at the mine to deal with the queries that were pouring in.

At the Winkelhaak Hospital, a Mr Field, a mining manager for Secunda Mine, was taking all telephone calls for the hospital. He would not put reporters through to hospital staff, saying they were "very, very busy." He would also not answer questions concerning the disaster.

**Civil defence**

The acting superintendent of Evander Hospital, Dr. W.F. De Water, said that there were 52 white mine workers admitted after 3pm. All but two of these people were in a satisfactory condition, and even these two were expected to improve.

Mr. Jack van Zyl, chief of Evander Town Council's protective services, which includes the ambulance, civil defence and fire brigade services, said he had only learnt about what he called "this major disaster" five or six hours after it had happened.

"The mine management left us in the lurch on this one — we only found out about it when we were asked to assist military vehicles ferrying beds to the local provincial hospital this afternoon."

The barmaid in the pub of a local hotel, Mrs. Sheila Smith, said last night that most of her customers were miners and their wives. The people who were killed and injured were their colleagues.

"They are very upset about what happened. Nobody really knows what is going on, other than what they have seen on the news," she said.

Mine officials shared in the despair. "We just don't know what we will find," said an anguished Gencor spokesman, Mr. Harry Hill.
JOHANNESBURG — About 200 workers are feared to have died in one of South Africa's worst ever mining disasters.

The official death toll in a fire at the Kinross gold mine rose to 26 early this morning and a mine spokesman said 180 people were still missing in tunnels between the mine's number one and number two shafts.

Earlier, Mr. Kobus Olivier, general manager of the Eastern Transvaal mine, said there was only a slight chance of survival for the miners still missing about a kilometre underground.

Mr. Olivier told reporters 13 bodies had been brought to the surface by rescue teams and 183 miners had been admitted to hospital.

He said 12 rescue teams were still in the mine searching for the missing men, more than 12 hours after the fire was sparked by a welding accident, but that "time was running out" for them.

The deaths and injuries were believed to have been caused by toxic gases that spread through the mine, generated by the fire.

The fire started when a gas cylinder exploded in a crosscut between the first and second shafts of the mine. Mr. Olivier said poisonous gases then spread rapidly through the 13, 16, 17 and 18 levels.

The first rescue team was sent into the shafts within an hour of the explosion. Proto teams from the surrounding mines joined in the rescue operation and more than 2,460 miners were rescued.

Mr. Olivier said they were saved by "bubbles of oxygen" in the areas of the mine where rescuers found them worked throughout the night in rescue operations.

But by 11 p.m. neither the rescue teams nor mine officials had had word from any of the miners trapped underground.

Mr. Olivier said workers had means of communication with ground level officials but "we haven't heard anything yet."

"People are going down physically searching every working place. Initially rescue teams went down using breathing apparatus," he said.

Mr. Olivier said no walls had fallen, in underground as far as he was aware and there had been no underground rockfalls.

The entire operation at Shaft 2 will be shut down today and possibly longer if necessary, officials said.

Most of those who are dead or injured are migrant workers from South Africa and neighbouring states, Mr. Olivier said.

The fire was the worst mining accident since the Hlobane colliery disaster which killed 45 workers in September 1963. Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, said:

"He told Sapa his union regarded the accident "in a serious light" and had sent a team of officials to investigate it last night."

The mining communities of Kinross, Evander and Secunda waited anxiously as hope diminished for husbands, friends and relatives..."
**Fire horror mine 'back to normal'**

Johannesburg - Work at Gencor's Kurnos mine, where 177 miners died in a fire last week, has "returned to normal" following a stoppage by workers protesting against the reopening of the shaft where the accident took place.

According to a Gencor spokesman, Mr Harry Hill, the night shift reported for work last night and the day shift yesterday reported as normal at shafts 1 and 2.

He said that yesterday the mine's No 2 shaft had been closed for a memorial service for the victims of the fire. About 2,500 workers at the No 1 shaft did not report for work either.

He said Gencor was still discussing access to the mine for a number of experts appointed by the National Union of Mineworkers to study the shaft where the fire occurred.

Last week NUM said Gencor had refused to allow its experts to look at the accident scene.

Sapa
A TOTAL of 26 workers have died of various diseases at Everite Limited — a major manufacturer of asbestos cement pipe and building products — 58 per cent are asbestos-related diseases in the past 30 years.

In a report to the SOWETO community, the company says it has accepted a total of 102 cases of workers who are suspected to have contracted the ‘‘killer disease’’ at its asbestos plant countrywide.

The report indicates that 90 people have died of asbestos, nine of lung cancer and eight of other diseases. The company has acknowledged responsibility towards employees who contracted diseases while on duty.

This report comes in the wake of an anti-asbestos campaign launched by the Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers Union (SAMWU), following claims that thousands of people may die of asbestos-related diseases in the mines, especially in the northern Transvaal region of Pongola.

At its anti-asbestos conference in Soweto recently, the union resolved to intensify its campaign until the asbestos mines are closed in the country, just like in other parts of the world.

Referring to Everite’s report, Bemunu’s president Mr. Letsato Mtshala said they were concerned about the rate of deaths caused by asbestos, although the company’s rate seemed to be lower compared to the number of cases in the mines.

“We have held meetings with Everite on the possibility of improving health and safety measures of their plants because many people may die as a result of asbestos-related diseases,” he said.

The report says all employees who became disabled as a result of the disease continue to receive an income equal to their basic monthly salary in addition to the money paid by the Workmen’s Compensation Board.

By approving this policy, and granting annual increments, the company ensures that the employee will be placed in the same financial position as if he had worked in his present position until the age of 65,” the report says.

This policy applies to all workers despite their race group. But, Mr. Mtshala said: “We are interested in seeing our people getting the same benefits as whites. There should be no disparity.”
Unions call for probe into safety at mines

JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called on the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr Danie Steyn, to appoint a commission of inquiry into safety in the mining industry.

The call is backed by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

In a statement, the NUM said the deaths and injuries at Evander were “a tragedy unparalleled in mining history.”

The NUM’s president, Mr James Motlatsi, the general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, regional chairman, Mr E. Vala, regional organiser, Mr T. Mothupi, and safety adviser, Mr J. Leger, went underground at the mine yesterday to investigate the disaster.

The national executive committee of the NUM has convened an urgent meeting to decide on appropriate action to be taken by its membership.

“This disaster takes us back to the Dark Ages and demonstrates clearly the unacceptable low safety standards practised in South Africa’s mining industry,” the union says in the statement.

Referring to reports that wire cables underground caused a fire and toxic fumes were inhaled by workers, the NUM says it has repeatedly called for an end to the use of such cables underground and has waged a consistent campaign to expose the unsafe work practices in the industry.

“It has required tragedy after tragedy and the loss of many lives before the industry and government pay attention to safety standards. This disaster is a clear indictment of the industry and makes its claims of having the lowest fatality rate in the world absurd.”

Calling for a “complete overhaul of safety standards on the mines”, Cosatu says the fatalities at Kamies are a “national tragedy” and “a telling example of the price black miners are expected to pay for the super profits of the South African mining industry.”

Cosatu says calls to improve safety standards have met with a “lukewarm response and boastful safety claims from the industry.”

“Are the mine bosses too busy pursuing profits to care about the lives and safety of black miners? Are they too busy trying to fend off the just demands of workers for a living wage to pay proper attention to decent working conditions?” Cosatu asks.

“Meanwhile, the disasters continue with horrendous frequency. Between 1972 and 1984, more than 8,000 miners were killed.”

“The continuing tragedy of the mining industry is that black miners are paying with their lives for the wealth and profits in which they do not share.”

— Sapa
JOHANNESBURG — The mining industry had a commitment to ensure there would be no recurrence of the Kinross disaster, the president of the Chamber of Mines, Mr. E P Gush, said last night.

The entire mining industry was overwhelmed by the Kinross tragedy.

“Our heartfelt sympathies go to the families of the dead and injured miners,” he said.

“We have a commitment to ensure that nothing like this happens again.

In line with this commitment, and once we have details of how a tragedy of this scale occurred, the industry will take steps to prevent any possible recurrence of such an event.”

In Cape Town last night Archbishop Desmond Tutu said he hoped the Kinross tragedy would spur the Government and the mining companies “to continue efforts to ensure the safety of all who work underground”.

“It is with great distress that I have learnt of the tragic mine accident at Kinross,” he said.

“I mourn with those who have been bereaved, send my sympathy to the injured and remember in my prayers those who have perished in this disaster.”

“Thus accident reminds us of the human cost of producing minerals” — Sapa
DIRTY, noisy, dark — and dangerous. South Africa's mines.

Ironically, the tragedy at Kinross mine, at Secunda, followed by an announcement by the Chamber of Mines that fatality rates had fallen to record lows on gold mines. The annual rate of 0.88 deaths per 1000 people employed was a 14 percent improvement on figures for the previous year, and a 40 percent improvement over the last decade.

Kinross itself claims one of the most impressive safety records in the gold mining industry. It has worked a million fatality-free underground shifts three times, and last year had a fatality rate of 0.66 compared to an industry rate of 1.05.

But offsetting these vaunts are National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) figures claiming that at least 800 miners a year die from accidents, and other industry-related causes.

The NUM's claims are backed by studies such as that issued in 1976 by the South African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) of the University of Cape Town, which cited fatality figures of about 19,000 miners — more than 93 percent of them black — between 1956 and 1966.

In the wake of the Kinross tragedy the NUM, backed by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), has called for a national commission of inquiry into safety in the mining industry.

Proximate to this call were reports that the majority of deaths were caused by toxic fumes from burning underground cables, and claims that the mining industry had ignored consistent condemnation by the NUM of safety standards on the mines.

Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), right, and the president of the union, Mr James Motsatsi, at Kinross mine to conduct an independent inquiry into the disaster.

The face of survival — a miner can't believe he is safe.

Dissatisfaction with safety conditions dates back many years, and the danger, allied with low pay and poor living conditions, was long identified as a major reason for the unpopularity of mine work among South Africans, leading to the necessity of recruiting foreign migrant workers for the mines.

A Cosatu statement, issued yesterday, said more than 8500 miners were killed between 1973 and 1984.

The Saldru study, covering up to 1976, showed that between 1967 and 1975 nearly 5000 miners died.

From 1972 to 1975 there were 2293 accidental deaths and 110169 serious injuries, the overwhelming majority of which were attributable to "danger inherent in work or misadventure" and defective plant or machinery.

Issued shortly after a riot at Western Deep Levels, at Carletonville, in which 13 workers died and 13 police were injured, it said that a factor which appeared to be underplayed in reasons advanced for trouble on mines was the anxiety and consequent tension provoked by the hazardous nature of the work.

The fact that many incidents of unrest had taken place on mines where serious accidents also occurred suggested that a connection between danger and unrest might not be invalid, said the study.
The call for silence
no one heard...

by GORRY BOWES-TAYLOR, Staff Reporter

December 24, 1959: You know what office parties are like, same old tinsel rolled out year after year, sometimes new mistletoe where kisses are lightly given, mostly the same stuff, some savoury stuff to eat.

Such was the merriment at the President Steyn gold mine bursary Christmas party that night when, at about 9.30 pm there came a call for silence, nobody heard.

When there was quiet and the mine staff heard the news, there was soft weeping and the celebratory party was over.

Twenty-five men had died in that Welkom mine after a methane gas explosion, at about 3.30 pm the day before. The terrible news was witheld because no-one could immediately assess the possible loss of life.

January 1960. At a pithead, on a very warm summer’s evening, the two giant wheels are ominously still. There are people, mainly women, most with children, kneeling close by. A munster, the Rev P D Luckoff, moves among them praying, touching, holding hands.

There is someone notices, a sleeping baby in a shawl whose mother is trying to cry quietly, so as not to wake it.

Some recent Hollywood movie-in-the-making perhaps? A director who’ll call CUT! and send the actors and extras home?

No, it is the true tragic scene at the Clydesdale colliery near Coobook, in Natal. There are 435 miners entombed behind a rock wall. It will be known as the greatest mining tragedy in South Africa’s history.

Rock fell at 4.20 pm, with further falls at 7pm.

There was no “pipe talk” — thus is the miner’s method of striking water pipes to tell rescuers that there were still survivors somewhere down there.

There was no air. Its place was taken by the deadly methane and carbon monoxide gases. Rescue workers who carried a two-hour air supply could spend only an hour at the rock face. The other hour was spent in getting to and from that cavernous place.

At the second, 7pm, rock fall, rescuers were trapped. They were led to safety four hours later.

The scene at the pithead was almost unchanged. It had grown and the agony was greater for those parents and grandparent and children and wives, as hope faded. Surely somebody could step forward and say OK all over, all home now, entombed miners please come out. Collect your files at the gate marked OUT.

No instead a rescue workers says, and it is widely reported “Every falling stone sounds like thunder — and all the time we know full well our lives are hanging by a thread.”

Other rescuers talk of the entombed tons of mud, water and ore. Who could survive?

Further into the 60s. At what was called Freddie’s Mine at Odendaalrus, 12 trapped miners are heard to weep with relief as rescuers workers sing a microphone over their level nearly 2,000 metres below ground. Wives and children talk and sing to them. The miners take it in turns to talk back. Then the earth shudders, and the microphone is silent.

Dossier of disaster

Dateline: EVANDER

Several heroes emerged from the Kinross mine tragedy. Mr Billy Tar-ran (28) is one. But he wonders whether he will ever want to take another step underground. In intense heat and smoke so thick he could not see past his hand, he climbed about 6m with a man on his back and returned a second time to carry to safety another miner who had collapsed.

Still under treatment at the Evander Hospital, he told of his experience.

He was about to leave Level 13, where he was working, when he smelt smoke. He went to see if there was a problem, and told people to get out.

But his own heroics are not dominating his thoughts. He cannot express his feelings of pain for his friends who lost their lives. “It’s a loss to the whole community. We are all good friends in this town.”

He described the panic on level 14. “Everyone was trying to run, but it was practically impossible to walk from the heat. My legs were numb, they felt like rubber.”

IF it were not for a group of unknown black workers who dragged an unconscious Mr Tol Sadler to a running tap, he would have been dead today. “I have no doubt in my mind that they saved my life. The water cooled me down and brought me back to consciousness,” Mr Sadler (32), a surveyor, said.

He was trapped for six hours after the underground fire in the mine started, and was alone for most of the time. “It was just after 9 am on Level 15 when I saw the smoke where I was busy surveying. I moved close to the point where the lift cage stops, but only ran into more smoke.”

“I turned round and decided to move to a lower point. I found more smoke and decided to climb up to a higher level, but was too weak. My hands slipped and I lost consciousness. When I came to, I was lying under a running tap. I could not move and stayed under the tap for about three minutes. Eventually I shifted to the opening of another tunnel.”

“I managed to make about 40 metres when I reached a water pipe. My throat, eyes and nose were burning intensely. I used a stone to break the pipe to get more water. There was nobody else in the vicinity. I was alone and very scared. The only thought that entered my mind was this is the end.”

“The next morning I heard that it was a group of black workers who had dragged me to the tap and left the water running before making a break themselves.”

While other bereaved families in Evander are turning to their loved ones for comfort, Mrs Ria Smuth (34) is alone with her grief and three small children. The body of her husband, Raymond (42), was brought up from underground shortly after midnight. He had been overcome by the fumes.

Both their parents died several years ago. The rest of her family live in the Cape. She has no-one to comfort her.
Investigation into 'safe' materials used in mines — chamber

The Argus Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — A search for five workers missing in the Kinross mine disaster is continuing, with the death toll standing at 177.

The mine management has little hope that the missing five are alive.

Serious questions about the cause of the tragedy have not been answered and are unlikely to remain so before the completion of a judicial inquiry into the disaster.

The Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr D W Steyn, gave an assurance he would do everything to have the inquiry held as soon as possible.

The Chamber of Mines says the disaster has thrown "a huge question mark" over the polyurethane materials used extensively on mines and says it will investigate these products once their role in the accident is known.

WIDELY USED

Chemical products are used widely on South African mines for insulation and sealing. The mining industry could be faced with a major problem if some of these materials, previously regarded as flame-resistant, are identified as hazardous, according to sources in the industry.

The general manager of the Kinross, Mr Kobus Olivier, said samples used in the mine to provide support and prevent corrosion were being tested.

He retracted an earlier statement that a sealing substance on surfaces had given off toxic fumes, but said some sort of polyurethane material might have given off the poisonous smoke.

NO NEED TO CHECK

He said the mine administration had not known this substance was inflammable and the mine had not felt there was a need to check when it used the product.

A spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said "The polyurethane and other products used in mines have until now been regarded by mines as safe. But the Kinross tragedy clearly puts a huge question mark over this, which the Chamber of Mines Research Organisation will be investigating once their role in the events at Kinross in known.

The chamber intended investigating these products and check where they had been used as "a matter of priority."

It was revealed yesterday that the victims had died from noxious fumes from one burning polyurethane product and from the smoldering cables underground.

COURSE OF ACTION

The National Union of Mineworkers, which has attacked safety standards on the mine, was due to discuss action at its executive committee meeting today.

The general secretary of the white Mineworkers' Union, Mr Arrie Paulus, has expressed his condolences to the relatives of those who lost their lives.

An MWU investigator visited the mine yesterday and will report back to the union's executive.

Production at the No 2 shaft, where the accident occurred, has been halted indefinitely. The shaft could remain closed for longer than a week and will be reopened only when declared safe and clear of gas.

The No 1 shaft has reopened.

Dirty, dark and dangerous, Page 23.
'Fatality Free Shifts — 0'

The sign stop the room where miners at the Kinross gold mine wait before descending into the earth reads: 'Fatality Free Shifts — 0' — a memory of the worst disaster in the history of the South African gold-mining industry.

The underground fire that sent poisonous fumes spewing into the shafts of the Kinross mine killed at least 177 people. According to the mine's general manager, Mr. Kubus Olivier, the fire, which broke out at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, was started by welding in a section of the mine's No. 1 and No. 2 shafts.

"An acetylene cylinder caught fire and set alight underground cables and pipes," he said.

He said an anti-corrosive sealing substance was burned and caused a toxic reaction which filled areas between the mine's No. 1 and No. 2 shaft and went to levels 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. Of the 177 dead, five were white miners. They were two surveyors, one shift boss, and two miners.

They were Christoffel Johannes Dorfling, 27; Raymond John Smith, 32; Stephanus Christoffel Adendorff, 32; Frederick Johannes Fransloos, 32; and Stephen Anthony Latchford, 32.

Dorfling and Adendorff were members of the mine's prototype team.

The names of the black miners will not be released until their next of kin have been notified.

Rescue teams brought 220 people to the surface. A total of 44 people are still trapped in the mine.

A member of the National Union of Mineworkers legal team, who was not named, said there were four people in the mine's intensive-care unit who were not immediately in a life-threatening state.

Most of the workers treated were suffering from gas inhalation and respiratory problems. A decision at the mine yesterday morning as a bakkie and several security guards — some armed — separated the press from about 250 miners. The miners, who were already on their way to the mine, were turned away.

One foreign journalist claimed he was nearly run over by the bakkie when he tried to speak to the miners.

Several times guards warned journalists that the police would be called in to remove them if they insisted on their attempt to speak to the miners.

Two loads of miners were ferried in and out of the ground as they were apparently taken for tests at the local hospital.

Both white and black hospitals barred the press. A spokesperson at the Wimhordt Hospital told journalists that access to patients was being denied to "avoid conflicting reports."

Early yesterday evening there was waiting time for patients on the hospital's two shafts at shifts 1 and 2. As journalists tried to find out what was happening, a security guard said, "That is nothing unusual. It happens every day."

A miner later commented: "We are very angry. None of this need has ever happened. It is going to take us a long time to get over the sadness this has caused." — Sapa and Own Correspondent.

"A miner who escaped after he broke into the photo room reached them underground. He said that the security gate had been opened and that the security man was in the gate."

The State President, Mr. W. Botha, has sent a message expressing his "deepest sympathy" to the families of those killed. He said the President had been cut short in his address to the nation's Parliament. The President expressed his "deepest sympathy and condolences" to the families of the killed.
MINE DISASTER: 5 STILL MISSING

By LANGA SKOSANA

Rescue workers were last night still searching for five miners still unaccounted for at the Klaros gold mine after Tuesday's disaster which claimed at least 177 lives and left scores of miners injured.

Mine manager Mr J A Oliver said yesterday the mine would close for a week during investigations into the disaster.

The general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said he was not satisfied with safety procedures at the mine.

He said there were no fire extinguishers in the area where the accident happened.

Fire

The owners of the mine, Gencor, said the accident happened when underground fire broke out between number one and number two shafts on the mine.

The mine is situated on the outskirts of Evander between Springs and Bethal, about 100 km from Johannesburg.

Mr Ramaphosa said his union was going to launch an investigation and legal action might be taken to protest the interests of its members.

NUM was meeting urgently today to decide what action to take.

Mrs Maschaba-Mokoena arrived at the number two shaft yesterday after news of the disaster.

She said her husband was among the people who were working on that shaft when the accident happened.

She did not know whether he was dead or alive.
Critical questions remain unanswered

By Mike Sibanda and Gemma Sporo

At about 9 am on Tuesday, 2 400 miners were working underground at the 1 900 in Kinross gold mine when a fire broke out, leading to the death of nearly 180 men. While there is some consensus between the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and management about what happened on that fateful morning, several critical questions remain unanswered.

According to versions given by both sides events would have followed this pattern:

- A fire cylinder ignited starting a fire. Pandemonium breaks out as panicked workers try to escape the deadly flames. Some fall while fleeing, hurting themselves in the process. Management becomes aware of the unfolding disaster about 10 minutes later. Rescue teams are sent down Bodies of the dead and others overcome.

Area of about 1.5 km. Some are found huddled in groups and others are scattered over the affected area. The consensus ends here leaving a number of questions unanswered even after several press conferences held by management.

Questions like how the incident could have happened and how strictly were safety regulations adhered to?

The mine’s general manager, Mr. Kubus Olivier, has defended its safety performance. PRECAUTIONS

When asked why the mine had been stripped of two of its five stars accorded in terms of an international mine safety system, Mr. Olivier attributed this to certain elements governing the ratings system. He could not remember which of the elements it was his mine lacked.

Mr. Olivier said the miners would return to work before the outcome of the inquiry. He said additional precautions had been taken.

NUM general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa claimed welders at Kinross did not have fire extinguishers with them. He said a pathologist would conduct post-mortems on the miners’ behalf.

Workers from Kinross declined at a mass meeting last night that action taken in protest at Tuesday’s incident would have to occur in conjunction with workers at other Eastern Transvaal mines.

The Minister of Minerals and Energy Affairs Mr. Dumas Steyn, visited the disaster area.

He said a judicial inquiry would be conducted.

South Africans mourn with the families of the dead miners,” he said. “We should be proud of the high quality of the South African miner and the courage of the brave workers who saved hundreds of lives this week.”

Payments due to families

The families of the miners who died in the Kinross mine accident this week are entitled to certain benefits.

In July 1981, a new de-recruited death benefit scheme for miners was introduced. It created a salary-related formula for death benefits.

Although the system is equitable in principle, black wages are much lower than whites’ so black benefits are also lower.

Dependants of workers who die receive 24 times their monthly salary, and in the case of black miners, a further sum equivalent to the current value of food and lodgings allocated to them on the mine for two years.

In addition, dependants are paid benefits by Rand Mutual, calculated according to salary, years of service and qualification.

Relatives of black Kinross victims may be robbed of death benefits

By Sheryl Ramp

Ignorance administrative red tape and corruption could rob the relatives of black miners killed in the Kinross mining disaster of much-needed death benefits.

Relatives most likely to lose out on benefits paid to miners who died on duty are those living in neighboring states such as Lesotho and Mozambique.

An International Labour Organisation report on migrant labor released this year noted there was evidence of corruption and inefficiency in the administration of benefits paid to relatives as well as ignorance on the part of beneficiaries.

A breakdown by origin of black workers who died at Kinross this week showed a significant number from Lesotho Malawi and Mozambique.

In most cases, the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), the Chamber of Mines recruitment wing, administrates successful payouts, but in Lesotho, Mozambique and Malawi, the government play a part in the administration.

Sources in the mining industry say there are lingering suspicions that money is misappropriated, particularly in Lesotho from which South Africa draws 150 000 miners.

In general, we do not have any problems,” a spokesman for TEBA insisted, but he noted that in Lesotho, TEBA recruitment agencies through which relatives lodge claims for death and other benefits try to keep the claims payouts within their control to ensure the benefits are paid out.

One of the problems identified by the ILO and confirmed by TEBA is the assessment of which relatives qualify for benefits and the lack of available appeal machinery.

Ignorance is a major problem. Relatives do not lodge claims for death benefits because they do not know they are entitled to them. Others lodge claims and never collect the money. Such funds are kept in trust and lists of beneficiaries who have not collected their benefits appear in the South African Government Gazette from time to time.

The ILO noted that in 1979 less than one-third of those eligible for various types of compensation received their awards.
Mine rescue hero recalls the horror

Glenda Spiro

Several heroes emerged from the Kinross mine tragedy. Mr. Billy Tarran (28) is one — but now he wonders if he will ever want to take another step underground.

He is one of three men still being treated at Evander Hospital in nearby Winkelhaak Mine Hospital, 38 miners have not yet been discharged.

In "intense heat and smoke so thick" he could not see past his hands, Mr. Tarran climbed 6.5 m with a man on his back and returned to carry to safety another miner who had collapsed.

Mr. Tarran said he was about to leave level 13, where he was working, when he smelt something. He went to see if there was a problem and "told people to get out."

THOUGHTS OF LOST FRIENDS

But he does not dwell on his own heroism. His thoughts are dominated by the friends he lost.

He said he could not express the feelings of pam at the loss of close friends, killed in South Africa's worst gold mine disaster.

"It's a loss to the whole community. We are all good friends in this town."

As a surveyor, he hopes there is a lot of work for him above ground. "I'm scared to go back under and my wife doesn't want me to," he said.

One of the things he feels saved him was the fact that he tore off his shirt to cover his face from the toxic fumes which claimed the lives of nearly 200 fellow workers.

He described the panic on level 14: "Everyone was trying to run, but in the heat it was practically impossible to walk. My legs were numb, they felt like rubber."

Because he spent three hours ferrying several people to underground stations away from the gas, Mr. Tarran's condition is still being monitored.

Mr. Jeremy Lewis (24) is lying opposite Mr. Tarran and Mr. Koos Green (29).

He told The Star he did not know at first there was a fire. He first noticed an acrid smell and only realised something was wrong when he saw shift bosses waiting for a cage to take them out of the mine.

Mr. Lewis is still confused about what happened, but feels something should have been done to prevent the tragedy.

He added: "The rescue procedures seemed first class, but we were so busy trying to get everyone out, we didn't realise the extent of the task."

Mr. Lewis, a Briton, is a surveyor who was working on level 12. He went to see what was happening on levels 14 and 15 when workers rushed from these areas. Although he went above ground soon after that, he was still badly affected by fumes.
Large bomb rocks children's home

The bomb, believed to have been planted by the African National Congress (ANC), destroyed two townships and left many children homeless in the same area.

Mercury Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG - A row over safety measures at Gomorrah’s Children’s Home was broken out yesterday as the official death toll climbed to 177.

More than 260 members were injured in the disaster and five individuals, including a police officer, were killed.

The incident occurred at the home, which is located in the Soweto township of Jabulani.

The police officer, who was on duty, said that the bomb was planted by the ANC.

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55% poll at Klip River

Political Reporter

As the polls closed in the Klip River by-election last night, the National Party emerged as clear winners, defeating the opposition by a wide margin.

The party secured 55% of the vote, compared to 45% for the opposition.

The results were a clear victory for the National Party, which has been in power for the past 20 years.

ed saves sleeping woman

she was sleeping on a matress in the back of a truck when she was attacked by a group of youths.

The woman, who was a mother of five, said that she was attacked by a group of youths who tried to rob her.

She was able to escape and was taken to hospital, where she was treated for injuries.

She was later released and has been discharged from hospital.
Kinross disaster

Rescuers died trying to save workmates

from page 1

were whites, 43 Sohos, 29 Xhosas, 20 Ponds, 15 Malawians, 14 Tswana, 21 Shangaans, six Hlubis, eight Zulus, eight Swazis and one Venda and one Pedi, with the origin of three others still not established.

Two of the five whites who died, Christoffel Johannes Dorfling, 27, a shift boss and father of two children, and Stefanus Christoffel Adendorff, 27, a surveyor who had been married for two months, were members of a proto team trying to rescue miners underground.

The other white miners who died were Raymond John Smith, 42, a stoper and father of three children, Frederick Johannes Prinsloo, 32, a developer and father of two children, and Stephen Anthony Latchford, 19, a surveyor.

The names of the black miners who died will only be released once their next of kin have been notified.

The wife of a survivor has given a chilling description of the horror and panic below ground when toxic gases swept through the mine.

Mrs Barbara Terron told how her husband Billy had described the terror to her.

'His wife said there were bodies piled up on the tracks. Men were lying with blood coming out of their mouths.

'My husband had to punch his friend in the chest to make him breathe again.'

Panicked

'He saw a lot of men fall down the shaft because they panicked when the cage came down and did not pick them up.'

A Mr Mnene, who works as a driller, was one of about seven survivors from the 15th level.

'Only about seven of us made it to the surface. When the gas leaked we tried to escape to the 14th level but it was too strong for us.'

'One Swazi citizen continued going up but he was overcome by the gas between the two levels and fell and died.'

The miners retreated and tried to use another route to the 14th level. Many could not make it because the gas had become too strong.

Evacuated

Mr Rantile Lipala, a Lesotho citizen from Master, was loading iron sheets into a locomotive at the 14th level when his supervisor yelled at them to drop everything and rush to the lift.

He said he did not smell gas.

or see the gas.

Mr Shelalets Nqatha, 22, from the Transkei, said he smelled little of the gas at the 10th level before they evacuated the area.

Mr Tsishidiso Linyati and Mr Litshoane Litshoane, both from Lesotho, said 'We know of colleagues from the 18th level who are not in the compound. We have heard that only seven survived.'

See Editorial Opinion
Fatality rate up in past 6 months

Safety records kept over the last decade indicate that the Kinross gold mine generally compared favourably with the rest of the gold mining industry. However, certain of the most recent statistics give cause for concern. As far as injury rates are concerned, only in 1985 did Kinross records show that the injury rate (29.32) was higher than that for the gold mining industry generally (25.14). Significantly, the statistics show that the reportable injury rate for the last six months is the highest for the last decade — 39.87. As far as fatality rates are concerned only in 1978 and significantly in the last six months, has the Kinross average fatality rate exceeded the average for the mining industry as a whole. In the period September 1985 to August 1986, the fatality rate at Kinross was 0.96 workers for every 1,000 workers underground. The industry rate was 0.86.

Kinross toll up prior to disaster

By Sheryl Raine

The Kinross gold mine had recorded a significant increase in deaths and injuries in the months immediately prior to this week’s disaster.

Records show that the latest reportable injury rate on the mine is the highest in 10 years.

The mine, which lost two of its five stars after a rating on the advanced International Mine Safety Rating System in June this year, boasts an impressive safety record (see graphic).

But, an examination of the records shows that, during the period September 1985 to August 1986, the average fatality rate for every 1,000 underground workers on the mine had jumped to 0.96 — higher than the gold mining industry average for the same period of 0.88.

Kinross for years recorded an average reportable injury rate well below the industry average, but spoiled its record in 1985.

The injury rate again rose in the first half of this year. Latest injury statistics are higher than at any time in the past 10 years (see graphic).

Records show that the injury rate for 1985 was 29.32 for every 1,000 underground workers. This figure is higher than the 25.14 average for the gold mining industry generally. The figure for 1986 so far is 39.87, which is higher than the Kinross mine’s 1978 high of 30.40.

The rating system was first implemented at Kinross in 1960 when the mine was awarded three stars on the advanced schedule. By 1981 it had won four stars and kept its rating for 1982 and 1983. In June 1984 it was awarded five but in June this year was downgraded to three.

A reportable injury is one in which a limb is lost or a person incapacitated for 14 days or longer.

Apartheid blamed for high fatality rate

The Star Bureau

LONDON — South African mines have a “disastrous record,” says the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu).

In a statement from Lusaka, it claims that an average of almost two miners are killed and 10 injured every day in accidents on gold mines.

“This high fatality and injury rate stems from apartheid. It is the racist and exploitative conditions in the pursuit of super-profits that makes mining in South Africa one of the most dangerous occupations in the world.”

Sactu condemns Gencor, saying its health and safety record is “among the worst in the international rating system.”

It calls on all miners to demand recognition of the National Union of Mineworkers at their workplace as the first step towards ensuring adequate health and safety standards.
Injured miners are accommodated in extra beds on the floor of the Mt. Washakie Mine Hospital.

The substance was inflammable and the mine had no firefighting equipment. It was in a critical situation, with no hope of saving the lives of those trapped. The WNFA had asked the BCL to order an inquiry before the mine was reopened.

The UAW also asked for a stop work order, but the miners were concerned about the safety of their families. A memo from the mine owner stated that the miners would not lose their jobs and that they would get a raise. The miners decided to continue working, but they were unsure if they would be able to save their jobs.

Mr. Shapp (who was the President of the UAW) had asked for the mine to be reopened, but the miners were unsure if they would have to face safety hazards. Mr. Shapp had also asked for a stop work order, but the miners were unsure if they would get a raise.

The men were unsure if they would have to face safety hazards. The miners were unsure if they had to face safety hazards. The miners were unsure if they had to face safety hazards.
EVANDER — The general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said yesterday he believed the Kinross accident could have been avoided.

“It was completely unnecessary,” he told journalists after a three-hour inspection of the site where the fire occurred.

Mr Ramaphosa said more safety precautions should have been taken to prevent such accidents, especially when workers were welding.

He said the NUM had established that the welder whose acetylene cylinder had caught fire and set alight underground cables and pipes, had not had a fire extinguisher “immediately near him.”

“We believe this is very irregular,”

Mr Ramaphosa said NUM members were “very angry” at the “terrible disaster” and the union’s executive would meet this morning to decide on possible action nationwide and at Kinross mine.

He said it was “anybody’s guess” what action might be taken by the union. However, in 1983, after another mine disaster, 30,000 workers had gone on a 30-minute work stoppage.

He could not say whether the accident would affect wage negotiations, but he was doubtful whether talks scheduled for tomorrow would continue.

 Asked whether the NUM was contemplating any court action, he said the union had asked its lawyers to pursue the case.

“It goes without saying that when an accident of such proportions happens, we have to take action to protect our members’ interests.”

Mr Ramaphosa said the union was opposed to the mine’s compensation scheme, which would pay the equivalent of two years’ salary to the next of kin of miners killed in such accidents, and would take action to try to obtain increased compensation.

He said most of the black miners earned only about R340 per month and two years’ salary therefore did not amount to much.

So far, Mr Ramaphosa said, the management’s version of events appeared to be correct. The NUM had only been able to interview two people underground and the union would have to take further statements from other miners involved.

Mr Ramaphosa said that from the accounts the NUM had heard, it appeared the flames had spread from the acetylene cylinder to the walls, pipes, cables, and rubber equipment on the rails and lighting system in the shaft.

A sealant that had been used on the walls, caught fire and caused fumes that killed the miners.

He said the NUM was not satisfied with the type of materials used in the shaft.

The union had identified four dangerous materials, including PVC cables, rubber cables and the sealant, which it believed should not have been used.

However, he could not say whether other mines were using better equipment. He said the NUM was unhappy with Gencor’s attitude on safety requirements. The union believed that safety stewards should be appointed from its ranks but Gencor believed that safety was management’s responsibility.

Mr Ramaphosa said Gencor had been declared “an enemy company” by the NUM because of “intransigence” over union recognition and “repressive measures”.

However, the management had been very cooperative during the accident and had allowed a NUM inspection, and had promised to keep the union up to date with the latest information.

He said the NUM delegation would meet the mine management again after a visit to the mine hospital to interview victims of the fire. — Sapa
Names of five dead released

JOHANNESBURG — Gencor has released the names of five white mineworkers who were killed in the disaster.

They were a shift boss, Mr Christoffel Johannes Dornling, 27, who was married with two children. He has worked at Gencor since July 1978. Mr Raymond John Smith, 42, employed since February 1972 as a stoper. He was married with three children. Mr Stephanus Christoffel Adendorff, 27, employed from November 1984 as a surveyor grade 1. He was unmarried.

Mr. Frederick Johannes Prinsloo, 32, employed as a developer since January 1986. He was married with two children, Mr Stephen Anthony Latchford, 19, employed as a surveyor since July 1985. He was unmarried.

A statement released by Gencor yesterday said the names of the other deceased could only be released pending the notification of their next of kin.

This was being done, but as they came from various parts of South Africa as well as neighbouring countries, it might take two or three days to contact all concerned.

They are, however, of the following origins: Sotho 45, Zulu eight, Shangaan (Mozambique) 21, Pondo 20, Hlubi (Transkei) six, Swazi eight, Venda one, Xhosa 29, Tswana 14, Malawi 15, Pedi one.

The origin of four more persons has not yet been established, the statement said.

It is estimated that production at No 2 shaft will be interrupted for a week, although the shaft will remain closed as long as it might take to ensure that conditions there were absolutely safe again.

One week's production at the shaft is equal to about 25,000 tons out of the mine's total milling rate of 180,000 tons — Sapa
Witnesses tell of horror

Chilling accounts of death underground

Johannesburg — A pall of death and shock hung over Evander yesterday where 177 Kromoss miners lost their lives in the worst mine disaster in 26 years.

Mr. Isath Sipho, an underground worker who saw the accident happen, said: "It was about 9.30 am yesterday. A worker was using the cutting torch. The torch broke and caused a big explosion. I only saw smoke and fire. I went as fast as I could down to a lower level to get away from the smoke. There I waited until about 1 pm when we were taken out."

The wife of a survivor of the disaster gave a chilling description of the horror and panic below ground when toxic gases swept through the mine.

Mrs. Barbara Tarran said her husband, Billy, had described the terror to her.

"My husband said there were bodies piled up on the tracks. Men were lying with blood coming out of their mouths."

"My husband had to punch his friend in the chest to make him breathe again. He saw a lot of men fall down the shaft because they panicked when the cage came down and did not pick them up."

An injured miner said his father, a shift boss, warned him to get out of the mine when he smelt smoke.

"I smelt smoke and knew immediately there was a fire somewhere," Mr. Wiots Pretorius, 26, said from his hospital bed in Evander.

"To be safe I phoned my father. Puss! He said we had to get out at once. Because there was smoke at level 15. I went straight back to my workers. We took our things and ran back to the station."

"If we had not got to level 11 so quickly, we would have been at least badly hurt. All my workers were luckily unhurt," he said.

Another miner, Mr. Komis Mb CREKO, 20, said: "We were trapped. We held our hands to our mouths and noses in desperation. I saw my colleagues being overcome by the gas and fall."

"It is the worst I have seen or heard of in the 23 years I have worked at the mine," said Mr. Ntoloza Thangane of Transkei.

Mr. Mb CREKO, who works as a driller, was one of about seven survivors from the 16th level.

"Only about seven of us made it to the surface. When the gas leaked we tried to escape to the 14th level but it was too strong for us."

"One Swazi citizen continued going up but he was overcome by the gas between the two levels and fell and died," said Mr. Mb CREKO.

The Witbank Mine Hospital, 8 km from the scene of the disaster, treated 1,900 miners, of whom 44 were still there, the general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, said yesterday.

Mr. Ramaphosa visited the injured after a 50-minute delay at the hospital's entrance before he was allowed to proceed.

Kromoss lost two of its five safety rating stars in June last year.

The mine's general manager, Mr. Kobus Oliver, said the stars had been lost because of "lesser elements" in the list of 21 safety criteria used to grant the stars.

"It was certainly not because of materials or work methods," he claimed. — Sapa
Worst mine accident since 1960 collapse

JOHANNESBURG — The fire at Kinross gold mine is the biggest mining disaster in South Africa since 435 coal miners were buried alive at the Clydesdale colliery in January 1960.

Ironically, it comes just one week after the Chamber of Mines announced accident rates had fallen to record lows on gold mines.

As a country which draws vast wealth from the earth, South Africa has recorded its tragic share of mining deaths over the decades.

A recent International Labour Organisation report noted that despite significant improvements in safety, 8,500 miners were killed in South African mines between 1973 and 1984.

In its defence, the industry claims South African mining conditions are among the most dangerous in the world, one of reasons being the depths at which ore is mined. Further, the industry is one of the biggest in the world employing over 500,000 people.

“Gold mines which are members of the chamber have reduced their fatality rate to below one for every 1,000 people employed,” said the chamber last week. The annual fatality rate of 0.88 for every 1,000 workers was a 14 per cent improvement on figures for the previous year and a 40 per cent improvement over the last decade.

Kinross belongs to the Chamber of Mines.

The country’s worst mining disasters include:

- 1963 Hlobane Colliery — 68 dead after a methane gas explosion. An inquiry found the owners of the mine, Iscor, criminally responsible for the death of the miners. The NUM emerged as a safety watchdog in the industry and instituted civil action against Iscor on behalf of the victims’ families.
- 1989 Vaal Reefs — 31 dead in lift, cage fall
- 1978 Vaal Reefs — 41 dead in underground fire
- 1977 Blyvooruitzicht gold mine — 38 dead
- 1969 Buffelsfontein gold mine — 60 dead
- 1960 Clydesdale colliery near Coalsbrook — 435 dead when the mine collapsed, burying miners alive
- 1923 ERPM gold mine — more than 50 dead — Sapa
British, Germans to aid union in mine-disaster inquiry

The Argus Correspondent

Johannesburg — South African mining standards will come under international scrutiny when the National Union of Mineworkers brings in mining experts from Britain and Germany to help it in the judicial inquiry into the Kinross gold-mine disaster.

The NUM is also briefing a team of top advocates to represent the families of the victims at the inquiry, the inquest and during possible criminal prosecution, NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said today.

West Germany's Foreign Minister, Dr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, has issued a statement saying experts from other countries with deep-level mining experience might be able to propose improvements to prevent similar tragedies.

Mr Pak Botha has invited Dr Genscher and the "best German experts" to South Africa for a look at safety standards in the gold-mining industry.

More than 300 miners yesterday went on a protest march at De Beers Finch diamond mine near Kimberley after the mine refused to allow a senior shift steward time off to attend an emergency NUM executive committee meeting.

NUM Press officer Mr Marcel Golding said "Finch has acted in the most despicable, callous and insensitive manner by refusing to allow Mr Archie Lahlabo to attend the meeting.

Mr P Leyden, a director of De Beers, told Sapa that management had given orders for Mr Lahlabo to be released from work so he could attend.

He said the mine had initially refused permission because Mr Lahlabo had been absent from work frequently in recent weeks.

The NUM national executive council meeting has been postponed to today because many delegates had not been able to attend yesterday.

The meeting is expected to discuss the NUM's "course of action" in the light of the Kinross tragedy.

ROW OVER COMPENSATION

Meanwhile, a major row has erupted between the NUM and the Chamber of Mines over compensation for the families of those killed.

The chamber has claimed that compensation paid to victims was non-racial and exceeded International Labour Organisation standards.

The NUM rejected the claim.

Mr Golding said that while compensation for black mineworkers was officially based on salary, not race, the final outcome was a racially determined structure of compensation because of the "appalling low wages paid to black mineworkers who work under the most dangerous conditions in the mines."

According to the chamber, compensation for "lower-income groups" was based on a maximum of 75 percent of their monthly wage earnings, while "higher-income employees" received 60 percent of their earnings.

"If a married employee is fatally injured in an accident at work his widow will receive a monthly pension payable for life," the chamber said.

Dependants also received two years of the employee's monthly wages as a lump sum.

Compensation could be increased if negligence in the Kinross disaster was proved, Mr Golding said.
FOCUS ON THE MINE DISASTER

The horrified faces of miners watching the bodies of 177 col

It could be so tragic... and they had been one of them.

The miners who died in the underground No. 7 shaft Tuesday were remembered yesterday in a service in Harrismith, Free State.

Two of the miners, J. G. Botha and E. J. Du Plessis, died in the mine disaster on Tuesday. The other two, J. G. Botha and E. J. Du Plessis, died in the mine disaster on Tuesday.

A grim sense of a mine disaster... A grim sense of a mine disaster... A grim sense of a mine disaster... A grim sense of a mine disaster...

A sharp NUM critique of shaft safety

By PHILIP VAN NIEKERK

One of South Africa's worst mine accidents in recent years has focused attention on the need for improved safety measures in the mining industry.

A mine disaster... A mine disaster... A mine disaster... A mine disaster...

The black dead: Just faceless mine statistics

By PHILIP VAN NIEKERK

In 1945 a black academic and poet, BW, left behind a legacy of poignancy and pain that has haunted the mining industry ever since.

The lives of the dead... The lives of the dead... The lives of the dead... The lives of the dead...

The bodies of the dead... The bodies of the dead... The bodies of the dead... The bodies of the dead...

A mine... A mine... A mine... A mine...
FOCUS ON THE MINE DISASTER

the bodies of 177 colleagues being brought to the surface ...

of God —

but worse —

... of the 177... seven...a few... what kind of safety system handles such high ratings in mines, while disasters continue to happen? PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK reports

This week’s mine horror came three years, almost to the day, since the last major mine disaster. After an inquiry, the mine owners were fined R100m for losses in safety to 166 miners. What kind of safety system handles such high ratings in mines, while disasters continue to happen? PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK reports

... according to Obier, was not for miners related to Tuesday’s fire.

Obier’s telling if it were not for certain miraculous events, the fire might have been a fire storm.

Thus the lack of an underground warning system, for instance, is not considered to be a drawback in acquiring permits for the star rating system.

Coming within a week of the Chamber of Mines’ proud statement that there had been some decline in deaths in the first six months of this year to the lowest rate ever, the Kommer mine has clearly done its part.

The Chamber has not been responsive to pressure from the NUM on safety and since the Kommer disaster there has been marked improvement in safety ratings.

But still, hundreds of miners die every year — three times more than died in the Kommer disaster.

What has been their way to go? We will not exit as long as our people are dying underground. For us, every death is too many.

Gencor’s censors can teach the government

By PAT SIBLEY and ANTON HARBER

The accident at Gencor’s Kommer mine took place at 9:30am on Tuesday, the first announcement of the incident came after 10:00am.

In delaying the announcement of the mine disaster, the government, according to reports, was concerned about the impact on the economy and the image of South Africa. The mine disaster has caused a national crisis.

Gencor also expressed concern about the safety of its workers and the impact on the economy. The company is committed to improving safety standards and reducing the number of accidents.

Although delayed by the tragedy of 177 unwell deaths, another victim of the accident was the public’s right to know.

Most mining companies have always been transparent about their safety and efforts to allow journalists to investigate more on the ground and talk to miners. With Gencor’s response, the control of information this week was more extensive.

The agreement between the Chamber and the press in not to release information about mines or accidents in the interest of national security is merely not enough. The press has the right to know the truth.

Nevertheless, Gencor has not kept to its own accorded agreements.

A photograph taken from a helicopter reveals an aerial view of the mine disaster site.

Death figure of 132. According to the agreement, "mines, members of the Chamber, accept that the press has the right to report on the mining industry. The Chamber’s policy is not to report on accidents, but to give as much information as possible on the progress of the investigation."

In this case, Sapa was not notified until several hours after the disaster. Even then, the full extent of the disaster was not revealed until much later, with the company originally saying that the fire was not a firestorm related to Tuesday’s fire.

Now — with fresh concerns being expressed over safety in the wake of the Koma mine disaster, the NAMTSA has called for a "cull" of non-compliance at the mine and an independent investigation into the safety of the mine.

A report of the disaster could lead to the determination of the compensation for the families of the miners.

The Chamber of Mines, however, has been silent on the issue of safety improvements, saying that it will provide a full investigation into the disaster. However, the mine has not provided any information on the cause of the fire, leading to speculation.

The Chamber of Mines has acknowledged the tragedy and has committed to improving safety standards and reducing the number of accidents. However, the government has not released any information on the cause of the fire, leading to speculation.

Reports were barred from going anywhere near the disaster scene, and were not allowed near the hospital to interview survivors in scenes.
Nation-wide protest by miners likely

By PHILLIP VAN NIEKERK

BLACK miners are almost certain to decide on national protest action in response to Tuesday's disaster at the Kinross mine where 177 workers died.

The national executive of the National Union of Mineworkers was meeting at the union's headquarters last night to decide how to respond to the disaster.

Union sources said there was growing anger among NUM members at the accident, which workers felt could have been avoided if proper safety standards had been applied.

"This action takes us back to the dark ages and demonstrates clearly the unacceptable low safety standards practised in South Africa's mining industry," the NUM said in a statement.

NUM president James Mathlatsi said it was likely that whatever action was decided on would take place within the next two weeks.

In 1983 about 30,000 miners downed tools in solidarity with the 68 mineworkers who died in a methane gas explosion at the Hlobane coal mine near Vryheid in northern Natal. The NUM was in its infancy then, and now claims more than 300,000 members - six times the size of its membership.

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Black miner protest likely

Union sources indicated that the most likely form of action was a disciplined stoppage throughout the industry for several hours.

Mathlatsi said the union would also demand all the corpses be examined by union doctors.

In addition, the NUM is gearing up for a massive legal challenge at the judicial inquiry which is to be held in terms of the Mines and Works Act.

The mine's manager, Kobus Olivier, has refused to comment further on the accident because he claims the matter is "sub judice." However, Gencor have called a press conference for today which is to be addressed by its chief executive, Derek Keays.

The union — backed by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) — has called on the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Danie Steyn, to appoint a commission of inquiry into safety in the mining industry.
Kinross miner still missing underground

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Fourteen workers injured in Tuesday's underground fire at Kinross gold mine were still receiving treatment in the Winkelhaak Mine Hospital, Gencor said in a statement yesterday.

The condition of the hospitalized workers was described as satisfactory, with all but one of the workers reported missing accounted for.

Fifty-five injured workers have been discharged from hospital.

The disaster, which claimed 177 lives, comes a week after the Chamber of Mines reported sharply reduced accident figures for the industry.

The No 2 shaft, where the accident occurred, would remain closed "for as long as it may be necessary to assure that it is safe again", the Gencor statement said.

Gencor chief executive Mr Derek Keys will address a press conference on the disaster today.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has convened an urgent national executive meeting to discuss possible action. The meeting was due to begin last night and continue today.

Commenting on speculation that NUM may stage a demonstration work stoppage, its spokesman, Mr Marcel Golding, would say only that members had responded angrily to the disaster.

'Callous'

He slated as "callous and insensitive" De Beers' Finch diamond mine management's refusal to permit the national executive committee member for the mine to attend the meeting.

Meanwhile, in continued international reaction to the disaster.

Sape-Reuters reports that the Pope sent a message of condolence in a telegram signed by Vatican Secretary of State, Agostino Casaroli.

West Germany expressed condolences and has urged South Africa to allow an international commission of deep-level mining experts to assess conditions at the mine.
One miner still missing, 14 stable in hospital

JOHANNESBURG — The official death toll at Kinross Gold Mine on Tuesday afternoon, when toxic fumes were released after a gas cylinder caught fire during welding work, was 17, Gencor said yesterday.

"With one exception, all employees previously reported missing have now been accounted for," Gencor said in a statement.

"The majority of the workers who were in hospital have been discharged, although 14 are still receiving treatment in the Winkelhalk Hospital. Their condition is satisfactory," the statement said.

"The No. 1 shaft system at the mine is in operation again, but as reported previously, No 2 shaft, where the accident occurred, will remain closed for as long as it may be necessary to assure the shaft is safe again.

The names of the deceased, which have not been released yet, will be released as soon as possible after their next of kin have been informed of the circumstances. Further statements, other than the names, when possible, will be released," the statement said.

In a Sapa report it emerged, that if it were not for a group of unknown black workers who dragged an unconscious Mr Tol Sadler to a running tap, he would be dead today.

"I have no doubt in my mind that they saved my life. The water cooled me down and brought me back to consciousness," Mr Sadler, 32, a surveyor at Kinross, said.

The father of three said he was trapped for six hours by the underground fire in the mine.

"I decided to climb up to a higher level but lost consciousness. When I came to, I was lying under a running tap.

"Eventually I shifted inch by inch to the opening of another tunnel."

"A boy, with a few other black workers, carried me to a spot where the ventilation was better. I stayed there until a proto team took me to the surface."

The next morning I heard that it was a group of black workers who had dragged me to the tap and left the water running, before making a break themselves.

The 55 white miners admitted to the Evander Hospital after the accident, were allowed home after treatment, the report said.

The Foreign Ministry in Bonn disclosed yesterday, that West Germany has urged South Africa to allow an international commission of deep-level mining experts to assess conditions at the disaster-hit Kinross gold mine.

It said the Foreign Minister, Mr Hans-Dietrich Genscher, had asked Pretoria to allow an immediate inspection of the mine, to determine if poor safety standards contributed to the deaths of the 177 workers poisoned by toxic fumes from the fire.

The statement expressed West Germany's condolences for the disaster.

Mr Genscher, who held talks in Bonn yesterday with South African churchmen, Dr Beyers Naude and Dr Wolfram Kistner, said experts from other countries with deep-level mining experience might be able to propose improvements to prevent similar tragedies.

—Sapa-RNS
Gencor starts Kinross Trust

From Page 1

phosa said it was "interesting" that Gencor should concede that worker compensation was inadequate. "Kinross should not be treated as a special case. All workers in mining accidents should be adequately compensated."

He said he had heard that Gencor was holding a memorial service on Monday, but NUM had not yet been invited.

Mr Ramaphosa also said Gencor yesterday refused NUM's mining experts access to the Kinross mine to conduct an inspection of the mine. He said that on the day after the accident, Gencor had agreed to allow NUM experts — from Germany, Sweden and Great Britain — to inspect the mine, but yesterday afternoon "they called us to say they could not see their way clear for our experts to inspect the mine."

However, Sapa reports that the Chamber of Mines said in a statement the mining industry would be happy to open its doors to any team of international mine safety experts.

A Gencor spokesman denied that they had been approached by NUM.

Mr Ramaphosa also said that workers were "compelled" to go underground on Thursday, though workers yesterday refused as they were "approhensive."

"Our members will refuse until their apprehensions are allayed." He said the entire shaft should be closed as the toxic fumes had penetrated a large portion of the mine.

Mr Carl Netscher, senior director mining division, said "some people" were working in the number two shaft, where the accident occurred, but not in the area where the fire broke out. The number one shaft was in full operation.

"But there is no question of forcing any workers to go underground."

• SA mine safety measures less strict — claim, Page 4
R2m trust for families of Kinross dead

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Gencor yesterday announced the establishment of a R2-million trust fund to assist the dependants of the 177 victims of the Kinross disaster, as the National Union of Mineworkers called for a national day of mourning.

It was also disclosed yesterday that some miners were refusing to go underground.

Speaking at a press conference, Gencor's executive chairman, Mr Derek Keys, said, "Our intention is that we should seek a majority of trustees who are independent of Gencor and who include some with the closest possible identification with the beneficiaries."

Mr Keys indicated that NUM will be one of the parties to be invited to participate in the trust, which would have the provisional name of the Kinross Trust.

He said the trust will have the "sole aim of assisting any such dependants for whom the industry's present arrangements of compensation might require to be compensated."

Meanwhile Sapa reports that NUM's secretary general, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said at a separate press conference yesterday afternoon that his union has called for a national day of mourning on October 1, to honour the dead miners.

He said NUM had "approached the Chamber of Mines to close all mines on Wednesday, October 1, to honour the fallen miners."

Mr Ramaphosa said he expected the Chamber to consider the union's request, and should it refuse, NUM members would still observe the day of mourning.

Commenting on Gencor's trust fund, Mr Ramaphosa said: "It's an important step in the right direction, but it's not enough. We need more support from the government and the industry to ensure that the families of the victims are properly looked after."

Gencor's announcement was well received by the families of the victims, who said they were grateful for the gesture of support. However, they also called for more concrete actions to be taken to prevent such disasters from happening in the future. 
Tons of steel trap bodies—battled by rescuers

The Argus Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — Rescue workers were battling today to
free the bodies of six miners
killed in an underground acci-
dent at JCI's Randfontein Es-
tates Gold Mine.

A JCI spokesman said 26 survi-
vors had been taken to the
surface and 25 were in hospital.

The accident happened yest-

derday when an empty cage
and 120 tons of steel cable
plunged 880m down the Cooke
ventilation shaft.

"There were 32 men working
at the bottom of the shaft,"
said the spokesman. "The six
who died were buried under
tons of cable."

HELICOPTER

Three injured were taken by
helicopter to the Cottesloe Hos-
pital in Johannesburg. The hos-
pital superintendent said today
they were in a good condition.

Two miners who were "more
seriously injured" were taken
to the Wenele Hospital in Jo-
hannesburg.

Twenty miners were taken
to the Sir Albert Robinson
Mine Hospital in Randfontein.
They were all in a satisfactory
condition today and most were
expected to be discharged soon.

The names of the dead and
injured have not yet been re-
leased.

The accident happened when
a hoist, operating a kibble
(cage) went out of control.

Mr Gordon Waddell, chair-
man of JCI, said a full inquiry
would be held.
Battle to free miners’ bodies

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue workers were still battling to free the bodies of six miners killed in an underground accident at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine yesterday, a spokesman for Johannesburg Consolidated Investments said today.

Mr Ken Maxwell, chairman of the JCI-owned mine, said that at 4.30am today rescue teams were still struggling to free the bodies pinned under tons of steel cable.

The accident occurred when an empty cage and 120 tons of steel cable plunged 800 metres down the Cooke ventilation shaft.

"There were 32 men working at the bottom of the shaft," Mr Maxwell said.

The six who died had not yet been brought to the surface because they were still buried under tons of cable.

The medical superintendent at the Wernau Hospital said the condition of two seriously injured miners was still "serious".

He declined to give further details saying it was not yet possible to get the permission of the patients for details of their condition to be released.

A total of 26 survivors were freed from the accident shaft yesterday and last night.

A JCI spokesman, Mr J Nel, said 20 of the survivors were only slightly injured and are expected to be released from hospital today.

Three injured men were taken by helicopter to the Cotterloe Hospital in Johannesburg.

The superintendent of the hospital said today one patient had had a leg operation last night and was not in a serious condition.

"The other two patients are also in good condition," he said.

Twenty workers were taken to the Sir Albert Robuornile Mine Hospital in Randfontein. They were all in a satisfactory condition today and most were expected to be discharged soon.

Mr Maxwell said the accident occurred when a hoist operating a kibble went out of control. The kibble and 120 tons of steel cable fell 800 metres to the bottom of the shaft, collapsing a work stage 16 metres from the bottom.

Rescue operations were hampered by the fact that the shaft was new and incomplete. It had no proper lift system and the hoist operating the kibble had to be repaired before rescue work could begin.

Mr Maxwell and Mr Gordon Waddell, chairman of JCI, went to the scene of the accident immediately. Mr Waddell said a full inquiry would be held.

Company spokesmen said the accident would affect Randfontein Estates Gold Mine's star safety rating. The mine celebrated its 18th one-million fatality-free shift last week.

The mine is one of only two mines to have achieved three million consecutive fatality-free shifts. The other mine is the West Rand Consolidated Mine.

The names of the dead miners have not yet been released — Sapa.

By Denise Boutall

The Port Elizabeth City Council was not responsible for any delay in the decision about the future of Walmer Township, the Town Clerk, Mr P. K. Botha, said today.

It was announced on Friday by the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Chris Heunis, that Walmer Township would be retained and R1 million spent on upgrading it.

Mr Heunis also announced that R2 million had been allocated for housing in Athlone and Motherwell and that extensive facilities would be provided in Kwanobuhle in Uitenhage.

In Port Elizabeth on Friday Mr Heunis and the Port Elizabeth City Council's investigations had been "time consuming" and were only completed on August 29.

Mr Botha said the council had only twice been asked to comment on Walmer township. In one case it had passed on the information within seven days and in the other within 24 hours.

"I am certainly not to blame for any delay in the decision on Walmer Township," Mr Botha said.

The first time the council was ever asked to comment on Walmer was in April when the council was asked what conditions it would impose on the retention of the township.

The council supplied information about its road requirements within seven days.

On August 27 the council was asked to give its general view on the retention of the township within 24 hours. The matter was put to the council which decided it favoured the retention of the township.

The Town Clerk of Uitenhage, Mr Eddie Coetzee, said projects in the pipeline for Kwanobuhle included electrification of the whole of Kwanobuhle, the full servicing of the resettlement area and the construction of a 1,000-seat community hall.
FIVE MINERS DIE AS CAGE FALLS

FIVE miners were killed when a cage fell on them as they were working at the foot of an 800 metre deep ventilation shaft at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine yesterday.

Chairman of the mine, Mr K Maxwell, said an unknown number of the 32 miners working at the bottom of the shaft were injured but details were not yet available.

He said two of three miners working on the stage were killed by the falling rubble.

The accident occurred at about 7.40am.

Crashed

Mr Maxwell added that the miners were killed when the cage which was lowering them down crashed down the 800 metre shaft.

"Communication with those at the bottom of the shaft was cut off but torch lights have been seen flashing. The damage to the host winder drum has been repaired and it is hoped that another cage will be lowered down to the shaft to try and rescue the miners," Mr Maxwell said.

The names of the dead miners will only be announced after their next-of-kin have been notified.
Battle to free bodies of six miners

Workers are battling to free the bodies of six black miners killed in an underground accident at JCI's Randfontein Estates Gold Mine yesterday.

Of 26 survivors brought to the surface, 23 are in hospital.

The accident occurred when an empty cage and 120 tons of steel cable plunged 380 m down the Cooke ventilation shaft.

Three whites were taken by helicopter to Cottoloe Hospital in Johannesburg.

Two black workers, "more seriously injured" were taken to the Weneia Hospital in Johannes burg and 20 others to the Sir Albert Robinson Mine Hospital in Randfontein.

The accident would affect Randfontein Estates Gold Mine's Star Safety Rating. The mine celebrated its 10th one million fatality free shift last week.
Bodies hauled from mine shaft

Johannesburg — The bodies of three of the six workers killed in Sunday's accident at Randfontein Estates gold mine on the West Rand had been recovered, it was announced here yesterday.

A spokesman for Shaft Sickers, the company responsible for sinking the ventilation shaft at which the accident occurred, said the three bodies had been trapped under about 20 tons of steel cable.

Rescue teams were still working to recover the bodies of the other three workers.

Three of the dead were from Lesotho and the other three from Bushbuckridge in the Northern Transvaal. The managing director of Shaft Sickers, Mr. Eric Brereton, said he knew the identities of the dead workers but would not release their names until all the bodies had been brought to the surface and positively identified.

They were all employed by his company.

It is believed it could be days before all the bodies are recovered.

At a news conference yesterday, the chairman of Randfontein Estates, Mr. Ken Maxwell, said, "It will be a question of days rather than hours before we can get them out."

The accident occurred at Cooke 3A shaft at 7:40 am on Sunday where Shaft Sickers were digging a ventilation shaft to join up with the production area of the mine.

By 2 pm on Sunday, the first rescue workers reached the wrecked stage underground and worked through the night until the last of the 26 survivors were brought to the surface at 3:45 am yesterday.

Mr. Maxwell said Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI), which owns the mine, would welcome participation by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in the inquiry into the accident.

At yesterday's news conference, it emerged that the winding gear above Cooke 3A shaft was found to be in order less than 24 hours before the accident — Sapa-DDC.
Rescuers could see lights in tragedy shaft at Randfontein

Rescue teams could see lights moving 800 m down after the shaft accident at Randfontein Estates Gold Mine on Sunday — but were powerless to do anything

“We tried to contact the survivors but failed. All we could do was to look down. We saw moving lights and realised that there was life at the bottom of the shaft,” Mr Erve Breton, managing director of the shaft sinking company, said at a Press conference yesterday.

Only about eight hours later could rescue teams start going down the shaft as a new brake mechanism had to be fitted to the headgear.

“We also had to ensure an unrestricted path for the rescue kibble. The kibble eventually went down unguided in a pendulum motion,” said Mr Breton.

The last survivor was brought to the surface at 3.45 yesterday morning.

No names yet

The six people who died in the accident are still trapped under 3,200 m of rope.

Mr Breton said 26 people, including four white workers, survived.

“Three workers have fractures and the remainder suffered from shock and bruises and are under observation.”

Three of the dead miners were from Lesotho and the other three from Bushbuckridge. Their names would be released only after the recovery of the bodies.

It could take “hours or days” to free the trapped bodies, said Mr Breton.

“We can see the bodies, but tons of steel cable have to be cut away and we have to get through the stage or platform which weighs about 100 tons.”

Mr Ken Maxwell, executive director of Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company, described the disaster as an “incredible accident.”

> “From yesterday’s Press conference it emerged that things started going wrong when an empty kibble housed to the surface went out of control, hit the headgear and snapped the steel cables.

Twenty tons of steel cables and the second kibble in the shaft plunged down on top the stage on which most of the men were working.

Three of the dead workers were working on top of the platform while the other three were at the bottom of the shaft.

Mr Breton said yesterday that it was inexplicable that the accident took place.

“Something went wrong, and that will be the subject of our inquiry.”

Second accident

A commission of inquiry under the auspices of the Inspector of Mines will investigate the cause of the accident.

Mr Breton said that representatives of the Nation Union of Mineworkers would be welcome to attend the inquiry.

The question of NUM participation in the actual investigation was not up to the mining company, he added.

The accident was the second since the sinking of the ventilation shaft started in January.

Three months ago a mine worker died when a kibble rolled over after hitting a slope at the bottom of the shaft.

The accident occurred only nine days after Randfontein Estates achieved a million fatality-free shifts for the 10th time.
Shaft gear ‘checked’

THE winding gear above Cooke 3A shaft at Randfontein Estates gold mine was inspected less than 24 hours before the equipment attached to it plunged nearly 800m down the shaft on Sunday morning, killing six people.

This emerged at a Press conference called yesterday by JCI, owners of Randfontein Estates, and Shaft Smokers, the company contracted to dig a 2km ventilation shaft at the mine.

All 32 people in the shaft at the time of the accident were Shaft Smokers employees.

Anglo American holds an 89% equity in the company and the remainder is owned by JCI.

Shaft Smokers MD Eric Brereton said the winding gear was inspected on Saturday and found to be in order. The four-hour inspection was carried out by company personnel in terms of requirements of the Mines and Works Act.

The accident occurred after the host “failed to retard” A crosshead — the fitting to which a 2,3-ton bucket-like kibble is attached — crashed into the winding gear. It severed the cable and both it and a kibble — used to bring ground to the surface — attached to the other end of the cable plunged down the shaft with 20 tons of cable.

Brereton refused to comment on whether the accident might have been caused by faulty equipment (including the apparent failure of an emergency automatic cut-out device) or by human error. He said the matter was sub judice pending the outcome of the official inquiry by the Government Mining Engineer (GME).

By yesterday afternoon, three of the bodies had been brought to the surface. Operations to rescue survivors were completed at 4.30am yesterday.

Six survivors — three whites and three blacks — have suffered fractures or dislocations of limbs. Other injuries include abrasions, bruises and shock.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said it wished to take part in any inspection or inquiry into the accident.

Mine chairman Ken Maxwell said yesterday it was the prerogative of the GME to allow the union to take part. The GME could not be reached for comment.

The accident, which took place in a shaft not yet in use, will not affect production.
GFSA weighs up NUM peace offer

GOLD Fields (GFSA) was last night considering a call by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for a top-level meeting to discuss ways of resolving the wage dispute which has precipitated a strike involving at least 25,000 black miners.

More than 80% of the black workforce at Gold Fields' Kloof, Doornfontein and Deelkraal mines went on strike on Sunday night and yesterday over the refusal to match the 19.5% to 23.5% wage increases offered by other mining houses last week.

Formal agreement with Anglo American, JCI, Gencor and Rand Mines' gold division was reached last night.

Gold Fields, with Rand Mines collieries, withdrew from the negotiations when the employer offer reached the 15% to 20% level in July.

However, the company says it implemented a wage adjustment in August, designed to eliminate certain anomalies in its wage curve.

These increases, Gold Fields claims, mean that its wages are "on aggregate in much the same ballpark as those of other mining groups".

It says the strike is illegal because the union has not conducted strike ballots.
Randfontein mine disaster survivors tell of their ‘luck’

By Claire Robertson

"Lucky" is a word the survivors of this week’s Randfontein mine tragedy often use.

Sitting up in their beds in the Chamber of Mines hospital yesterday, miners Mr Wynand Neuhold and Mr Henne Ludick spoke of their escape from the accident which claimed six lives when an empty kibble went out of control in a shaft on the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine on Sunday.

Mr Neuhold says he is lucky to be alive. Mr Ludick was lucky to escape with only a sprained ankle and brused back.

"I was busy with my work on a lower deck of the stage when the kibble hit," Mr Neuhold said.

"About five seconds later the cross bar and cables hit the top deck."

By then Mr Neuhold was trapped under the debris, one leg broken, the other severely bruised. Something hit the back of his head, and he received a puncture wound.

He could not move until he summoned one of the lightly injured men in the shaft to his aid and he was pulled free of the debris.

"That hurt very much," he said.

From about 7.30 am, when the accident occurred, until he was rescued just before five that evening, Mr Neuhold lay in the dust light with the moans of the injured all around him.

He could only reflect on "the luck of my God."

He has worked on the mines for 24 of his 42 years. He does not intend to go underground again.

"I am lucky that I don’t have to. I have a trade so I can go back to working with tools."

Mr Henne Ludick was on the top deck when he saw the kibble shoot down to the lower cables.

"Myself and Japie (Weesels, discharged yesterday with a sprained ankle) looked down, the crossbar cut the cables and the stage dropped about 18 m. We were flung to one side just before the cables came crashing down."

Mr Ludick and four others were trapped in a narrow space afforded by the canopy built as protection from falling rocks.

LIFTED CLEAR

The men comforted the injured and, using a snapped-off bar as a lever, lifted two men clear of the cables.

Mr Neuhold’s wife heard about the accident about 9.30 am. Until late that afternoon she did not know if he was alive.

"It was terrible, waiting like that," Mrs Emmarentia Ludick told The Star.

"I just hoped she wouldn’t hear about it too soon – it is awful for the families when something like this happens," said Mr Ludick (48), who started the mines when he was 16.

Would he go underground again?

"Look, if you have a road accident, it doesn’t mean you’ll never get into a car again.

"But I will never have to go underground. I am very grateful for that."

Last bodies are brought up

West Rand Bureau

Rescue operations at the Randfontein Estates gold mine Cooke 3 shaft were completed yesterday when the last three bodies were brought to the surface following Sunday’s accident.

One of the bodies was recovered at the ventilation shaft in the morning, the other two in the afternoon.

The cause of Sunday’s accident, in which a kibble and 120 tons of steel cable fell on to 32 miners, is still being investigated.

A spokesman for the shaft-sinking company said the recovery operation had been completed much sooner than expected.

"We really did not expect to finish so soon as we had masses of steel cable to cut through," he said.

He added that 11 of the 20 shaft sinkers who had been admitted to the Albert Robinson mine hospital were discharged yesterday. The remaining nine would be discharged soon.

The condition of the three white miners at the Cottesloe Chamber of Mines hospital has been described as "fair."

One of the two injured men, who were flown by helicopter to the Rand Mutual Hospital on Saturday, is in a serious condition. The other is reported to be in a fair condition.

SAA halts freight traffic amid security rumours

Transport Reporter

South African Airways placed a nationwide embargo on domestic freight traffic for several hours yesterday for operational reasons, an SAA spokesman confirmed yesterday.

Although the spokesman would not elaborate, freight agents surprised by the temporary ban said documentation had been double-checked at airports. There were rumours of a security scare linked to the funeral of Mozambican President Samora Machel.

The embargo lasted from about 12 am to 3 pm.

All SAA’s domestic flights operated normally and there were no problems with passenger traffic. However, the airline would not accept cargo.

A large freight company told The Star it was informed of the embargo at about 12 am by SAA, which warned that cargo could be delayed.

"They gave no reasons but asked us to bear with them. They also said they would try to get urgent cargo through."

"I just hoped she wouldn’t hear about it too soon – it is awful for the families when something like this happens," said Mr Ludick (48), who started the mines when he was 16.

Would he go underground again?

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"Look, if you have a road accident, it doesn’t mean you’ll never get into a car again.

"But I will never have to go underground. I am very grateful for that."
All mine-shaft bodies recovered

The bodies of all six people killed at JCI's Randfontein Estates gold mine have been recovered, according to a spokesman for Shaft Sinker, whose 32 employees were in the Cooke ventilation shaft on Sunday morning when an empty cage and tons of steel cable plunged 800 m to the bottom of the shaft.

Another 25 people were hurt.

The spokesman said the last two bodies were brought to surface late yesterday afternoon.

He added that the shaft would be closed pending an investigation by the Government mining engineers.

See Page 4.
The accident occurred after the five-deck sinking stage had been lowered to a position just above the bottom of the 70 m shaft. The MD of Shaft Stoppers, which is carrying out the work, declined comment on why the various devices had not been installed. The incident occurred near the end of the shift at around 6:30 AM on 21st November. The accident is under investigation by the Mine Safety Authority.

Kibble shaft<br>protection system<br>installed at Randfontein mine

The key question to be answered at the inquiry is whether the mine was operating in accordance with the regulations. The Mine Safety Authority has been informed of the incident and is conducting an investigation.
Stayaway at refinery after talks deadlock

JOHANNESBURG — Workers at Zinc Corporation's refinery near Springs failed to report for their shifts last night and this morning. Gold Fields of South Africa said in a news release today that a strike ballot was apparently held on Friday but the management of Zincor, which is affiliated to Gold Fields, had not been advised of the outcome, the statement said.

Wage negotiations between Zincor and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) became deadlocked last month. NUM then applied for the establishment of a conciliation board.

The Minister of Labour failed to approve or disapprove the establishment of a conciliation board within the 20-day period provided for in the Labour Relations Act, the statement said.

"Zincor and NUM held further talks at the invitation of Zincor. The parties again deadlocked and NUM requested permission to hold a strike ballot on Zincor's premises."

Zincor management said they had not been advised of the outcome following Friday's ballot nor were they informed that workers would go ahead with a strike — Sapa
2 miners killed by mud rush

Two miners were smothered to death by a mud rush yesterday afternoon at Gencor's Bracken Gold Mine, near Evander, a Gencor spokesman said.

No one else was injured.

Mr Tshidiso Mothupi, regional organiser of the NUM for Secunda, yesterday reported that three people were believed to have been injured in another accident at Bracken between 3 pm and 4 pm on Tuesday.

He understood that two people were thought to be still trapped underground.

A spokesman for Gencor could not confirm the second accident.
Second blaze in 24 hours hits West Rand mine

Firefighters are battling to stop a blaze raging underground at Gold Fields' Kloof gold mine on the West Rand, a company spokesman said this morning.

It is the second fire in less than 24 hours and arson could not be ruled out, the spokesman said.

The first fire was extinguished. The second began last night. No injuries have been reported.

The National Union of Mineworkers is in dispute over wages with Gold Fields.

Although the union has been given strike ballot facilities at three Gold Fields gold mines, where it is recognised in certain bargaining units, the company refused such facilities at four other mines — East Driefontein, Kloof, Doornfontein and Venterspost.

The union has appealed to the Industrial Court for a ruling on the matter.
Mine fire, arson fear

MINING EDITOR

A FIRE 2,300m underground at Kloof Gold Mine continues to burn, amid speculation that it was caused by an act of sabotage.

A spokesman for the mine said it may take "some weeks" before the fire is brought under control.

Proto teams are still being deployed in relays to monitor the situation.

Based on the mine's high-average grade of about 15g a ton, and a 20% cutback in production as a result of the fire, production losses could run at more than R600,000 a day.

The fire, detected at 7pm on Wednesday night, has halted production on the 67 Longwall, the mine's most southerly stoping area, 3km from the No 1 shaft main complex.

So far, one person has been hospitalised as a result of exposure to gas, but his condition is reported to be satisfactory.

The area was sealed off to contain the blaze. Steps are now being taken to install concrete plugs with a view to flooding the affected area.

The plugs will seal off four crosscuts leading to the Longwall, on levels 28 to 31. The affected area is approximately 1,000m by 220m.

It is planned to start flooding next week, but because of a limited supply of surplus water (over and above what is needed for production) it may take some weeks to quench the fire and cool working places.

The extent of damage is not known and management are not forecasting when production will return to normal. Yesterday, about 10% of the mine's 8,500 underground workforce had been redeployed elsewhere.

Arson possible in mine fire

BUDDY

_lhs_
3 gold miners die from fumes

Johannesburg — Three miners at the Stilfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal died after being overcome by fumes underground early today, the mine's owners, Gencor, said in a statement in Johannesburg.

Gencor said investigations were proceeding "to obtain more details" and a further announcement would be made later today — Sapa.

● Mine fire at Gold Fields
Kloof rages on — Page 11.
Mine fire ‘sabotage’

PROBABLE sabotage at Gold Fields Kloof Gold Mine on the West Rand has left a fire raging 2.5km underground, put 20 percent of the mine out of production and will cost at least R12 to R15 million in damage and lost earnings.

This was said yesterday by the mine’s manager, Mr Keith Spencer, as mine management fought a desperately battle to extinguish the mine’s second underground fire in three weeks which late yesterday was still raging out of control on the 28th level.

No injuries have been reported so far, although proto teams were yesterday at work close to the fire.

“I am almost certain that sabotage was behind the first fire, which we managed to extinguish before too much damage was done on Monday evening,” Mr Spencer said.

“Such a fire, which burns at a very high temperature, has been wrapped around one of the mat packs, or timber support columns, on the 28th level. The adjacent packs were already burning, but the fire patrol — which detected smoke and reaction from gas detectors in the southernmost working area the mine — managed to put it out.

“There were no electrical cables about and the area was relatively unused. That together with the way the ignitor cord was placed makes us feel sure it was sabotage.

“We have not yet had a chance to get close to the area of origin of the second fire, which began in the same area about 300m away and one level down, but we are considering the possibility of sabotage as its cause,” said Mr Spencer.

Following Monday’s fire, mine management, concerned about the possibility of another attempt by an arsonist or arsonists, sent special shifts down the mine on Tuesday afternoon and about 7pm smoke was again detected coming from the same longwall where the first fire had started, this time on the northern side and one level lower.

The effect was “four times greater than on the previous occasion”, said a mine spokesman.

The area was immediately sealed off, making it impossible to determine the cause and exact location of the fire.

About 10 percent of the 8,500 underground workforce reporting for yesterday’s morning shift had to be deployed elsewhere.

Mr Spencer said the next step was to seal off large parts of the mine with four 5m-thick walls to smother the second fire, but this meant the closure of about 20 percent of the mine’s production capacity.

“We will then flood the area if the fire is still burning. In all we can expect a disruption in production of at least three weeks and although it is difficult to estimate the final costs in damage and lost earnings at this early stage, it will almost certainly be in excess of R12 or R15 million.”

The National Union of Mineworkers has declared a formal dispute with Gold Fields over wages. Although the union has been given facilities to hold strike ballots at three Gold Fields gold mines, the company declined such facilities at East Driefontein, Kloof Doornfontein and Venterspost.
Firefighters battle gold mine blaze

JOHANNESBURG — Firefighters are still battling to stop a blaze 2.5 km underground at Gold Fields Kloof Gold Mine on the West Rand, which has put 20 per cent of the mine out of production, a Kloof spokesman said yesterday.

Losses are expected to run into tens-of-millions of rands.

The management has reported evidence of arson in one of two working places affected by fires since Monday evening, said a Gold Fields' spokesman, Mr Attie Roets. There is a strong possibility that arsonists started the fire.

There is evidence that two timber support packs had been deliberately set alight by means of igniter cord placed in the timber and connected to the face charged up for blasting at the end of the day shift, reports a Daily Dispatch Johannesburg correspondent.

A fire patrol raised the alarm and the fire was extinguished.

Based on the mine's high average grade of about 15g per ton, and a 20 per cent cutback in production, production losses could run at more than R600,000 a day, the correspondent reports.

Mr Roets said there was a cutback in production as a result of having to seal off large parts of the mine to smother the second fire.

No injuries have been reported although proto teams are working close to the sealed-off area.

Mr Roets said that on Monday evening a fire patrol detected smoke and reaction from gas detectors in the 67 long-walls of the southernmost working area of Kloof's main shaft system.

"Because of management's concern about the possibility of another attempt by an arsonist or arsonists, senior mine officials worked special shifts," he said at 7 pm on Wednesday night. "Smoke was again detected coming from the same long-wall, but this time on the northern side and one level lower. The effect was four times greater."

"This area was immediately sealed off, making it impossible to determine the cause and exact location of the fire."

Yesterday the fire was still raging on the 29th level.

Kloof was one of several Gold Fields mines affected by wildcat wage strikes by up to 35,000 mineworkers last month.
Gold mine fumes kill three

JOHANNESBURG—Three miners at the Sulfonole gold mine in the Western Transvaal died after being overcome by fumes underground early yesterday, the mine's owners, Gencor, said in a statement here.

Gencor said investigations were proceeding 'to obtain more details' and a further announcement would be made later.

Earlier this year 177 miners died when they were overcome by fumes from an underground fire at Gencor's Kinross gold mine in the Eastern Transvaal — South Africa's worst gold mine disaster.

Meanwhile the fire 2.5 km underground at Gold Field's Kloof mine on the West Rand was still burning, a company spokesman, Mr Attie Roets, said last night — (Sapa)
3 die in third mine fire

Johannesburg — Three men died yesterday in the third underground goldmine fire this week, a mine official said.

Gencor spokesman Mr Harry Hill said the men were killed by fumes from a fire in the Sillsfontein gold mine about 100 km south-west of Johannesburg, near Klerksdorp. No other details were available.

Yesterday engineers at the Kloof gold mine, owned by the Gold Fields group, continued to build concrete dykes almost 3200 metres underground and planned to flood a fire that began on Wednesday.

An official said mine owners suspected sabotage. A fire in the same mine on Monday was set deliberately. — UPI
Rockburst miners recovering

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Eleven miners are today recovering in hospital after a rockburst at Anglo American's Vaal Reef's gold mine on the West Rand, said a company spokesman.

The employees were injured in a rockburst at midday yesterday at the 70th level of the No 8 shaft, said the spokesman. The injured are in a satisfactory condition in the mine's hospital.

"An inquiry into the accident is being held by management," he said.

This is the second time tragedy has struck the mine in a few days. In a weekend of violence 13 people were killed and at least 20 injured, four seriously, over a boycott of the No 1 shaft beer tavern.

As a result, 5,000 workers at the shaft refused to work yesterday.

Last night, 90 percent of the workforce reported for duty and today absenteeism was back to normal levels, said the spokesman.
11 miners hurt in rockburst

JOHANNESBURG — Eleven mine workers were injured in a rockburst at midday at the 70th level of Vaal Reefs no 8 shaft, an Anglo American Corporation spokesman, Mr John Kingsley-Jones, said last night.

"Following normal procedures, an inquiry into the accident is being held by mine management," he said.

No further details were available — Sapa
Mine fire fight goes on

JOHANNESBURG — Proto teams yesterday continued attempts to seal off a fire 2,300m underground at Gold Fields' Kloof gold mine near Westonaria on the West Rand, a spokesman for the company said. Workers were still putting in concrete plugs to seal off the area and predictions that workers could begin pumping water at the 31 level by Friday appeared on target, he said.
Coal workers dismissed over strike action

Management at the Gencor-owned Matla colliery, near Kriel, discharged 128 workers on Saturday for striking last Tuesday.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) plans to fight the dismissals in the Industrial Court.

The workers were among 2,000 who staged the stoppage in protest against relations between their union and Kusatsu Gold Mine management.

Matla management barred 2,000 from returning to work, pending individual disciplinary hearings which were completed on Friday.

Gencor coal-division CEO Graham Thompson said 128 workers, as a result of the hearings, were discharged for failing to obey an instruction which was reasonable and in no way constituted a danger to them.

They already had disciplinary warnings on their records, he said.

The remaining workers had been given final warnings not to absent themselves from work. Despite the dismissal of their colleagues, they are expected to return to work today.

NUM Press officer Marcel Golding said the NUM would ask the Industrial Court to rule that Gencor was guilty of an unfair labour practice by selectively discharging workers.

Matla was one of three Gencor mines affected by strike action last week over the situation at Kusatsu.
New NUM report links gold mines' safety records with company profits

By Mike Siluma

In the wake of several accidents, some fatal, that have plagued several South African gold mines in recent months, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has released a new report into accident statistics and has expressed disquiet at the situation.

The report says that between 1980 and 1984, 3,301 died on South African mines, an average of about 660 a year.

Researchers studied accident rates at mines belonging to six South African companies, as well as their profits per worker.

The companies are JCI, Anglo American, Gencor, Gold Fields, Rand Mines and Anglovaal.

According to the report, Gold Fields, with the highest profit per worker (R20 150), had the highest fatality rate of 1.43 per 1,000 workers.

This is followed by Anglo American with a fatality rate of 1.30 (R12 470 profits per worker), Rand Mines 1.23 (R5 510 profits), Gencor 1.22 (R9 440), Anglovaal 1.09 (R10 030) and JCI 1.08 (R9 310).

NUM safety officer Mr Hazzy Sibanyompe has expressed his union's stance that the international safety-rating system used in South Africa was far less than adequate.

In the light of the above information, it was clear, he said, that "the belief that the international safety-rating system is a solution is devoid of truth".

A case in point, Mr Sibanyompe said, was Rand Mines' ERPM gold mine. ERPM had recently been awarded a five-star rating "despite the fact that last year more than 54 workers died on the mine and that the mine had a fatality rate of 2.01 between 1980 and 1984".

"The other irony is that Gold Fields made the highest profits per worker between 1980 and 1984 (yet) it had the worst accident record.

"It is only through the involvement of workers in matters affecting safety that there will be a decline in the number of accidents. It is time that more money is spent in making the mines safer, than on security, as Gold Fields is doing."

Major accidents in recent months include the one that claimed 177 lives at Gencor's Kenross Gold Mine.
Mine safety ‘not related to profits’

JOHANNESBURG — The Chamber of Mines has rejected a suggestion by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) that accident rates on South African mines were related to profits.

A spokesman for the chamber said there was no scientific basis to link accident rates with profits. They were unrelated.

He said the profitability of a gold mine was, for instance, largely determined by the grade of ore that was mined, while accidents, on the other hand, could be influenced by numerous factors including the geological strata of a mining area, the depth of mining and human error.

While it was true that only richer ore bodies could be mined economically at great depth — thus providing a link between profitability and depth which, in turn, could impact on safety — it was illogical to compare profits and accident rates.

In reply to the reported criticism by the NUM of the International Safety Rating (ISR) system, the chamber spokesman said the NUM had ‘consistently and deliberately ignored’ the improved safety performance on South African mines since the introduction of the system, which was a ‘very effective’ management tool.

The spokesman said the ISR system was not an end in itself but, as an organised way to focus on safety, was only a means to an end — improved safety on the mines.

In essence, the system identified potential problem areas and set standards for the work to be done to remedy these. And, most important, it enabled the effectiveness of this work to be measured by means of audits or inspections.

Progress towards greater safety on mines through the ISR system was therefore dependent on the efforts of both management and the workers themselves.

In the light of these facts concerning the ISR system, it was ‘misleading merely to suggest, as the NUM has done, that a mine which has been awarded a five-star grading in terms of the system should have a 100% safety record’, the spokesman said.

What the ISR system had done was to contribute to a dramatic reduction in accidents over the past few years, he added.

A 42% reduction in the fatality rate had been recorded on the chamber’s member mines from 1978 to the middle of this year.

The chamber also believed that the latest round of illegal stoppages and unrest on some mines was having a negative effect on safety and the NUM must take responsibility for this disturbing state of affairs’, he said. — (Sapa)
No basis' for safety-profit link on mines

THE Chamber of Mines has rejected attacks by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) on the industry's safety record and its International Safety Rating (ISR) system.

It was apparently reacting to allegations last week by NUM safety officer Hazy Shikanyoni, who linked accident rates to profits.

A Chamber spokesman said yesterday there was "no scientific basis whatsoever" for this link. He said profitability was largely determined by the grade of ore mined.

Accidents "could be influenced by numerous factors including the geological strata of a mining area, the depth of mining and human error".

The spokesman accused the NUM of "consistently and deliberately" ignoring the improved safety performance on SA mines since the introduction of the ISR system.

He said the system was not an end in itself but an organised way of focusing on safety. He pointed to a 42% drop in the fatalities on chamber mines from 1978 to mid-1986.

"Regrettably, these achievements have been overshadowed by the Kuswa disaster which, would naturally distort the industry's safety figures for the second half of this year," the spokesman said.
Vaal Reefs death toll rises to 33

By Sheryl Haine

Thirty-three mineworkers have been killed and at least 32 injured at Anglo American's Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney on the West Rand in the past two weeks.

Trouble started at the mine, which employs about 47,000 people, on the weekend of November 22 when 13 men were killed and 20 injured. Fighting began when certain parties, among them members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), tried to enforce a boycott of the No. 1 shaft beer tavern. Eight of those killed were NUM members.

Situation tense

Violence erupted again this weekend claiming a total of 29 lives and injuries to at least 72 people. Although calm had returned to the mine by last night the situation remains tense, according to an Anglo spokesman.

In the latest violence, 10 people were killed and 51 injured in "faction fighting" with home-made weapons at the No. 2 shaft hostel on Friday night.

Despite efforts by mine security personnel to keep the factions apart, fighting began again on Saturday night. Another 10 people were killed and 20 injured. This time the fighting took place predominantly at the No. 1 shaft hostel but also spilled over to the No. 2 shaft hostel.

None of the injured admitted to the mine's hospital was in a critical condition, the company spokesman said.

Anglo American say the cause of the fighting is not yet known and management is acting as an intermediary between the two factions. Police are investigating but have not been involved in restoring calm to the mine.

The factions were divided along tribal lines, Anglo spokesman Mr. Marcus Golding said.

"Management is holding discussions with leaders of the two groups involved in an urgent attempt to find out the cause of their actions and to resolve their differences," said the spokesman.

Asked whether the latest violence was linked to the earlier beer tavern boycott the spokesman said: "It may be linked but it is too early to tell. Once fighting started two weeks ago and 13 people died, a revenge mentality set in. It is thought the latest violence was sparked by a desire to get even."

Asked whether Vaal Reefs had experienced a particularly violent year the spokesman said: "No."

However, records kept by The Star show that Vaal Reefs has in fact experienced several wildcat strikes and a number of outbreaks of violence.

"The worst outbreak of violence occurred in March this year."

In less than a week, between March 11 and March 17, 10 men were killed and 91 injured in faction fighting at the mine.
First black mining engineer graduates

The first black mining engineer graduates from Wits University tonight, but government legislation will prohibit him from working as a miner in SA.

The Scheduled Person definition in the Mines and Works Act will block graduate Patrick Rangwetsi from obtaining a blasting certificate—a pre-requisite for entry to mine management.

The discriminatory clause, which prevents advancement to skilled jobs, is expected to be removed early next year. However, until the definition is scrapped, Rangwetsi will have to undergo training at one of the homeland mines of his employer, Johannesburg Consolidated Investments (JCI).

JCI director Jeremy Nel said "The scheduled person's clause was not a problem in terms of Rangwetsi getting his degree. But we were constantly aware that it would raise its head once he had graduated."

JCI sponsored Rangwetsi's education after spotting his "obvious potential" during training courses at Rustenburg Platinum mines, where he was employed for a number of years.

His practical postgraduate training will take place at either JCI's Atok mine or one of its Bophatatswana mines.

Graduating along with Rangwetsi are the first four black candidates for BSc (Engineering) degrees in metallurgy, materials and surveying.

Another pioneer is Gavin Foley, who will become the first Wits graduate to obtain a BSc (Eng) degree in mine surveying.

At the ceremony, Professor Desmond Midgley, SA's leading authority on hydrology and water resources, will receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Engineering.

In all, the engineering faculty will confer 148 degrees, 42 higher degrees and 54 postgraduate diplomas.
Three miners killed

JOHANNESBURG — Three miners were killed in a pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine in Boksburg yesterday morning, a mine statement said. The burst 3,000m underground took place on the 70th level of the south-east vertical section. The names of the dead have not yet been released.
Johannesburg. — A spokesman for the Gold Fields group has announced the death of five people and the hospitalization of another 12 after faction fighting at its Kloof gold mine.

Two miners died in fighting "between Zulus, Xhosas and Pondos" in the hostel late on Tuesday night.

Three black miners were killed in a pressure burst at the ERPM gold mine in Boksburg yesterday morning, according to a mine statement.
Govt ‘courting confrontation’

By Mike Siluma

The National Union of Mineworkers today warned the Government that by deporting two of the union’s senior leaders, it was courting confrontation with the NUM and the broader union movement.

The two officials served with deportation orders to the Transkei were, according to the NUM, Mr M Manyiso, employed by Anglo American and Mr M Phato, who works for Gold Fields’ West Driefontein Gold Mine. Mr Phato is the union’s Western Transvaal regional chairman and a member of the national executive committee.

NUM spokesman Mr Marcel Golding said the two men have been in emergency detention since June, with no charges brought against them.

He said the deportations were part of a general attack against the trade union movement, which included the deportation of Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) branch secretary Mrs Chris Bonner.

The orders were issued by the office of the Home Affairs Minister, Mr Stoffel Botha, said the union.

“Through these attacks, the State is clearly looking for a confrontation with the NUM and the broader trade union movement,” Mr Golding said.

“We do not recognise the bantustan system — a creation of apartheid which has led to thousands of people being stripped of their South African citizenship — and will not accept the State’s arbitrary decision to deport our members.”

Meanwhile, the CWIU reported that up to 6,000 workers in Natal and Transvaal engaged in an industrial action in protest against the impending deportations of Mrs Bonner.

A union spokesman said after a meeting which ended late last night that of about 25 chemical industry employers, 13 undertook to make representations to Mr Botha. The rest would make their decision known today.

Dr Bonner is attached to the history department at Wits University.
Ninth miner dies

A mine worker died in hospital today, the Anglo American Corporation has announced.

This brings the deaths in recent faction fighting at the President Steyn gold mine to nine.

A spokesman said on Wednesday that eight mine workers had died and 37 were injured in the fighting. — Sapa
MINING - ACCIDENTS

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JANUARY - DECEMBER
NUM retaliates after Anglo advert on mine violence

By Sheryl Ralae

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) today hit back, in a full-page newspaper advertisement, at Anglo American’s criticism of the union and the company’s views on recent mine violence.

Earlier, Anglo American placed advertisements in newspapers noting “disturbing trends” in NUM’s behaviour and announced that fighting on two mines had resulted in 62 deaths. Anglo said an inquiry was determining the causes of the violence.

Anglo criticised NUM for failing to adhere to established procedures and channels for conflict resolution.

In an advert in a weekly paper today, NUM said that while Anglo had not stated that the union’s behaviour had caused the violence, it had suggested that the violence had been aggravated by the union.

NUM said the conflict was rooted in the “institutions of oppression and exploitation” existing in the mining industry.

“The hostel system, migrant labour and induna system were pioneered at the turn of the century by the mine owners to ensure maximum exploitation and control over all aspects of mineworkers’ lives.”

BRUTAL SYSTEM

“It is from this brutal and draconian system that Anglo has benefited. Over time these structures have been refined but kept intact.”

Although Anglo had acknowledged some of the causes of tension on the mines, it was not prepared to remove these “archaic structures.”

“It (Anglo) wants to publicly articulate its liberal views and distance itself from the deaths and violence, when the very causes of the problems emanate from the institutions it has created,” said NUM.

Anglo had refused to implement union proposals to remove the sources of conflict. Only once these institutions had been dismantled could industrial relations on mines be regularised.

Six died in accidents on two mines

By Mike Siluma

Six workers died in the past three weeks in accidents at two mines owned by Anglo American, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) disclosed yesterday.

NUM spokesman Mr Marcel Golding said two workers died in the Elandsrand gold mine, near Carletonville, in a 2,000 m fall down a shaft when a small cage was involved in an accident.

An inquiry is planned for Monday.

Mr Golding said four workers died on December 17 during a fall of ground in Number 2 shaft at the Western Deep Levels gold mine, near Carletonville.

An inquiry into the deaths was held on Tuesday.

An Anglo American spokesman confirmed the deaths.

The company gave the names of those killed at Western Deep Levels as: Mr Mncedisi Mbangwa (28) from Mount Frere, Transkei; Mr Elijah Mbuli (27) from Ezingelewini, KwaZulu; Mr Gcetabowwe Tshlamiso (37) from Botswana; and Mr Maswane Nkanyana (31) from Indwe in the Cape.

Those killed at Elandsrand were Mr Njongam Mbone (41) from Transkei and Mr Zacharius Mabessa (57) from Mozambique.
R1bn bill for safety in mining

BECAUSE of several disasters last year, the mining industry will be forced by law to spend an additional R1-billion on safety in the next four years.

The first major blow to the pockets of the mining houses came in amended safety regulations last October. These require all underground miners to wear life-support systems on their belts. There are 500,000 miners in SA. The self-rescuers cost R100 each, so the mines face a R500-million bill for them alone.

High risk

The life-support systems will have to be worn at all times, be ready for instant use and contain sufficient oxygen to keep a miner alive for about 30 minutes.

All underground mines will have to provide refuge bays or safe places within walking distance of men using the life-support systems. Mines will have to build refuge bays every two kilometres.

The refuge bays must be large enough to accommodate all workers in the area and be equipped with air, water and first-aid equipment. The refuge bays must be impervious to noxious gases and have communications with the surface.

The bays will have to be provided with larger, longer-lasting rescue systems for about two-thirds of the workers to enable them to move to surface or a safer place. The large units will cost about R2.5 million each.

A billion rand of expenditure will increase costs. Mine costs were estimated at R8-billion in 1986.

It is estimated that it will take four years for the mines to implement all the new safety measures.

Don Morrin, deputy government mining engineer (GME), says new safety standards will be introduced to as many high-risk mines as possible this year.

He says the cost could be as high as R1-billion, spread over about four years.

Three in running

Three companies are vying for the lucrative business of supplying life-support systems — Premier Group’s Protective Mining & Industrial Equipment Systems, US-owned MSA Africa and Cemtec.

Only two of their self-rescue systems have been approved by the GME. These are the German-designed Drager unit called the Oxyboks K, which is distributed by PMIE, and a unit from MSA Africa.

PMIE will test a compressed oxygen unit in February.

The French-designed Facey unit distributed by Cemtec will undergo trials in February.

All self-rescuers are imported, but PMIE is investigating the possibility of making Oxyboks under licence. It is almost certain that most models will have to be modified to meet difficult gold-mine conditions.

T&I Ivor’s fortune soars

Rand Merchant Bank is to take control of Business Times Reporter.

Time-table

Since November, however, two self-rescue systems have been approved by the GME.

No specific time-table has been set for the introduction of the safety measures, first mooted in 1981. However, the GME may instruct a mine to introduce all or some of the safety measures contained in the new regulations.

Mr Morrin says the GME has asked mining groups to submit programmes for introduction of the measures, but high-risk mines will be asked to introduce at least some of the measures this year.

T&I Ivor’s fortune soars

Rand Merchant Bank is to take control of Business Times Reporter.

29 January - 21 February 1987
Two more miners killed in the OFS

Two more mineworkers have died at the President Steyn Gold Mine in Welkom — one in an underground "incident" and the other after being stabbed, Anglo American Corporation announced yesterday.

A miner was killed and 12 others slightly injured on Monday in a faction clash between Xhosa's and the Basotho at the No 2 shaft hostel.

Incident

Announcing the two deaths yesterday Anglo said, "President Steyn management regret to announce that, following an underground incident on Monday morning, one employee died and that a second employee was killed in a separate stabbing incident today."

Meanwhile, management is meeting Lephepa and Xhosa delegations and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in an attempt to settle differences between those who were involved in faction fights on Sunday night. -- Sapa.
3 miners die in rockfall

JOHANNESBURG — Three miners died and three were injured in a rockfall at Western Deep Levels gold mine number 3 shaft yesterday morning, an Anglo American spokesman said. The injured are in a satisfactory condition.
Kinross disaster — homicide charges

The Argus Correspondent
PRETORIA. — A director of the Kinross mine, Mr Hugh Smith, another Kinross employee and the mine itself are to face charges of culpable homicide following the disaster in which 177 mineworkers died last year, said a spokesman for the Attorney-General's office.

The spokesman said Mr Smith, Mr Ignatius Olivier and the Kinross gold mine would be tried in Witbank Regional Court probably in May or June.

They also face alternative charges related to alleged contraventions of the Mines and Works Act.

Four other Kinross employees will also be charged with allegedly contravening the regulations.

Most of the 177 miners died after inhaling toxic fumes from polyurethane foam which caught alight underground, said experts employed by the National Union of Mineworkers and the mining group Gencor.

Constable puts marathon man on the wrong track

The Argus Foreign Service
LONDON. — Marathon runner Gregor Booth was certain to win his latest race until he asked a police officer the way.

For a woman constable sent him up a cul-de-sac and, by the time he got back on course, his closest rival was crossing the finishing line.

Gregor, 24, finished the mini-marathon in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, about a minute and a half behind...
Charges after Kinross disaster

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Kinross gold mine and two individuals will face charges of culpable homicide arising from the disaster in which 177 miners died last September, Transvaal Attorney-General Mr Donald Brunette said yesterday.

The two are Kinross director Mr Hugh Smith and mine employee Mr Ignatius Olivier. The case will be heard in Witbank Regional Court on a date still to be decided.

Mr Brunette said he did not expect the hearing to begin before May or June.

The three main accused also face alternative charges relating to contraventions of Mines and Works Act safety regulations.

Four more Kinross employees would be charged with contravening the regulations.

Mr Brunette said the 14-page indictment was served “a few days ago.” However, a Gencor spokesman was unaware of the step last night.
NUM urges inquiry into Kinross disaster

THE National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) yesterday called for a Mines and Works Act inquiry into last September's Kinross disaster.

The Attorney-General said last week the mine and certain employees would face culpable homicide and other charges arising from the accident and that this obviated the need for an inquiry.

NUM health and safety officer Hazy Shanyem said the union "accepts that the criminal prosecution is the forum for determining the guilt or otherwise of the mine's management".

"But there are wider safety issues involved in the Kinross accident that need to be canvassed and debated in a public forum."

Gencor has placed an advertisement saying that no formal charges relating to the Kinross accident have been served yet and that only draft charge sheets have been sent to the company's legal representatives and to other parties who might be charged.

It says the name of H A Smith, a director of the company, was listed in the draft documents purely as a nominee of the company, Smith will be returning soon and the A-G has agreed to substitute another nominee.
Johannesburg — Three employees died and another three were injured in a rockburst at Anglo American's Western Deep Mine on Tuesday. An Anglo spokesman said the accident happened at 10am on the 78 level of the mine's No 1 shaft and is being investigated by the government and mining engineer. Two of the injured had been treated and discharged from the mine's hospital. The third employee had been hospitalized and his condition was satisfactory.
Two miners critical after gas explosion

JOHANNESBURG — Five of the 16 miners injured in yesterday's methane gas explosion at Bosjespruit Colliery near Secunda in the Eastern Transvaal have been taken to private hospitals in Johannesburg, says a Sasol spokesman.

Two of the five were in a critical condition and three were serious.

The remaining 11 injured miners were in the mine hospital.

Mr Peter Cox, general manager responsible for collieries and personnel, who was on the scene immediately after the incident, said the explosion was in a secondary area 180m underground and 6.5km from the shaft.

The exact cause of the explosion was not known, but the mine inspectorate had already visited the scene, said Mr Cox.

— The Argus Correspondent and Sapa
MINERS HURT IN GAS BLAST

JOHANNESBURG — Sixteen miners were injured, three badly, in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Bosvesspruit Secunda colliery in the Eastern Transvaal at midday yesterday. A Sasol spokesman said the cause of the blast was not yet known.
Protest strike at detention of miners in T'kei

Dispatch Correspondent

Johannesburg — About 1,500 members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) employed at Anglo American's New Denmark colliery in the south eastern Transvaal have been on strike since Tuesday, a union statement said.

The NUM said yesterday they were protesting against the detention of 75 colleagues in Transkei. They had travelled by bus to Transkei at the weekend to a colleague's funeral.

Workers at New Denmark believed management had acted in collusion with the Transkeian authorities because after management had received the news of the detentions it refused to inform workers of the incident, the NUM said.

Workers were now demanding that management put pressure on the Transkeian authorities to release their colleagues.

An Anglo spokesman last night denied any collusion in the arrests. He said management had received unconfirmed reports of arrests on Monday from the local recruiting agents.

Anglo had been in contact with the Transkeian authorities and had expressed its concern, but the authorities had not yet confirmed or denied the arrests.

"Management has informed the workforce of its position and expressed concern for the safety and whereabouts of the employees and hopes for an early return to work," he said.

The chief of the Transkei Security Police, General L. Kwe, could not be contacted for comment last night.

Free should all —

Dispatch Reporter

KOMGA — It was imperative that the free enterprise system be made to work for all South Africans, the NP/PPPP alliance candidate for King William's Town, Mr. Pat Rogers, said here last night.

Mr. Rogers told some 35 people in the town hall that the economic situation in South Africa was more critical than the constitutional situation.

The constitutional situation had been created for South Africa, while the economic situation was created by South Africa.

National Party policies had resulted in the country having a limited tax base where a minute proportion of the population shouldered most of the tax burden.

The laws of the country did not allow all its citizens to participate in the economy to the full extent where taxpayers and entrepreneurs could get a better deal.

"If you think of the boycotts and unrest I can see no reason why blacks should be con-
Thirty-one miners were killed and 12 injured in a methane gas explosion which ripped through Ermelo Mines in the Eastern Transvaal at 6.30 last night.

The incident, the worst mine accident since the Kinross mine disaster last September and the second methane gas explosion this week, was announced by mine owners Trans-Natal Coal Corporation, a part of the Gencor group, this morning — nearly 12 hours after the accident occurred.

The names of three of the dead have been released. They are Mr Abel Erasmus (28) of 44 Dame van Heerden Street, Ermelo; Mr Petrus Pieterse (24) of 10 Jannie de Waal Street, Ermelo, and Mr Andre Veldman.

The names of the other victims — all black miners — will be announced as soon as their next-of-kin have been notified.

Mr Pieterse is survived by his pregnant wife, Mr Erasmus by his wife and two children.

Proto teams brought the last of the 31 bodies to the surface this morning.

A spokesperson for the Ermelo Provincial Hospital said 12 of the injured had been admitted, some in a serious condition.

The spokesperson did not give further details.

Gencor spokesman Mr Harry Hill said the company had no more information on the accident and would release details as they became available.

Ermelo tragedy was 2nd methane blast this week

By Susan Piemning

The accident at Ermelo Mines last night, which claimed 31 lives, is the second mining incident in three days involving a methane gas explosion.

On Wednesday 16 people were injured in a methane gas blast at Sasol’s Bosjiespruit Colliery. No reason has yet been given for this incident.

The Ermelo accident is the most serious in the coal mine industry since 1983, when 68 people died at Hlobane Colliery after an explosion caused by methane gas.

An inquest found the owners of the Hlobane Colliery, Iscor, criminally responsible for the deaths.

The Ermelo miners apparently died after they were overcome by carbon monoxide fumes following the explosion.

The presence of methane gas has always plagued the mining industry, especially coal mining operations.

The gas seeps out of the exposed coal underground and because it is odourless and colourless it is difficult to detect. It is also highly inflammable.

Other incidents on the country’s worst mining disasters list include:

- The Kinross mining disaster on September 16 last year in which 177 miners lost their lives. Poisonous polyurethane foam was involved in that accident.
- At the Vaal Reefs mine in 1980 31 people died when a lift cage fell.
- At the Vaal Reefs Gold Mine in 1978 41 died in an underground fire.
- The Clyde Colliery, near Coalbrook, is where the worst mining disaster in this country took place. In 1960 453 miners were buried alive when the mine collapsed.
- At the Middelburg Colliery at Secunda on August 12 1955, 30 miners were killed after a methane gas explosion.
- In 1928 ERPM Gold Mine lost 50 miners.

But, as a whole the South African mining industry has an improving safety record. Deaths in the coal-mining sector fell from 0.43 for every 1 000 employees in 1985, to 0.33 for every 1 000 employees in 1996. The industry has set itself a target this year of 0.25 for every 1 000 men.
Dispatch Reporter

UMTATA — The head of the Transkei Security Police, General Leonard Kawe, confirmed yesterday that about 75 miners workers from the Transvaal had been detained under the Public Security Act.

It was reported earlier that 1,500 workers at Anglo American's New Denmark colliery in the south-eastern Transvaal had gone on strike in protest at the detention of their fellow-workers.

Gen Kawe said the men had been detained because of their activities at the funeral of one of their colleagues at Mqanduli.

The funeral included speeches and songs and the actions of the miners workers were felt to have been undermining the authority of the state, he said.

The men were arrested at a roadblock after the funeral. It was not known at the time that they were all miners workers, but it would have made no difference to their being detained, he added.

Gen Kawe said the men would not be held unnecessarily. Police were investigating the motives for their actions and if no charges were to be brought, they would be released immediately.

Sapa reports from Johannesburg that Anglo American yesterday expressed its "extreme concern" for the safety and whereabouts of the men.
Miners tell forbidden story

Miners at the Ermelo Mines, where methane gas exploded on Thursday night, killing 34 of their colleagues, told yesterday how they escaped 110 m underground.

They said something like a storm filled the tunnels. The lights went out and men screamed.

"We dropped everything we were doing and scrambled for the exits. Others fell on the way," said one miner.

The miners gave interviews under anonymity after threats by mine security staff at the compound that action would be taken against them if they spoke to the Press. Pressmen were ordered not to interview the miners.

"You will get everything from management. No worker is allowed to speak to you so long they are employed here," said an official.

Earlier, Pressmen were allowed to tour the shaft surface on condition they did not speak to surface workers or go to workshops.

Miners said the explosion took place in Sections 3 and 18, which are next to each other.

Mr. Abel Erasmus (23), Mr. Petrus Pretorius (24) and Mr. Andre Veldsman died while working in Section 8.

"I was in Section 14 when I saw smoke coming. Our shaft boss told us there was something wrong and we should leave the place. All of us there escaped unharmed and re-surfaced at Tweefontein," a miner said.

One in Section 3 said: "We tried to drag..." To Page 2

Mine disaster

● From Page 1

along those overcome by the fumes, but when their bodies stiffened, we dropped them because they were becoming heavier as they died. There were screams all over. The lights went out and our lamps only shone as far as an arm's length.

"We ran into dead ends on several occasions and were forced to go back the way we came, where the fumes were coming from. There was a stampede," said a miner who was working in Section 10.

On the surface they saw their colleagues brought up by rescue teams. Some were dead, others injured.

"Some died on the way to the Bethal Hospital. We were taken there for treatment and were later released," another miner said.

By last night the afternoon shift had not gone underground.

Political comment by H.W. Tyson, posters by D. Allen, headlines by D. Legge, all of 47 Baker Street, Johannesburg.

Newsmen arrested at Ermelo's death mine

Johannesburg. — Three journalists assigned to the Ermelo mine disaster on Friday were arrested and had their cameras and video equipment confiscated by police.

Those arrested were Visnews cameraman Mr Rob Celliers, his sound recorder Mr Dave Copeland and Reuters photo-journalist Ms Wendy Schwegmann.

All three have been summoned to appear in the Ermelo Magistrate's Court on May 4.

Captain P E Meyer of the Ermelo police yesterday confirmed the arrests of the three.

He said they had been summoned to appear in court to face charges of trespassing and of taking pictures of dead bodies before a post mortem.

The police alleged the three had photographed some of the 34 people killed in Thursday's mine disaster, after they had gained entry to a mortuary.

On their release, their cameras were returned, but police refused to return the TV crew's video cassettes and other video equipment.

By yesterday the equipment had still not been returned.
Miners out of intensive care

Only one of the six badly injured miners admitted to the Rand Mutual Hospital after the Ermelo mine accident last week was still in the intensive care unit, a hospital spokesman said today.

Five of the miners had now been moved to general wards. The patient still being treated in the intensive care unit was off the critical list, the spokesman said.

Thirty-four miners died and 16 were injured in a methane gas explosion last Thursday evening.
SEVEN miners were killed and four injured when a rockfall occurred at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine yesterday morning.

The accident, the country's third major mine accident in less than a week, occurred underground on the 106 level of the Cooke number three shaft at about 10:30am.

A spokesman for Johannesburg Consolidated Investments yesterday told Sapa that the rockfall occurred about 60 m below the surface while 10 black machine operators were drilling holes to install supports in an underground workshop excavation.

The names of the dead will be released after the next-of-kin have been notified.

Hospital

The injured workers were admitted to the Sir. Albert Robinson Mine hospital for lacerations and heavy bruising.

Blasting operations were suspended after the rockfall but production was not affected, according to the JCI spokesman. He said the cause of the tragedy would probably not be known until after an inquiry by the inspector of mines was conducted.

A miner who did not wish to be identified, told the Sowetan that the rockfall occurred in a new section of the mine.

He took one of the injured to hospital while a helicopter was also on stand-by. One miner was discovered dead hours after the accident. He had earlier been reported as missing.

More than 500 tons of rocks collapsed while the men were working.

Officials of the National Union of Mineworkers who investigated the incident could not be contacted for a comment.
Seven more miners die

SEVEN miners died and three were injured by a massive rock fall at Johannesburg Consolidated Investment’s Handfontein Estates gold mine yesterday morning.

This brings the total of dead to 41, with 35 victims injured in SA’s third mine disaster in less than a week.

In yesterday’s accident, about 120 tons of rock fell onto 10 black miners 960m underground at Cooke Number Three Shaft. They were drilling holes to install supports in an underground workshop when the groundfall occurred.

It took workers about five hours to complete the rescue operation with the last body brought to the surface shortly after 3.30pm.

To Page 2

Rock fall adds to mines’ death toll

Last October, six workers were killed and 25 injured at the same mine when a cage and 120 tons of steel cable crashed onto workers during shaft sinking.

Those injured in yesterday’s accident were being treated for arm lacerations, leg injuries and back and pelvis contusions at the mine’s Sir Albert Robertson hospital, JCI spokesman David Freemantle said.

National Union of Mineworkers’ safety officer Haazzy Sibanyoni said the union would issue a statement today.
ON Thursday last week, a disaster which claimed the lives of 34 miners hit the small town of Ermelo. But from appearances, it seemed as if nothing of earth-shaking proportions had occurred.

Ermelo still went on as usual. The miners went about their way and some, who had too much of the grape, staggered along. Others wore smiles as they went. As for the whites, it looked like business as usual — nothing seemed to have disturbed the way of everyday life.

The only indication that there was something amiss was to be found at the entrance of Ermelo Mines where a big reception party of armed security officials waited to welcome the Press.

As we went, our tour guide pointed out to us the mine's administration block, the training centre, the main shaft gear and the stores depot.

**Smirk**

It all took about six minutes. At the end, our tour guide, with a smirk on his face, said, "That is all gentlemen" He could not answer any questions he said.

**Trans-Natal**

The owners of the mine, would be issuing a Press statement later in the and a gust of hot air rushed in. The force of day he said, The Press was played an Olympic joke. Officials at the Ermelo Hospital were more helpful. We were allowed to speak to the survivors, but asked not to ask them questions that could upset them.

Mr Phineas Ncube (25), who is from Pongolo in Natal, told us he had been employed at Ermelo Mines for the past four years. He said he was busy working when he heard an explosion and saw a bright flash.

"The place was plunged into darkness the intruding air swept my tunic off my head together with its lamp. "I was frightened and started running blindly. I am told I was found at the safe area where there is fresh air," Mr Ncube said.

**Explosion**

Mr Nzuvo Mgwili (30), a driller, said he was busy at work when he heard a big explosion after which a big whoosh of air rushed in.

"The lights went off and my hard hat flew off my head We put on our gas masks and I lay flat on the ground with two others so that the poisonous gas went above us.

"We belly-crawled to a safe section in the darkness. I later heard that my two colleagues died. A white electrician died as well," Mr Mgwili said.

**Survive**

Mr Lymon Siyaya (29), a coal-cutter operator, said all he remembered was hot air rushing into his work place and the place being plunged into darkness.

"I don't know what happened afterwards. I found myself in hospital," he said.

He had bruises on his face and arm and had bitten his tongue.

Mr Aaron Onyima, from Bushbuckridge spoke haltingly and asked to be given time to remember what his age was. He said he was 21 although his bedletter had him listed as being 26.

Mr Alson Mavumbele was still dizzy days after the accident.
Miners died close to rescue kits — official

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The 36 Ermelo miners who died after a methane gas explosion, suffocated within 30m of a cache of self-rescue emergency breathing kits, according to the mine's chief executive.

An investigating team is waiting for the go-ahead to enter the area where the explosion took place.

Meanwhile, Trans-Natal Coal Corporation managing director Mr. Graham Thompson says the Ermelo Mines safety record has improved dramatically over the past three years.

He says a voluntary decision by the mine to install self-rescue kits last June probably saved many lives in last week's accident.

Self-rescue kits became compulsory from this year.

Mr. Thompson said: "We reckon there were 170 miners in the area affected by the blast.

DOING ANALYSIS

"Of those, about 50 were in the immediate vicinity of the explosion and the rest in ventilation areas which became contaminated."

"It is our belief the majority escaped because they got to the self-rescue kits."

Mr. Thompson said mine officials were doing a thorough analysis to establish how many men reached the self-rescue kits.

He said the cause of the explosion would be investigated tomorrow or on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the death toll at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine, where there was a groundfall yesterday, has risen to seven.
Seven miners die in rock-fall

OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG — Seven miners died and three were injured by a massive rock-fall at Johannesburg Consolidated Investment's Randfontein Estates gold mine yesterday morning.

This brings to 41 dead and 35 injured the number of victims in South Africa's third mine disaster in less than a week.

In yesterday's accident, about 130 tons of rock fell on to 10 miners 860 metres underground. They were drilling holes to install supports in an underground workshop when the ground-fall occurred.

It took workers about five hours to complete the rescue operation, with the last body of a miner brought to the surface soon after 3:30pm.

Last October, six workers were killed and 25 injured at the same mine when a cage and 120 tons of steel cable crashed on to workers during shaft sinking.

NATIONAL UNION Mineworkers' safety officer Mr Hazy Sibanyoni said the union would issue a statement today.
The wreckage of the twin-engined Boeing 727, which crashed into mine host.

Aircraft crashes Three die as plane...

By James Low...
Pressure burst kills 2

JOHANNESBURG — Two miners died and 20 were injured in a pressure burst at the Vaal Reef gold mine near Orkney yesterday, a spokesman for the mine reported last night. The spokesman said another employee, believed to be injured, was still underground “and efforts to reach him are continuing.” The accident, which occurred at 11.40am at the mine’s No. 3 shaft and on the 70th level, was being investigated.
Three miners die at Orkney

JOHANNESBURG — Three miners died and 20 were injured in a pressure burst at Vaal Reefs gold mine, Orkney, yesterday — Sapa
Two more miners die - total for two weeks rises to 46

JOHANNESBURG — The death toll in last night's pressure burst at Anglo-American's Vaal Reek gold mine in the Western Transvaal has risen to five.

An Anglo spokesman said this morning that two workers injured in the accident died overnight and the body of a miner originally reported missing has been retrieved from the accident shaft.

Last night Anglo reported two miners were killed and 20 injured in a pressure burst on the 79th level of the mine's No. 5 shaft.

"Those who have died since yesterday include the employee who was trapped underground and two employees who were among the 20 injured in the accident," the spokesman said.

The accident brings to 46 the number of workers killed in accidents on South African mines in the past two weeks.

Last Tuesday, 16 miners were injured in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Bopengspruit Colliery about 120 kilometres east of Johannesburg.

Last Wednesday, in one of South Africa's worst coal mining accidents, 34 miners died and 16 were injured at Gencor's Ermelo coal mine southwest of Johannesburg.

On Monday this week, seven workers were killed and three injured in a rockfall at JCI's Randfontein Estate's gold mine about 40 kilometres west of Johannesburg — Sapa.
Miner from Alice dies

EAST LONDON — One of the miners who died in the Helmelo rock blast disaster which left 34 people dead last week, was from Alice in Ciskei.

He was Mr Mzimasi Sityla, 33.

No other details were available last night.

DDR
Three dead, 20 hurt in mine burst

Three miners were killed and 20 were injured in a pressure burst at Anglo American's Vaal Reefs gold mine at Orkney yesterday, bringing to 45 the number of workers killed in four mine accidents in the past week.

An Anglo American spokesman said last night that the burst occurred at about midday on 70th level of No 5 shaft.

The injured had been admitted to the Vaal Reefs hospital.

The spokesman said the incident was being investigated. Names of the dead workers would not be released until their next of kin had been informed.

The National Union of Mineworkers has claimed that the death of seven workers on Monday at JCI's Randfontein Estates gold mine was due to failure to use the proper drilling machine.

"The workers were not installing supports as stated by the company, but were drilling to blast an excavation to store equipment," said the union.

It named the dead miners as Mr. Mcedisi Sulo, Mr. Badikile Mabuyakulu, Mr. Beki Ngwenya, Mr. Jerry Dlamini, Mr. Jacob Gamede, Mr. Elliot Mamba and Mr. Joseph Masiya.
Suspected limpet mine blast wrecks vehicle in Langlaagte

By Craig Kotze, Crime Reporter

A suspected limpet mine planted on a BMW car in Langlaagte, Johannesburg, exploded yesterday, wrecking the vehicle but causing little damage to nearby homes and property, eyewitnesses and the Government's Bureau for Information said.

No-one was injured.

The blast came only hours after a policeman was killed and 64 injured after a grenade was flung on to the parade ground of the Tladi Municipal Police Training Centre in Soweto.

Yesterday's blast, which happened at about 2:50 pm, outside the Western BMW garage on the corner of Robinson and Central avenues, set the car alight — only a few metres from Grosvenor Station.

A bureau spokesman said it was not yet known who planted the bomb, but declined to comment on whether it was aimed at the station.

Windows in nearby houses and flats were shattered and a wall surrounding the garage servicing area was cracked.

Riot police, traffic officials and the Johannesburg Fire Department were on the scene within minutes and the area was cordoned off. Traffic was not disrupted.

After the flames were extinguished, police bomb experts confirmed the BMW, which had its left front tyre blown off, its engine compartment extensively damaged and its windscreen shattered.

The car belongs to a car-hire firm and had been taken to the Western BMW garage for a service two weeks ago.

It was parked outside the Robinson Street workshop entrance when the suspected limpet mine detonated, Western BMW service manager Mr Joe Marutus (36) said.

He said the bomb had apparently been planted on the left front wheel.

"I lifted out of my chair when I heard the bang, which I first thought was in the workshop. When I ran outside I saw the BMW in flames, grabbed a fire extinguisher and tried to extinguish them."

Watch repairer Mr Denis Griffiths said when he heard the explosion he thought something had happened at Grosvenor Station across the road.

The BMW was only about 20 m. from his shop.

"I thought my walls would collapse because the whole building shook. At first I thought something had happened to a train because one had just stopped at the station," he said.

Nico Marais (12), who was standing on the pavement about 20 m. from the car when it exploded, said "he got a huge fright" when he heard the bang.

He ran to tell his mother, who immediately telephoned the Fire Brigade.
company's retrenchment programmes, a JCI spokesman said.

The strike was over JCI's retrenchment programme which had been under discussion with the National Union of Mineworkers since last August.

The spokesman said the retrenchments, affecting 2,310 miners, would go ahead.

Comment from NUM could not be obtained.

Sapa. 4/4/85 (24)
3 Kinross miners die

Johannesburg — Three miners died in a "tail of ground" at the Kinross gold mine at Evander, yesterday morning, the mine owners, Gencor, said.

Gencor said in a statement the accident about 7am took place 1,780 m underground at the mine's Number Two shaft.

No further details were immediately available, and Gencor said more information would be released when it became available—Sapa
JOHANNESBURG — Three miners died in a "fall of ground" 1780m underground at Kinross gold mine's No 2 shaft at Evander about 7am yesterday, mine owner Gencor said. No further details were immediately available. The National Union of Mineworkers has condemned the accident and called for an "urgent commission of inquiry."
6 miners die in Evander faction fight

Six miners were killed and about 20 injured in fighting between groups of workers at Gencor's Bracken gold mine near Evander at the weekend.

Gencor's chief executive for gold and uranium, Mr Bruce Evans, said four of the dead were from Bracken, one from Kross and another from Winkelhaak gold mine. All three mines are owned by Gencor.

Mr Evans said the six were killed yesterday behind a private shop near Bracken mine.

He said trouble had broken out over a woman and yesterday's fight was apparently in revenge for earlier assaults.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) organiser in the area, Mr Thuliso Mothapi, said management had "refused to co-operate" on Saturday and yesterday when warned by the union of impending clashes between workers and a gang.

A Gencor spokesman could not comment on the NUM claim at the time of going to press.
5 killed in mine fighting

JOHANNESBURG

Five people were killed and 21 were injured after faction fighting between Pondo’s and a group known as “The Russians” broke out on Gencor’s Bracken Mine at the week-end.

Gencor’s chief executive, Mr Bruce Evans, said in a statement that the miners were killed by another group of mine workers early yesterday morning at a shop adjacent to Bracken property.

“The miners were apparently taking revenge for assaults against their colleagues which occurred in the same place on Friday and Saturday nights,” the statement said.

The trouble apparently started as a result of a brawl between two men over a woman.

The National Union of Mine Workers (Num) official in the Secunda area, Mr Tshediso Motshupi, claimed 21 miners had been hospitalized.
9 miners die in mudrush

Nine workers were killed and three are still missing after a mudrush at the Coalbrook Colliery, near Sasolburg yesterday, mine-owners Gold Fields of South Africa said today.
JOHANNESBURG — The death toll in the mudslide at Gold Field's Coalbrook Colliery near Sasolburg in the Orange Free State has risen to 12.

The Gold Fields public relations officer, Mr. Attie Roets, said rescue teams had discovered three more bodies under coal and mud that had flooded a tunnel just under the surface of the mine yesterday afternoon.

Teams retrieved one body from the shaft yesterday afternoon and eight more bodies were found during the night.

The workers died after a rush of coal and mud spilled into the shaft from a silo on the surface used to store raw coal.

Mr. Roets said an inquiry into the cause of the accident in terms of the Mines and Works Act, would be made.

The mudslide was the third big colliery accident in the past two months. On April 8, 16 miners were injured in a methane gas explosion at Sasol's Bokspruit colliery in the Eastern Transvaal. The next day, 34 workers were killed when another methane gas blast ripped through Gencor's Ermelo mines.

Coalbrook is also the site of the largest mine accident in South Africa's history where 435 miners were burned alive when parts of the mine collapsed in 1960. — Sapa
MARITZBURG. — An employee of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), bleeding from head wounds, was beaten by a member of a rival union at Coronation Mine, Vryheid.

This was stated in papers before the Supreme Court here yesterday. The court granted an interim interdict ordering members of the United Workers Union of South Africa (Uwusa) not to assault, threaten or intimidate members of NUM at the mine.

The interdict was granted after an urgent NUM application.

Uwusa intends to contest the application and denies NUM allegations.

The court heard that on May 5 Mr John Ntshangasa, a Natal regional organiser of NUM, was beaten with a kerrie by a man alleged to be a member of Uwusa. He died later. — Sapa.
Kinross hearing to be postponed

PRETORIA – Last year's Kinross mining disaster which claimed 177 lives will have a sequel in Witbank Regional Court this week when Gencor's Kinross Mines Ltd and senior employees will face allegations of culpable homicide and alternative, statutory charges.

According to the Attorney-General's office in Pretoria, a "postponement date" will be fixed at a preliminary hearing on Friday.

The statutory charges stem from alleged contraventions of the Mines, Works and Factories Act. — Sapa
JOHANNESBURG — Six Kinross mine managers and employees are to be charged with culpable homicide in Witbank Regional Court on Friday, following last year's Kinross disaster, when 177 workers died. The six are charged in their personal capacities and as representatives of the mine.
Eersteling mine to deliver 5g/t of gold

PETER STACEY

SA's oldest gold mine, which has been re-opened by the Severn Group, will deliver a recovery grade of 5g/t over a 20-year life span, says MD Steen Severn.

Underground development and plant construction has already begun at Eersteling, near Pietersburg, on the site of SA's first gold find 116 years ago. Planned production is 10,000 tons a month and it expects to pour its first gold early next year.

The mine is the latest venture of Severn Mining and Development company (SMD) which last year successfully re-opened JSE-listed Rand Leases.

Eersteling is one of 14 prospects — embracing a variety of different minerals — which SMD bought last year from the American Utah Mining company. It is the first of these prospects to be developed.

Eersteling is an Archean Greenstone hydrothermal gold deposit consisting of four reefs that between them have over 15km of surface outcrop.

Initially these outcrops will be mined at low cost by open pit methods. The reefs vary in thickness between 1m and 2.5m, and exploration in recent years has shown in-situ grades from 3g/t to more than 15g/t.

Main areas of capex of the mine — at least initially — will be a carbon-in-pulp gold recovery plant, with a minimum capacity of 10,000 tons a month, and a main vertical shaft that will go down to 300m.

So far, work at the mine has revolved around the sinking and equipping of three winzes, underground development, the provision of some surface infrastructure, including a hostel block and housing, and site clearing for the metallurgical plant.

To date the Severns have personally funded its development. Negotiations are under way to raise further finance and a JSE listing is likely.
Seven miners killed

JOHANNESBURG — Seven miners were killed and three were injured in accidents at two mines in the Transvaal yesterday.

Five miners died and three were slightly injured in an underground pressure burst at the ERPM Gold Mine, near Boksburg, a mine spokesman reported.

The burst occurred at 2.15 am about 3000 m underground in the 72 level of the mine's G shaft.

At the Transvaal Navigation Colliery near Middelburg yesterday afternoon two miners were killed after a "fall of roof".

A Transnatal Coal Corporation spokesman said no one else was injured in the accident. — Sapa
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The burst occurred at 2.15 am about 3,000 m underground in the 72 level of the mine's G shaft.

At the Transvaal Navigation Colliery near Middelburg yesterday afternoon two miners were killed after a "fall of roof".

A Transvaal Coal Corporation spokesman said no one else was injured in the accident. — Sapa
JOHANNESBURG — An underground pressure burst yesterday killed five miners at the ERPM gold mine in the sixth fatal mine accident in six weeks, a spokesman said. Three miners were injured in the accident. The spokesman said the rockburst occurred 3,000m underground at the 72nd level of the deep shaft near Boksburg. The latest fatalities bring to 51 the number of people killed in mining accidents since April 1.
JOHANNESBURG — Seven employees of Kinross Mines appeared briefly in court yesterday charged with culpable homicide following the deaths last September of 177 miners in South Africa’s worst gold-mining disaster. Those charged included a Kinross director, Mr John Burke, and mine manager Mr Jacobus Olivier. They were not asked to plead on the culpable homicide charges or a range of alternative charges under the Mines and Works Act. The case was remanded until September 22.
Mudslide death toll rises to 12

JOHANNESBURG — The death toll in the mudslide at Goldfields' Coalbrook Colliery near Sasolburg in the Orange Free State has risen to 12.

— Sapa

Rear of more Sumatra 1st March 12

—Sapo
Two miners die in pressure burst

JOHANNESBURG — Two men were killed and three injured in a pressure burst 2 000m underground at Kloof Mine near Westonaria yesterday, a Goldfields spokesman said. The men were not named. — The Argus Correspondent
T'kei budgets record R1,6bn

By LAWRENCE NGOZI

UMTATA — Transkei has budgeted a record R1.6 billion for the 1987/88 fiscal year, according to the Appropriation Bill, 1987, read for the first time by the Minister of Finance, Mr G K. Neta, in the National Assembly yesterday.

The total budget tabled, amounts to R1 604 435 000 and reflects an increase of R292 million over last year's budget.

The biggest slice of the budget goes to the Department of Education, which is asking for R343 million, followed by the Department of Finance, with R259 million, and the Department of Welfare and Pensions with R214 million.


The Department of Defence has asked for R41 million, Police — R38.7 million, Manpower, Planning and Utilisation — R26 million, Posts and Telecommunications — R25 million, Prisons — R17 million, Justice — R15.7 million, Prime Minister — R12.4 million, Local Government and Land Tenure — R10.5 million, Foreign Affairs and Information — R7 million, Public Service Commission — R6 million, Interior — R5.8 million, and Auditor-General — R3 million.

According to the estimates, the revenue expected from local sources totals R630.7 million while R450 million will come from the Republic of South Africa as budgetary assistance.

The amount of budgetary assistance from South Africa has increased by R164.4 million over that of last year.

This makes the total amount expected to be received R1 290.7 million, leaving a deficit of R414 million.

In a special session two months ago, the National Assembly voted for a total of R300 million as part appropriation for 1987/88 and an additional amount of R218.9 million to the 1986/67 financial year.

Part of R717 million, which comes as revenue from taxation, will be R282 million from the customs union agreement, R192 million from general sales tax, R28 million from income tax, R5.7 million from general levy, R4.8 million from vehicle tax, R3.76 million from the general stock tax and R1.7 million from special tax.

The project will be funded by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) — R95.4 million, KEOSA — R33.7 million and own contributions — R44 million.

Mr Neta is expected to detail the country's fiscal policies and explain the budget in his budget speech today.

Mine explosion could lead to heavy claims

Dispatch Correspondent

DURBAN — Insurance claims for several thousand rands could be made against the Anglo American Corporation for shop and house windows broken during a massive explosion at the Western Holdings Mine between Welkom and Odendaalsrus in the northern Free State this week.

It appears no-one was hurt in the blast, which took place when a pile of explosives awaiting destruction was accidentally detonated during the routine blasting of old explosives.

The explosion was heard in Hennenman, 30 km from the mine.

Welkom glaziers said at least 60 shopfront windows in Welkom and Odendaalsrus, up to 15 km from the mine, were broken or cracked.

The manager of one of the glassworks, Mr Grant Foley, said the shop windows cost up to R500 each to replace.

Local insurance companies and brokers said yesterday that houses, particularly those in a suburb close to the mine, also had broken or cracked windows.

The receptionist at one insurance company said she had received 'quite a few calls about broken windows, mostly from homes in Reitz Park, close to the mine.

A spokesman for the Anglo-American Corporation in Johannesburg said the company was aware of reports of damage in the area.

EL family appeal return of missing violin

Dispatch Reporter

EAST LONDON — A young East London musician's violin has gone missing from his school, which may jeopardise his chances of playing in the Royal School of Music exam in two months time.

Lester Coo, a matric pupil at Selborne College, left his violin in its case in the school's classroom last Wednesday. When he returned to collect it for a music lesson, it had disappeared.

His mother, Mrs Gloria Coo, said she had reported the matter to the police, who had opened a case concerning the missing instrument.

She said her husband had also phoned the headmaster of Selborne College, Mr Tim Gordon, who said he would announce the fact that the violin had "gone missing" at the school.

"The violin has been in the family for a number of years and cannot be replaced," Mrs Coo said.
Six still trapped in mine

At least six gold miners are still trapped underground after a rockfall at Genco's Buffelsfontein Gold Mine in the Western Transvaal early yesterday.

By late yesterday, seven workers had been rescued. The body of one miner was recovered last night.

The men were trapped 2.5 km underground on level 26B at the mine's southern shaft.

A Genco spokesman said a pressure burst at about 7 am yesterday caused the rockfall.

Rescue operations are continuing.

Two miners are in the Rand Mutual Hospital in Johannesburg.

"The five rescued workers who received treatment at the Duff Scott Memorial Hospital at Stilfontein have all been discharged," said Mr WB Bruce-Evans, chief executive officer of Gold and Uranium Division of Genco.

A spokesman for the National Union of Mineworkers was not available for comment.
5 trapped, 7 rescued after mine rockfall

JOHANNESBURG — At least five miners are still trapped underground after a rockfall hit Gencor's Buffelsfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal early yesterday morning.

One miner is being treated for serious injuries after being freed from the mine.

Mr W B Bruce-Evans, Gencor's chief executive officer Gold and Uranium Division, said about 12 workers had been trapped more than 2.5km underground after the pressure burst occurred, but seven had been rescued by last night.

"The rescued workers are receiving treatment for injuries and shock at the Duff Scott Memorial Hospital at Stilfontein. The condition of one is serious, while that of the others is satisfactory."

Rescue operations are continuing, and further information will be released when available. The rockfall occurred 2400m underground about 7am on level 26 of the mine's southern shaft — Sapa.
PATRICK BULGER

UP TO five miners were still trapped underground last night at Gencor's Buffalo-footeins gold mine in Stilfontein after a rockfall yesterday morning.

A spokesman said it was not possible to say whether they were still alive.

Rescue teams pulled five workers to safety by late afternoon. Two other workers had been rescued by early evening.

They were admitted to Duff Scott Memorial Hospital where they were treated for injuries and shock. One worker was in a serious condition and the others stable, Gencor chief executive officer, gold and uranium, W B Bruce-Evans said.

Rescue operations were continuing last night.

The accident occurred at 7am yesterday morning when a "seismic event" caused rockfalls which trapped the miners 2 490m underground on 26 level at the southern shaft.

No other workers appeared to be involved in the accident, Evans said.
Recovery workers yesterday recovered the bodies of two more miners killed in a rockfall at Gencor's Buffelsfontein Gold Mine in the Western Transvaal.

This brings to three the number of miners killed in the accident caused by a pressure burst 2.5 km underground on Thursday morning.

Last night four men were still unaccounted for.

Two miners, Mr. Nelson Ngongo and Mr. Madinga Bongani, are recovering in the Rand Mutual Hospital after being crushed by rock. Mr. Ngongo is in the intensive care unit at the hospital and is in a serious condition, a hospital spokesman said.

Mr. Bongani (27) from Pongola in Transkei, said, "I disappeared underneath the rock. Others were trying to dig me out, but could not get to me. Two other men trapped with me died." He was part of a blasting team.

Five miners were treated at a Stellenbosch hospital after the rockfall and later discharged.
JOHANNESBURG — All the missing miners at the Buffelsfontein gold mine in the Western Transvaal had been accounted for with the recovery of three bodies from the area affected by the rockfall on Thursday, a Gencor spokesman said yesterday. Seven miners died.
Miner dies

A MINER was killed when he plunged nearly 1,000 metres down a shaft after an explosion ripped a hole in the floor of a cage waiting to take workers down the Gencor-owned Beatrix gold mine in the Orange Free State.

Mr Bruce Evans, chief executive officer of Gencor's Gold and Uranium Division, said the man apparently fell into the shaft through a hole in the cage after a number of detonators exploded beneath it.
Miner plunges 1 000 m to his death

JOHANNESBURG — A miner was killed when he plunged nearly 1 000 metres down a shaft after an explosion ripped a hole in the floor of a cage waiting to take workers down the Gencor-owned Beatrix gold mine, in the Orange Free State.

The Chief Executive Officer of Gencor’s Gold and Uranium Division, Mr Bruce Evans, said the man fell into the shaft through a hole in the cage after a number of detonators exploded beneath it.

The cage was waiting on the surface to take a team of workers down the mine’s 370-metre-deep number one shaft.

Two other workers received severe foot injuries and were admitted to the nearby St Helena mine hospital. A further 20 were in the same hospital receiving treatment for light wounds and shock.

Mr Evans said the cause of the explosion has not been established and was being urgently investigated by management and the Department of Mines.

Last week seven bodies were recovered from Gencor’s Buffelsfontein mine in the western Transvaal, after a pressure burst trapped a number of workers underground.

As a precaution, another five miners who were exposed to smoke from burning explosives, were sent to the Welkom hospital for observation.
— Sapa
NUM reiterates call for inquiry after miner’s death

The National Union of Mineworkers has again demanded an independent commission of inquiry into mine accidents following the death of a miner who fell nearly 1 000 m down a shaft at Gencor’s Beatrix gold mine.

Gencor said yesterday the miner fell to his death after detonators blew a hole in the floor of a “cage” waiting to take workers down the mine’s Number One shaft.

Gencor chief executive for gold and uranium, Mr Bruce Evans, said 22 workers, two with severe injuries, were admitted to the St Helena Mine Hospital. A further five workers had been sent to the Welkom Hospital for observation after being exposed to smoke from burning explosives.
Miner’s death plunge

JOHANNESBURG — A miner was killed when he fell 1000m down a shaft after an explosion ripped a hole in the floor of a cage waiting to take workers down the Gencor-owned Beatrix gold mine in the Free State. Two other workers received serious injuries and 20 minor injuries. The cause of the blast is unknown and is being investigated.
Mine blast: New call for probe

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers has again demanded an independent commission of inquiry into mine accidents following the death of a miner who fell nearly 1,000m down a shaft at Gencor's Beatrix gold mine.

Gencor said the miner fell after detonators blew a hole in the floor of a cage waiting to take workers down the mine. Twenty-seven workers, two with severe injuries, were admitted to hospital.

Five of those admitted were for observation after being exposed to smoke, said Gencor's chief executive for gold and uranium, Mr Bruce Evans.

Mr Evans said an urgent investigation was being held into the cause of the explosion.

NUM assistant general secretary Mr Marcel Golding said the Beatrix accident and the death of more than 57 miners in the past few months made management claims that South African mines were among the safest in the world appear "ludicrous."

He repeated the NUM's demand for talks between the union, the Chamber of Mines and mining houses on health and safety issues, as well as the introduction of safety stewards.

Last week seven workers were killed after being trapped underground following a pressure burst at Gencor's Buffelsfontein gold mine.
**Union wants inquiry**

THE National Union of Mineworkers has repeated calls for an independent commission of inquiry into mine accidents in the wake of the death of a worker who plunged nearly 1 000m down a mine shaft this week after an explosion blew a hole in a cage waiting to take miners down a Free State gold mine.

NUM's assistant general-secretary, Marcell Golding, said that the accident on the Gencor-owned Beatriz Mine and the death of more than 57 miners in the past few months made management claims that their mines were among the safest in the world appear ludicrous.

Earlier, Bruce Evans, chief executive officer of Gencor’s Gold and Uranium Division, said the man apparently fell into the shaft through a hole that had been blown into the floor of the cage after a number of explosions.

Two workers were injured.

Sapa
Eight weeks, eleven mining accidents

By Seboko Naka

...
Mine after closed deaths

[Image of a newspaper clipping]
By Jaap Boshoff

The death rate in South Africa's gold mines is rising again, and the average black stope miner will have a one-in-six chance of dying in a rockfall during a 30-year spell in the mines.

Consultant mine engineer Mr Jack Curtis says this means fatalities inside South African gold mine workings are about on a par with trench warfare during the two World Wars.

Mr Curtis has been studying gold mining fatality figures for the first five months of 1987, which he says are higher than in any year this decade.

He predicts that about a hundred more miners in all categories will die in accidents this year compared with the previous year, mean 880 a year, some 650 of them in gold mines.

Mr Curtis blames the rising death rate on the shortage of qualified mining engineers, both in the Government inspectorate and in the mines.

He says in the earlier days of gold mining, inspectors made unannounced visits two or three times a year. Now they only came after accidents.

He also believes that the position 'can only deteriorate' until the Scheduled Person Clause of the Mines and Works Act, which discriminates against black miners, is permanently removed to make black and white mine employees compete on merit.

'The official fatality rate of 1.03 per thousand in 1985 is likely to rise by nearly halfl to 1.5 per thousand this year — thus after a constant decrease in fatalities during the period 1905 to 1945 and a levelling off during the four decades between 1945 to 1985,' he said.

'The official fatality rate does give a misleading picture because it includes all mine personnel, such as kitchen staff, clerks and other surface workers.

'The fatality rate of miners in the stope is nearer to five or six per thousand,' he added.

'This worked out to one out of every six miners killed over a career of 30 years.'

The gold mines were simply not coping with rockbursts, despite the fact that the Chamber of Mines constantly advertised the millions of rands spent into rockburst research.

'The rockburst remains a result of mine design and is not a 'seismic event' interpreted as an act of God,' Mr Curtis said.
Shaft closed after killings

ANGLO'S Western Holdings Gold Mine in the Free State closed its number six shaft on Saturday after two white mine officials and six black miners died in a clash between mineworkers and mine security officers.

At the time of going to press it could not be confirmed whether the shaft had been re-opened or what the cause of the clash was.

Sapa, reported a police spokesman, said the white officials were attacked after being called to the scene of a strike at the number six shaft.

They were attacked by men wielding pangas.

Forty-one other workers were injured in the incident.

An Anglo official described the mine as quiet on Saturday.
EIGHT HUNDRED workers were killed in 12,709 accidents on South African mines last year. Deaths increased from 705 in 1985, although the number of accidents dropped from 14,820, a report tabled in Parliament by the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs said. The vast majority of accidents were at gold mines.
Fatal rockburst caused by tremor

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG.—A rockburst, which killed nine miners and injured 25, 3,400 m underground at the Western Deep Levels gold mine outside Carletonville yesterday, was caused by an earth tremor, owners of the mine said today.

An Anglo American Corporation spokesman, Mr John Kingsley-Jones, said the rockburst happened at 9:15 a.m. in the mine's No. 3 shaft after an earth tremor measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale.

Among the dead were Mr Ivor Owens, 27, a stoper, of Tugela Street in Carletonville. He leaves a wife, Frances, and three children, Tyrone, 5, Edwin, 4, and Nordika, 1.

Mr J P Engelbrecht, Mr Owens's stepfather, said funeral arrangements would be made today. He said Mr Owens had worked at the mine for three years.

"He was happy there. He enjoyed his work. It is just sad that this terrible accident happened."

The identities of the other eight men who died are being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed.

"This will take a while as some of the men are from rural areas," Mr Kingsley-Jones said.

He said 10 of the injured had been discharged from hospital. One man was flown to the Cottesloe Hospital in Johannesburg but his condition was described as not serious.

The other injured are being treated at the mine hospital for various injuries, including bruises, cuts and broken bones. Their general condition was described as "stable" today.

So far 15 miners have been killed in rockbursts at Western Deep Levels this year.
Nine die in rock burst

JOHANNESBURG — Nine miners were killed and 28 injured by a massive rockburst yesterday morning at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville.

The rockburst was caused by an earth tremor measuring 3.8 on the Richter Scale, an Anglo spokesman, Mr. John Kingsley-Jones, said last night.

This brought to 15 the number of mineworkers killed — all in rockfalls — at Western Deep this year.

"Anglo named one of yesterday's dead as 27-year-old Mr. Ivy Avenue. The names of the others, eight, will be released when their next-of-kin have been informed.

The rockburst occurred at the mine's Number Three shaft about 3400m underground. None of the injured were in a critical condition."
9 miners killed in huge underground rockburst

OWN Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Nine miners were killed and 28 injured in a massive rockburst yesterday morning at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels gold mine near Carletonville.

The rockburst was caused by an earth tremor measuring 3.5 on the Richter scale, Anglo spokesman Mr John Kingsley-Jones said last night. The rockburst occurred at the mine's No 3 shaft about 3,400 metres underground. None of the injured is in a critical condition.

Anglo named one of yesterday's dead as Mr Ivor Owens, 27. The names of the other eight will be released when their next-of-kin have been informed.
Chamber to move on Aids

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — The Chamber of Mines is expected to release soon a new policy on the handling of Aids in the mining industry.

The chamber has come under extreme pressure from government to repatriate all Aids carriers and to cease recruiting from areas — particularly Malawi — where the disease is prevalent, since the matter was raised in Parliament last month by the Conservative Party.

The chamber has been discussing the issue at the highest levels within its structures and, according to a spokesman, has been involved in ongoing discussions with the Department of Health.

Present chamber policy is clinically to assess and counsel carriers. Their services would be terminated only when they were clinically unfit to work.

In addition, it is chamber policy to screen potential new employees from Aids-prevalent areas.

The spokesman says the chamber does not have any new data on the prevalence of Aids in the industry since a study in August, based on 300,000 blood tests, which showed that about 800 workers may be carriers. Of those, 760 were from Central Africa.
On Friday, the Chamber of Mines is expected to release a new policy on the handling of AIDS in the mining industry. The policy is intended to protect all employees from discrimination and to ensure a safe working environment.

The policy follows a series of meetings held in Johannesburg under the leadership of Health Minister Dr Manto Mathaba. The meetings were attended by representatives from local mining companies and the Department of Health.

Present chamber policy is to screen all new personnel in the highest risk areas, while another policy is to screen all employees working in these areas. The Chamber spokesperson says the chamber does not have any new data on the prevalence of AIDS in high-risk areas.

In addition, the chamber has initiated a policy to screen personnel in areas with a high prevalence of AIDS. The chamber has also been involved in the promotion of the Department of Health's HIV and AIDS education programme.

In a related development, the Chamber has also been working with government to release an urgent report on the handling of AIDS in the mining industry. The report is expected to be released soon and will provide guidelines for mining companies to follow in the handling of AIDS in the workplace.
Five coalminers are recovering in hospital today after eating insecticide-spiked lunchpacks when they went underground at Gencor's TNC Colliery, near Witbank, on Friday.

It is believed the men were among 120 out of the mine's complement of about 1,300, who broke the national mine strike.

They were taken to the Rand Mutual Hospital in Johannesburg where they are reported to be in a stable condition.

A Witbank NUM spokesman said union members were not responsible for the poisoning. He said it was a mystery how the men were poisoned because many lunchpacks had left the kitchen that morning.
Two miners killed

JOHANNESBURG — Two miners were killed in a fall of ground at the Harmony Gold Mine at Virginia in the Free State yesterday, according to a statement by the mine.

Cosatu car stolen

COSATU'S Western Cape branch has appealed to three men who stole its office car — a 1986 white Toyota Corolla containing 150 Cosatu keyrings, four briefcases and 50 booklets containing reports from the second national congress — to "kindly return the goods".

Khayelitsha robbery

TWO armed men robbed a Khayelitsha security guard of his firearm on Wednesday. A police spokesman yesterday said Mr Julius Kololi, 59, a security guard for the Cape Provincial Administration's Community Services, was doing guard duty at Greenpoint, a tent town in Khayelitsha, at 11.30am when he was held up and robbed of his 9mm service pistol.

Sisulu denied passport

JOHANNESBURG — Mrs Sheila Sisulu, a sister-in-law of Mr Zwelakhe Sisulu (editor of the New Nation newspaper who is detained under the state of emergency regulations), has been refused a passport to travel to the United States, the Sowetan reported yesterday.

Ferrari celebrate in style...
24 MINERS DIE IN ACCIDENT

About 30 black mine workers have died — 24 of them in a bus accident — since the national strike by the National Union of Mineworkers started two weeks ago.

Another 300 have been injured.

By JOSHUA RABOROKO

Num's deputy secretary, Mr Marcel Golding, yesterday said the union had sent messages of condolence to the bereaved families and promised to do everything possible to help them.

At least 24 people were killed and 48 were injured in the bus accident at the Nico Malan pass near Cathcart. The bus, taking 72 miners home from the Free State gold fields for the weekend, went off the tarred road on a bend and crashed into a jagged, rocky bank one kilometre below the pass.

The death of a mineworker and serious injury to 20 others at Goldfields of SA's Lebanon mine last week indicated management's determination to break the legal strike action, Num said yesterday.

Two other miners have died and many injured on the mines since the strike started, the union announced.

Mr Golding said that big business — particularly financial institutions in the Western Transvaal and the Free State — were working with mine managements and the State in an attempt to browbeat workers into ending the strike.

He alleged that a number of banks and building societies in the Klerksdorp, Orkney and Free State regions had refused to give striking miners money.

Spokesmen for at least two financial institutions denied the Num allegations, adding that strong action would be taken if the allegations proved true about their bank or building society.

- The two-month-old strike by Postal workers remained unresolved yesterday.
- The Mercedes Benz of SA plant in East London remained closed yesterday as the dispute between the company and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA continued.
LUNGS (Those of blacks) ARE NOT SMALLER

Doctors challenge Western belief

The survey, co-sponsored by First National Bank and conducted by doctors from the University of Cape Town’s respiratory clinic, set out to challenge a long-accepted medical theory on the disparity between the lungs of black and white people.

Medical surveys conducted throughout the Western world in the last 50 years on the comparative lung functions of blacks and whites have indicated that black lungs are smaller in size than their white counterparts.

Western scientists believe that the factor is due to a genetic predisposition and have established a 15 percent average difference as the predicted normal lung volumes of black and white lungs.

Diseases

This finding has severe repercussions in countries with a large mining workforce. High percentage of chest diseases exists among miners, with miner’s pneumoconiosis (or miner’s dust disease), a common condition in South Africa.

Miner’s with a clinical diagnosis of the above disease are eligible for compensation, providing their lung function testing is 13 percent lower than the predicted normal.

Hence, a black miner seeking compensation for lung damage is at a serious disadvantage as his lung function has to read a full 28 percent lower than the white predicted normal, in order to qualify for compensation.

Researchers from the medical faculty of the University of Cape Town believe that it is possible that the 15 percent disparity might well be due to socio-economic factors rather than genetic.

Reasons for this belief:

1. No research has been published in South Africa on a broad cross-section of healthy lungs.
2. No research has ever been conducted investigating the specific relationship between socio-economic factors and lung function.
3. Until recently, black children were thought to grow more slowly than white children. However, researchers discovered that this growth retardation was due to poor diet.
4. It would not be unreasonable to say that until recently, most blacks in the Western world have come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds.

Dr Golden believes that eventual lung function potential is determined by environmental and dietary conditions during childhood, thus, in order to obtain a truly objective analysis, it was necessary to find a cross-section of working middle-class people from both the white and black communities.

The logistics involved almost made the project impossible, until First National Bank came to the rescue.

In addition to a cash donation of R10,000, First National Bank offered space in Barclays House as a home for the research project. They provided statistics of staff members of which some 900 were selected as suitable subjects.

The bank provided transport to the lung function unit and the chest X-ray unit in Hillbrow. A complete test per person takes roughly 3 hours, so the manpower cost to the bank was considerable.
IF the results of an extensive lung function survey recently completed in Johannesburg are as the chief investigator of the research project, Dr. Jonathan Goldman, expects them to be, medical opinion throughout the world may well have to do an about-face.

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Subjects were required to complete an extensive questionnaire with the primary focus being on environmental factors during childhood.

They then had to undergo numerous lung function tests, utilising some of the most technologically advanced equipment in the world.

Preliminary results of the research should be available in December, with the final conclusive results scheduled for publication in February 1988.

A staggering 40-60 percent of all medicine consumed in the Western world is for chest problems.
Eighty-nine workers are missing after an explosion at the St Helena Gold Mine near Welkom today.

Rescue workers are trying to contact the men who were descending in a lift at the mine's No 10 shaft when the blast occurred.

At the time of going to press there was no indication as to the fate of the workers.

A mine spokesman said that, at the time of the explosion, 434 workers were underground.

"Management has accounted for 345 persons, leaving 89 unaccounted for; the capacity of the lift is 82 persons but the actual number of passengers is not known at this stage. 

"The shaft is so severely damaged that it is not known at this stage whether the lift is still attached to the winding rope," said the spokesman.

"Mine management was unable immediately to establish the cause of the explosion.

Mr Gary Maule, a director of St Helena Gold Mines Ltd, said the explosion, which occurred while the lift was taking workers down at 7.15 am, had caused extensive damage to the shaft.

Rescue operations were under way but no contact had been made with the miners.

National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said the union was still investigating the circumstances of the accident.

The blast came as miners in the Transvaal and the Free State returned to work after the three-week NUM strike.

"Rescue operations are under way and, as soon as we make progress, we will distribute more information," a spokesman for Genco, administrators of the mine, said.

South Africa's worst mining disaster was in January 1969 when 438 miners died after being trapped 200 m underground at the Coalgate coal mine.

In August 1985, a methane explosion at Secunda's Middelbult colliery claimed 30 lives, with 29 injured, while 17 men were killed and 22 injured in a rock fall at the Eerpm gold mine near Boksburg a month later.

In September 1986, 177 miners died in an underground fire at the Kromme mine. The disaster pushed the gold mine fatality rate for 1986 up to 1.28 per 1,000 workers. The rate for coal mines dropped to 0.23 per 1,000.

At Ermelo Minel in April this year, 36 miners were killed and 10 injured in a methane gas explosion.
Hope fading for 42 trapped miners

Hope is fading for the lives of the 42 men still missing at the St Helena Gold Mine.

Five injured mineworkers were dramatically rescued from the shaft last night. Eight bodies were located.

The mineworkers were in a lift which was being lowered down the 1,637 m-deep No 10 shaft at 7.15 am yesterday when the mine was rocked by an explosion.

The lift plunged down the shaft. It is possible that all 42 men accounted for are inside the lift cage, which is 3.43 m long and 1.68 m wide.

Asked about a chance of survivors in the lift, a mine spokesman said: "I can't imagine anyone surviving a fall like that."

Work began at 7 am today to recover the bodies of eight black miners who died underground. They were found at an intermediate pump station 695 m below the surface.

Another five blacks, who suffered first degree burns, were admitted to hospital last night after a dramatic rescue.

Two of them were in a hospital in Pretoria. The other three were in hospital in Johannesburg.

A countrywide search of the newshole no longer exists in South Africa. The country's news media will continue to report on the end of the mine's operations.

The event was a sad day for the world. It was an event of international significance. The event was a sad day for the world.
A mining company said 92 workers were missing following an explosion that rocked a gold mine shaft yesterday, trapping at least 80 in an elevator suspended 300 metres below ground.

The blast occurred as thousands of black miners were returning to their jobs following a massive three-week strike.

The company said the explosion caused severe damage to the No. 1 shaft, at St Helena Gold Mines, 250 km south-west of Johannesburg.

Explosion

The cause of the explosion has not yet been established and initial reports spoke of a huge explosion that could have been caused by a mismanaged shot at the 1,560-metre-deep shaft.

A company spokesman said 72 miners were trapped in the shaft. Sixty-nine of these were able to return to the surface using the mine's emergency lifts and the other 13 were rescued from one of the ventilation shafts.

A spokesman at the mine said the mine had been closed for seven years.

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Mr G Maude, a director of St Helena Gold Mines Limited, said in a statement that at the time of the explosion, about 90 employees were believed to have been in the shaft's lift which was descending at the time.

"Rescue operations have been started but no contact has yet been made with the employees in the lift."

A spokesman for the Gencor - administrators of St Helena - said later the mine had been "particularly" affected by the national gold and coal miners' strike which ended at the weekend following talks between the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) and the Chamber of Mines.

"About 70 percent of St Helena's workers did not go on strike," the spokesman told Sapa.

"Rescue operations are underway as soon as we make progress we will distribute more information," he said.
The MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
in exercise of the power under section 6 (3) of the National Development Act of 1973, hereby declares that the following order and danger order are to be enforced in the area specified in the annexure thereto:

ORDER
The area specified in the annexure hereto is hereby declared to be a "danger area" for the purpose of section 6 (3) of the National Development Act of 1973.

DANGER ORDER
The area specified in the annexure hereto is hereby declared to be a "danger area" for the purpose of section 6 (3) of the National Development Act of 1973.

This order is effective from the date of its issuance and will remain in effect until further notice.
Welkom blast: 51 miners missing

Five miners rescued, 8 found dead

RESOLVE teams discovered eight dead and five injured miners at the intermediate pump station 695m below the surface at No 10 shaft at St Helena gold mine near Welkom last night.

Fears were mounting for the safety of the remaining 51 miners missing after the blast at the mine yesterday morning. Profo teams discovered the cable by which the lift cage in which they were travelling had been severed at 800m.

Gencor's GM operations for the Free State and Evander, Gerald Maude, said he would be wonderful if we found a stuck cage with people in it.

But chances were regarded as slim that the cage had become lodged somewhere in the lift shaft and it was feared the cage may have dropped to the bottom of the 1367m shaft.

Rescuers reached the injured and dead miners by taking a service lift to within 30m of the pump station and then lowering a "boxen chair" attached to the bottom of the lift by rope. The five survivors were brought up one by one to a safe level, from where they were being taken to the surface.

Preparations were being made to reach the cage last night, but work could not be started until there was no danger of more material falling down the shaft.

It was earlier thought 92 men were missing, but 26 of them were discovered on the surface, in addition to the 342 evacuated through the adjacent No 8 shaft earlier in the day.

Gencor, which administers the mine, announced the blast in a statement saying that at 6.45 yesterday morning "what sounded like an explosion was heard at No 10 shaft."

A Gencor spokesman said last night the cause of the explosion remained unknown.

One mining expert noted a prevalence of methane gas in certain levels of mines in the Welkom area.

This is the third major accident at a Gencor mine in the past year. Last September 177 miners died in an underground fire at the Kintross gold mine.

Another 24 died in a methane gas explosion at Ermelo in April.
JOHANNESBURG — Topping South Africa’s list of mine accidents in the past 12 months is a gold mine fire and a coal mine explosion that together killed 211 men.

Both occurred in mines owned by Gencor, as did the explosion yesterday which trapped at least 70 workers underground in a gold mine shaft at Welkom, south of here.

A Gencor spokesman, Mr. Dawie de Beer, declined to comment yesterday on the run of three major accidents in company mines “I can’t really say anything about it. It is as bad news to us as to anybody else,” he said.

A fire at Gencor’s Kinross gold mine east of here killed 177 men on September 18 last year. The deaths were blamed at the time on poisonous fumes from polyurethane foam used to line tunnel walls. It was the worst gold mine accident in the 100 years of gold mining in South Africa.

On April 9, methane gas exploded in Gencor’s Ermelo coal mine east of here, killing 34 miners. A day earlier, 16 miners were injured in a methane gas explosion at another coal mine east of here, run by Sasol.

The Kinross disaster occurred a few days after the mining industry reported its best safety figures ever.

The Chamber of Mines said in early September that deaths in gold mines in the first half of 1986 fell below one per 1,000 employees for the first time. It said that represented a 14.6 percent improvement over the comparable period of 1985.

The Kinross fatalities helped push the 1986 death toll in South African mines to 800, up from 706 in 1985.

The Chamber of Mines said last year that deaths in gold mines had been cut by nearly 40 per cent in the previous 10 years, largely because an international safety rating system had been introduced in 1978.

The system, adapted from one used by the US Bureau of Mines, gives mines ratings of one to five stars, according to casualty figures, emergency preparedness and other factors.

Safety has been a persistent issue between mining companies and the mineworkers’ union.

The union has contended that production bonuses paid to white miners encourage them to put pressure on black miners to increase output regardless of safety.

The union has also said safety is affected by poorly trained blacks doing some jobs legally reserved for whites.

The chamber has acknowledged that some blacks are doing jobs white miners are trained to do, but has denied that safety was affected. It has said supervisors have an incentive to maintain safety standards, since production losses cut their bonuses.

Mining companies say the nature of South African mines presents some of the stiffest safety challenges in the world. Shafts go deeper than in other countries and create difficult gas buildups and rock face pressures.

“The difficulties faced by the South African gold-mining industry have no comparable equivalents in industry anywhere in the world,” the chamber said last year. — Sana-AFP
Rescuers find 8 bodies
Miners down shaft
Hope fades for 51

JOHANNESBURG — Rescue

Daily Dispatch Correspondent

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03/14/11

bodies

Rescuers find 8 bodies
Miners down shaft
Hope fades for 51
WELKOM — The body of a miner has been seen lying on concrete debris 40 metres deep that has filled the bottom of St Helena gold mine's Number 10 shaft, 1,275 metres down, a Gencor director, Mr Gary Maude, said today.

This brings to nine the number of miners known to have been killed in yesterday's blast in the number 10 shaft of the mine near Welkom in the Orange Free State.

Mr Maude said rescue workers — who reached the 19th level, 1,275 metres below the surface via underground tunnels linked with the adjoining Number 8 shaft — saw the body of the miner after better lighting was installed in the shaft.

The worker had presumably fallen down the shaft, Mr Maude said.

He said rescue workers could not see all the way up the shaft from the 19th level, because "there is a further clogging of rubble higher up".

This meant there was "a slim possibility that the lift is caught in the higher up blockage," Mr Maude said.

If this was the case, there was a chance that the 41 unaccounted for were still alive, Mr Maude said.

Mr Maude said the St Helena management were sure that most, if not all, of the 41 miners unaccounted for were in the lift.

The explosion at 7.15am yesterday caused a lift to plummet down the shaft.

Five people were rescued in the pump station and eight dead were found in the shaft last night.

Of the five who were rescued two are in serious condition in hospital. The other three are in a satisfactory condition.

The five were being treated for burn injuries, indicating that there had been an explosion.

Mr Maude said St Helena was known to have methane gas underground as do all Orange Free State mines.

"Rescue conditions are still extremely dangerous," he said.

The names of four of the 41 missing miners have been released. They are Mr B A Hayns, 37, Mr O C Delspoort, 23, Mr D B Nothnege, 56, and Mr R H Bokha, 19 — Sapa.

Rescue teams have worked non-stop at No 10 shaft at St Helena gold mine near Welkom since the underground explosion yesterday.
Miners wait for news at No 10 shaft of the St Helena Gold Mine in Welkom. Eight miners were killed in an explosion in the shaft and 42 are still missing.

Argus chart marks launch of Sputnik

THIRTY years ago the launch of the first Sputnik began the exploration of space. And on Friday The Argus, in association with BP SA, will publish special chart to mark the anniversary of the launch.
The chart, in English and Afrikaans and printed on quality paper, is part of the popular Argus/BP Newspaper in Education series.
The charts are a valuable teaching aid for students and school pupils and a superb keepsake.
The Space Voyages chart is the second of four this year, the others being South African Fishes (already published), Natural Disasters and The Environment.

TV camera probes shaft as search for miners continues

WELKOM. — Rescuers at St Helena gold mine have suspended a television camera hundreds of metres down the blast-damaged No 10 shaft to find the missing lift in which 42 miners are believed to be trapped.

Hopes of finding the men alive are remote. "I can't imagine anyone surviving a fall like that," said Gencor director Mr Gary Maude.

St Helena management were "fairly sure" that most, if not all, the 42 miners unaccounted for were in the lift cage, which is 3,43 m by 1,63 m and is believed to be about 900 m below the surface.

SPINNING
A Gencor spokesman said the camera was being used to determine the extent of the damage to the shaft and to search for the lift.
"This examination has proved very difficult because of obstructions in the shaft and the camera spinning on its cable.
"Rescue crews managed to lower the camera only 80 m beyond the pump station, 720 m below surface." This is 370 m short of the lift.
"A frame for the camera was rugged and examination work is continuing," the spokesman said.
The explosion happened in the shaft early yesterday. The cause and location of the blast have not been determined.
Five people were rescued and eight bodies were found in the shaft last night.
Two severely injured men were taken to the Rand Mutual Hospital in Johannesburg during the night and the other

(Continued page 3 col 1)

Search for missing miners

(Continued from page 1)

three are in a satisfactory condition in the mine hospital.

A start was made early today to recover the eight bodies from the intermediate pump station, said Mr Maude.

He added "Rescue conditions are extremely dangerous. The concrete shaft wall is badly damaged and at this stage we cannot allow rescue workers beyond the pump station because of falling debris."

He said recovery of the lift would be a long job, "possibly measured in days rather than hours."

According to depth indicator readings, the lift cage stopped about 900 m underground, well short of the bottom of the shaft which is 1,367 m deep.

Mine management believes the cage is either between 915 m and 975 m down, or 46 m under debris at the bottom of the shaft.

Commenting on a National Union of Mineworkers' statement last night that "Gencor mines are death traps," giving Kinross and Ermelo as examples, Mr Maude said: "For a third party to judge the cause of an accident before those involved have done so is not very helpful."

Mr Maude also confirmed that St Helena is known to contain methane gas "as do all Orange Free State mines."

• The families of trapped mineworkers are living and praying in hope as rescue work for the 42 missing men continues.

The daughter of Mr D B Notingham, a 56-year-old driller who was last seen as one of those missing, said today the family had not given up believing that their father would come out alive.

Although she had been told by the mine management that her father was missing in the accident, she said grimly: "We still have hope that everything is all right."

Her face showing the tension, she said every ring of the telephone was an added strain as the family waited for news.

The five children were with their mother at the Nottingham's Odendaalsrus home - The Argus Correspondent and Sapa.

• Shock figures on gold mine fatalities - page 11.
Lone rescue saves 5 in death mine

When the law is an ass — or a goat

WELLINGTON — New Zealand will review the deportation of a South African breed miner following Prime Minister Sir Keith Holyoake's announcement that he had allowed South African gold to stay in New Zealand.

Earlier, the Dunedin Magistrate, Mr. Trevor de Crean, had ruled that the miner had to be shipped out because of its South African breeding.

However, Mr. Langer said yesterday he had once allowed a goat with South African pedigrees into New Zealand because they were not in South Africa when New Zealand imposed its embargo against South African products.

Johannesburg — Five miners were found alive after an explosion apparently ripped through a gold mine shaft at Welkom yesterday. But 42 men are still missing.

The five survivors were found under a pile of rubble by a lone miner working from a rope. He found the man at the bottom of the 2,730-meter deep No. 3 shaft at the St. Helena mine. The eight bodies were found at the same place.

Late last night evidence pointed to an explosion at the mine, according to the owners. Those involved in the explosion were killed and operations were being made to bring up the eight bodies from an interminable pump station at the 1,000-meter level.

No sabotage

"It is possible the miners were recouped by lowering a Hudson's chair from a 100-meter cable sent down the shaft. Work was very slow and very dangerous. Recovery took 30 hours per person," Mr. Maude said.

Of those injured, there is good medical evidence of burns whose severity seems to indicate an explosion," he said.

According to a mine overseer who has been in the mine last night, some were also buried. There is however, nothing to indicate sabotage he added.

Earlier it was estimated that 51 miners were still trapped.

Mr. Maude said the five survivors had been admitted to hospital after receiving treatment for burns from doctors. He said it was a serious condition.

Preparations were being made to evacuate the shaft below the intermediate pump station in order to save the men and locate the missing lift.

Mr. Maude said the rescue team miner reached the pump station about 13 hours after the accident.

He told reporters that the lift cage thought to have been carrying more than 50 miners could be trapped under 40 meters of rubble and watered at the bottom of the shaft.

Cable which had supported the lift cage had been found by rescue teams.

Preparations were being made to try to find the mine last night. But work could not be started until there was no danger of a mine explosion under the shaft.

St. Helena had been partly affected by the miners' strike. — Dain Correspondent and UPI

THIS IS IT! WINTER BARGAINS in our massive WINTER SELL-OUT

Skinny snakes

DURBAN — Two men, charged with cruelty to two snakes, were again remanded in the Durban Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Mr. George Sheen, 80, and Mr. Sydney Neiman, 29, will appear in court again on September 18. It is alleged that on August 14 they unlawfully starved, or undertook to kill one black mamba and had in their possession — snakes.

BUSINESS BRIEF

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Now half normal price!
Hope lost for 40 miners

WELKOM — All hope has been abandoned of saving 40 miners unaccounted for in the St Helena gold mine disaster.

A second body was found at the main pump station 1305m below surface at the mine here yesterday, bringing the known death toll in the blast to 10.

Five miners were injured, two seriously, when an explosion occurred in the mine's number 10 shaft. Forty workers have not yet been accounted for.

The mine's chairman, Mr Steve Ellis, said they were sure beyond doubt that the cage, probably containing all 40 of the workers unaccounted for, was not stuck in the shaft.

It could only be at shaft bottom 1.7km down.

"In these circumstances there is no hope that any of the 40 could be found alive," said Mr Ellis.

Rescue workers have been unable to reach the cage buried below 40m of rubble and twisted metal.

The bodies of the eight other people were still at an intermediate pump station 595m below surface.

A survivor of the blast described his 11-hour ordeal.

Mr Mlamli Mavi, 38, a Transkei migrant worker, received burns to his head and arm.

He was at the intermediary pump station in the shaft when he heard "an explosion followed by big fire, strong wind and then complete darkness", at which he lost consciousness for 11 hours.

"When I finally came to my senses, I saw bodies sprawled around."

An investigation into the causes of the accident at the St Helena mine would be conducted at soon as the spot where it occurred could be reached, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology, Mr Danie Steyn, said yesterday.

Mr Steyn expressed his "deepest sympathy" for the next of kin and friends of those who had been killed.

— Political Correspondent and Sapa
Methane gas ‘likely cause’ of mine blast

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — A methane gas explosion may have been responsible for the St Helena Gold Mine disaster in which 50 miners are believed to have died.

The bodies of ten miners have been found and mine chairman Mr Steve Ellis said last night there was no hope that the 40 workers trapped in a cage beneath 40m of rubble were still alive.

A Gencor director, Mr Gary Maude, said yesterday that methane gas “was one of the more likely” causes of the blast which sent the cage plunging to the bottom of the 1370m shaft.

He declined to speculate on other possibilities.

Of the five miners who were injured in the explosion, two are in a serious condition in hospital in Johannesburg.

The explosion happened at St Helena’s Number 10 shaft at 7:15am on Monday.

Mr Maude said management would do its utmost to reach the cage, although this could take several weeks because of the debris covering it.

He added that the bodies of eight of the dead miners were still at the intermediate pump station and would be recovered as soon as the shaft had been made safe.

Mr Mkhuma, a National Union of Mineworkers official, was highly critical of the safety measures and standards at Gencor mines. However, he refused to speculate on the cause of the accident, saying he had no facts.

Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology Mr Danie Steyn last night expressed his deepest sympathy with the family and friends of the deceased.

An investigation into the cause of the accident is to be conducted as soon as inspectors can reach the scene.
Sympathy for victims

A spokesman for the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Mr Danie Steyn, yesterday expressed his "deepest sympathy" for the families of the victims and a speedy recovery of those injured, in the Welkom mine disaster on Monday.

The Government mining engineer had been at the mine since the beginning of the disaster, the spokesman added yesterday.

"Mr Steyn has expressed his deepest sympathy, offering condolences to the relatives of those who died and wishes for a speedy recovery to those injured," the spokesman said.

[Signature]

[Date]
Recovery of bodies could take weeks

Methane gas may be cause of mine blast

By Mudini Maivha

A methane gas explosion may have been responsible for the St Helena gold mine disaster which is feared to have claimed the lives of 50 miners.

Mine chairman Mr Steve Ellis said at the mine last night after 10 bodies had been found that there was no hope that the 40 workers trapped in a cage beneath 40 m of rubble were still alive.

A Gencor director, Mr Gary Maude, said yesterday that methane gas "was one of the more likely possibilities" for having caused the blast that sent the cage plunging to the bottom of the 170 m-deep shaft. He declined to speculate on other possibilities.

Of the five miners who were injured in the explosion, which occurred at St Helena's No 10 shaft at 7.15 am on Monday, two are in a serious condition in a Johannesburg hospital.

The bodies of 10 miners were found but the 40 others are believed to be inside the cage at the bottom of the shaft.

Four of the miners now believed dead have been identified.

They are drillers Mr B A Hayes (37), learner drillers Mr O C Delaport (23), drillers Mr D B Nothnagel, and Mr R H Botha (19).

The names of the others have not yet been released.

Mr Ellis said:

"This is a very sad announcement to have to make. One had hoped against hope that there might still be a prospect of more survivors. But, by now, it is clear we must accept there are 10 confirmed deaths and up to 40 more unconfirmed."

He offered his condolences to the relatives of the victims.

Recovering the bodies

"Mr Maude said management would do its utmost to reach the cage as soon as possible although this could take several weeks because of the debris covering it.

"Recovery operations will have to be done from the 15th level -- 127 m below the surface," he said.

He added that the bodies of eight of the dead miners were still at the intermediate pump station and would be recovered as soon as the shaft had been made safe.

The Lesotho government contacted the mine to establish whether any of its citizens were victims of the disaster.

The Lesotho labour representative in Welkom, Mr P. Kholane, visited the mine. He was given the names, addresses and other particulars of unaccounted for Basotho by Mr Carel Potgieter, the mine's manpower manager.

Officials of the National Union of Mineworkers also made several attempts to meet management about the disaster.

Safety officer Mr Hasayi Sibanyoni and Welkom regional organiser Mr Nzwandile Malesela could not meet Mr Potgieter.

Later five other officials, including Mr Simon Mkhuma, were allowed into Mr Potgieter's office.

Mr Mkhuma was highly critical of the safety measures and standards at Gencor mines. He accused management of refusing to appoint safety stewards. But he refused to speculate on the cause of the accident, saying he had no facts.

The Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology, Mr Danie Steyn, last night expressed his deepest sympathy on behalf of himself, the Government and his department with the next-of-kin and friends of the deceased. He wished the injured a speedy recovery.

See Page 3
A MINE tragedy strikes deep in the hearts of people. It also conjures a picture of gallant workers pitting their strength against nature in the bosom of the earth.

The tragedy at St Helena Gold Mine in the Free State is particularly ironic as these miners had just been through the longest and most traumatic strike in the history of the industry.

So it is with sadness and with a deep sense of shock that we witness the drama unfold as men are being dug out from the depths of the mine. We are also thinking of families who might still not know what has happened and will then have to go through the throes of remorse we ourselves are experiencing.

We hope that the explosion was caused by nature. It would make us shudder even more if the suggestion that it could have been the result of sabotage is confirmed.

Miners all over the world are regarded as the unsung heroes of a country’s economy and history.

We express our deepest sympathy to the families, the friends and those who knew the dead men.
SOWETAN, Wednesday, September 2, 1987

How 5 were saved

had not yet been determined.

Reacting to the accident, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) described Gencor mines as "death traps." However, Mr. Maud's has repeatedly said they would not allow the NUM access unless they felt there was a need for the union to help. He said the NUM wasamping_7several other employee organizations who have been denied access but were being represented at the situation.

Furious.

NUM's assistant general secretary Mr. Marcell Gording said the accident confirmed the union's belief that South Africa's mines were the most unsafe in the world.

Recent accidents at Gencor mines include: the Knossos disaster, which claimed 177 lives last September, and a methane gas explosion in April which killed 34 miners at Ermelo Mines. The NUM's safety

OFFICER, Mr. Hazzy Stambouli, and the regional organiser for the Free State, Mr. Mzwamile Kondula, were furious that they could not see the mine's manpower manager, Mr. Carel Potgieter, with whom they had an agreement for 11:30 a.m. to discuss access to the shaft.

However, Mr. Maud's has repeatedly said they would not allow the NUM access unless they felt there was a need for the union to help. He said the NUM wasamping_7several other employee organizations who have been denied access but were being represented at the situation.

Injured.

In the evening, Mr. Mauds said, the NUM was angry and vowed to take legal action against the mine. The NUM has been camped out at the mine since yesterday, demanding access to the mine's records.

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Mine disaster puts spotlight on Gencor record

By Chris van Gass, Pretoria Bureau

The disaster at the St Helena mine near Welkom is the second major tragedy on Gencor gold mines in less than a year, putting the company's and the gold mining industry's safety record in the spotlight.

On September 16 last year, 177 miners died at Gencor's Kinross mine in the Eastern Transvaal. During 1986 there were 263 deaths on Gencor-owned mines, according to a spokesman.

The "fatality rate" which is expressed in the number of people killed in a thousand was 2.85 on its gold mines, according to Gencor.

The rate for gold mining members of the Chamber of Mines had been 1.28 for 1986, according to the Chamber. This rate had been reduced in the South African gold mining industry from a high of 1.41 in 1977 to a low of 1.03 in 1985. Last year's industry figure of 1.28 had been due mainly to the Kinross disaster.

For Gencor's coal mines the fatality rate had been 0.34, compared with the industry average of 0.33. In the United States, this rate was 0.48, the United Kingdom 0.18 and Germany 0.24.

The fatality rate for all Gencor group mines, which include mines other than gold and coal mines, was 1.73 in 1986, or a total of 288 deaths.

Mr Steve Ellis, executive director of Gencor's mining division, said that although he could not talk away the accidents which had happened, he believed accidents could be prevented.

"Gencor is extremely safety conscious and the matter is treated seriously even at the highest levels. Therefore, I don't even think that people who say that Gencor mines are disasters are worth replying to," said Mr Ellis.

A spokesman for the Chamber of Mines said statistics for the South African gold mining industry could not be significantly compared with the rest of the world because of the unique conditions found in the South African industry.

Gold mines in South Africa operated to depths approaching four km, providing problems with heat and pressure, said a Chamber spokesman.

The quartzite rock in which the gold bearing ore was found was the hardest and most abrasive in the world, which meant that working with it was very difficult.

Furthermore, the South African gold mining industry was highly labour-intensive, which meant if there was a rockburst or other accident, large numbers of people were involved, he said.
12 more presumed dead in mine blast

Own Correspondents

JOHANNESBURG — The presumed death toll from Monday's explosion at the St Helena gold mine near Welkom rose to 62 yesterday with the discovery that another 12 people were apparently in the lift cage which fell to the bottom of the No 10 shaft.

According to Genor's Mr Gary Maude, the 12 were employees of a contracting company at the mine.

The government and mining houses were yesterday sharply criticized by the Conservative Daily Telegraph newspaper in London for their poor safety record.

The newspaper said the government should ensure a tightening of safety regulations in mines. "Neither it nor the mining houses can claim to have the welfare of the black population at heart if they allow such an accident rate to continue," it said.
Mine death toll rises to 62

THE presumed death toll from Monday's explosion at the St Helena gold mine near Welkom rose to 62 yesterday with the discovery that another 12 people were apparently in the lift cage which fell to the bottom of the No 10 shaft.

According to Gencor's Gary Maude, the 12 were employees of a contracting company at the mine.

"Their presence came to light after new information was received from the company."

"Although we had been concerned throughout about the possibility of a miscount, we are nevertheless most distressed about this development," he said.

He added eight bodies found at the intermediate pump station were brought to the surface yesterday.

He said work was continuing to make the shaft safe to enable mine personnel to reach the fallen conveyance. This could still take some weeks."
DEATH TOLL

12 Workers from a Contracting Firm Among the Victims

The death toll of Monday's blast at St Helena gold mine near Welkom may have risen to 62 with Gencor's announcement that 12 workers from a contracting company were possibly in the cage that fell to the bottom of the shaft.

The confirmed number of dead is 10. Forty miners were yesterday still unaccounted for and presumed dead.

Eight bodies found at the intermediate pump station in the shaft were due to be brought to the surface yesterday according to a statement on behalf of St Helena by Gencor director Mr. Gary Maude.

Another two bodies have been located - one at the main pump station and the other on top of the shaft at the bottom of the shaft. Although we had been concerned throughout about the possibility of a rescuer, we are nevertheless most interested about the developments," Mr. Maude said.

"Work was continuing to make the shaft safe in order to enable mine personnel to reach the fallen conveyance as soon as possible, but would take some weeks," Mr. Maude said.

Epidemic feared

Wages could not be increased because of the present economic climate in the country and the fact that the council had begun a number of projects to upgrade the township, he said.

"Mr. Knot confirmed that residents feared an epidemic. A spokesman for the council said there were 2,000 people at work today or facing the dismissal."

BIKO ANNIVERSARY - Page 2

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for and presumed dead
And with the 12 contract workers who were presumed to be in the lift at the time of the blast, the toll has risen to a possible 62.

St Helena management has said it was "beyond doubt" that the lift cage plummeted to the bottom of the 1370 m No. 1 shaft when the blast rocked the mine on Monday morning.

 Residents in the area have also been left without access to their water supply and other essential services have been affected by the miners' action.

"The workers" are all members of the African Mineworkers' Union.
12 men feared dead in mine were pipefitting

By Dan Side

Twelve employees of an outside contractor, who are believed to have brought the final death toll of Monday’s St Helena Gold Mine disaster at Welkom to 62, were involved in pipefitting operations at underground pump stations.

According to Gencor PRO Mr Harry Hill today, the pipefitting crew was the last of the morning shift – along with the 40 St Helena miners who were also entombed in a lift cage under 40 m of debris at the bottom of the 1 387 m-deep No 10 Shaft – scheduled to descend to their work stations.

"I cannot reveal the name of the contracting company," said Mr Hill, "but I can say that the presence of their men in the cage has been rigorously checked and re-checked.

CONCERNED ABOUT MIS-COUNT

"We said earlier that we were most concerned about the possibility of a mis-count of the casualties," Mr Hill said.

"So far there was as yet no official explanation for the cause or location of the explosion that triggered the lift cable, causing the cage to plunge an estimated 407 m from its last reported position to the bottom of the shaft.

"This is still the subject of investigation," he said.

The 52 passengers in the cage were buried under tons of concrete and steel that rained down following the explosion. A statement released yesterday said it would take "weeks" to recover the bodies.

The bodies of the eight miners killed at an intermediate pump station at an upper level of the mine have been recovered. One dead miner was found at a lower pump station and another was found on top of rubble at the bottom of the shaft.

Five men were rescued in a dramatic operation, involving a small emergency lift called a "Mary Ann" and a bosun’s chair.

A team from the office of the Government Mining Engineer will investigate the accident. It is expected the team will probe possible overloading of what was scheduled to be the last cage load of the day for the morning shift.

SAPA reports that the President, Mr P W Botha sent a telegram to the general manager, saying: "On behalf of my wife, myself and the public of South Africa, I wish to express our deepest sympathy to the families, friends and colleagues of the deceased, the injured and the community of Welkom."
Contractor pipefitters in cage with last of the shift
12 more feared killed in Welkom mine plunge

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Twelve employees of an outside contractor who are believed to have brought the final death toll of Monday's St Helena gold-mine disaster at Welkom to 62, were fitting pipes at underground pump stations.

Genkor public relations officer Mr Harry Hill said today that the pipelining crew was the last of the morning shift — with the 40 St Helena miners who were also entombed in a lift cage under 40 metres of debris at the bottom of the 1,877m No 10 shaft — scheduled to descend to their work stations.

"I cannot reveal the name of the contracting company," said Mr Hill, "but I can say that the presence of their men in the cage has been rigorously checked and rechecked.

"We said earlier that we were most concerned about the possibility of a miscount of the casualties."

Investigation

Mr Hill said there was as yet no official explanation for the cause or location of the explosion that severed the lift cable, causing the cage to plunge 457m from its last reported position to the bottom of the shaft.

"This is still the subject of an investigation," he said.

The 52 passengers in the cage were buried under the tons of concrete and steel that caved down after the explosion. A statement released yesterday said it would take "weeks" to recover the bodies.

The bodies of the eight miners killed at an intermediate pump station at an upper level of the mine have been recovered. One dead miner was found at a lower pump station and another lying on top of the rubble at the bottom of the shaft.

Five men were rescued in a dramatic operation, involving a small emergency lift called a "Mary-Ann" and a bosun's chair.

Name released

A Government team will investigate the accident. It is expected to probe possible overloading of what was scheduled to be the last cage-load for the morning shift.

● The name of another miner killed in the disaster has been released.

He is Mr Anthony Miller, 28. His girlfriend, Miss Linda van Deventer, said mine personnel had told her of his death this morning.

Mr Miller has a young daughter in Cape Town.
Mine toll rises as 12 more missing

JOHANNESBURG — The presumed death toll from Monday’s explosion at the St Helena gold mine near Welkom rose to 62 yesterday with the discovery that another 12 people were apparently in the lift cage which fell to the bottom of the No 10 shaft.

According to a spokesman for Gencor, Mr Gary Maude, the 12 were employees of a contracting company at the mine.

Their probable presence came to light after new information was received by the company.

He added that eight bodies which had been found at the intermediate pump station were to be brought to the surface.

Mr Maude said that, although work was continuing to make the shaft safe to enable mine personnel to reach the fallen conveyance as soon as possible, this could still take some weeks — DDC.
simply not known where the blast happened, or what caused it. A methane explosion, which appears to be the cause of the tragedy in which 42 are feared dead, is unlikely at a main shaft, this would take a gas build-up in a closed space. For this reason, some question the alacrity with which the sabotage theory was ruled out. In any event, why was a build-up of methane not detected, they ask.

However, it's possible that the explosion occurred in an adjacent pump station, which damaged the shaft and caused the lift to plummet. The damage thus caused to its concrete wall and steel frame is making rescue work difficult and dangerous. The lift appears from the depth indicator to have stopped at 900 m underground, it is likely to take days to bring it to the surface. The shaft is 1,367 m deep.

Gencor says five people were rescued from an intermedia pump station 695 m below surface on Monday. One is in a serious condition, the others were treated for burns, which 'indicated an explosion.' Eight bodies were found at the pump station, from which a camera was being lowered to determine the lift's position.

According to the company, all Free State mines are known to have methane gas problems. Though there are regular checks, one says a spokesman, methane is "very unpredictable."

The names of four white miners among the 42 unaccounted for are B A Hayes (37), a driller, married with one daughter, O C DeLaport (23), an unmarried learner driller, D B Knohnagel (56), a driller, and father of five children, R H Botha (19), married with no children. The names of the others, including another white miner, will be released when their families have been informed.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) describes Gencor mines as "death traps," after the blast. To back up the charge it points to last September's Kinsross disaster, an underground fire in which 177 miners lost their lives, and the Ermelo colliery methane blast, which claimed 34 lives on April 3.

Gencor finds the charge "not very helpful," and tells the FM the company is "dissatisfied by this sad and severe setback," but will stick to its resolve to make mines safer.

The disaster again raises the issue of mine safety, which the unions have repeatedly addressed with demands for more danger pay and increased death benefits. Only days before last year's Kinsross tragedy, the worst in SA gold mining history, the Chamber of Mines reported the industry's best ever safety figures, with deaths on gold mines in the first half of 1986 below one/1,000 miners for the first time. After Kinsross, however, last year's mining death toll reached 800, compared to 766 in 1985.
Gencor release names of dead

Daily Dispatch

Ethiopian

EAST LONDON — Names of Transkeian miners involved in the explosion at number ten shaft of the St Helena gold mine in the Orange Free State last Monday have been released by the mining company, Gencor.

The three miners confirmed dead are, Mr Phakiso Mathe, 38, of Herschel, Mr Nhlanhla Lejakone, 20, and Masupha Mokhahane, 32, both of Lesotho.

Seven Transkeians of a group of 23 presumed missing have been named as Mr David Kholetsane, 23, of Mount Fletcher, Mr Maleke Mokhanyana, 20, Mr Welkom Miteleke Tomu, 23, of Kentane, Mr Joseph Yaso, 23, of Herschel, Mr Mxolisi Nyamla, 26, of Umtata, Mr Mphumzi Ngunase, 22, of Colenso, and Mr Mxolisi Mphlahleni, 22, of Idutywa.

The remainder of the 23 missing miners are from South Africa and the neighbouring southern African states.

In a statement yesterday, Gencor said the names released were those of whose relatives had been notified. The remaining names would not be released until they had been confirmed dead or missing and their next of kin had been informed.
Gencor has identified four men who died in the mine explosion as David Johannes, Diogo Mathe, Eusebio Guedes, and Leonel Alves. The blast occurred at the mine's No. 10 shaft, located in the mine's No. 10 section. The mine has already announced that it has retrieved the bodies of the men and that they will be flown to Cape Town for an autopsy. The mine is currently in the process of retrieving the bodies of the remaining five men who are still trapped in the mine. The mine has been closed indefinitely until the investigation is complete.
Two die in rock burst

JOHANNESBURG
Two miners died and 12 were injured in a rock burst at Western Deep Levels gold mine, the Anglo American Corporation announced yesterday.
THE COURAGE OF TWO FAMILIES

Mine put on alert after Colin taken seriously ill

COALWORKER Colin Fox, 34, has caught the feared legionnaire's disease — and his doctors believe it was contracted on the mine.

Fearing a mass outbreak of the killer disease, his physician immediately alerted Gencor's Matla Colliery, near Witbank, after Colin's condition was diagnosed.

The disease left Colin, an underground surveyor, critically ill for several weeks and plunged his family into dire financial straits.

Mr Fox must now convince Matla management that he caught the disease on the mine so that he can claim compensation for a stiff medical bill.

After a month in hospital, he is now back at work.

His physician, who may not be named, told the Sunday Times there was a "strong possibility" that Mr Fox caught the disease on the mine.

'Goner'

"I phoned the mine to tell them about the case because, if the mine was the source of infection, it could result in an epidemic." The sometimes fatal but not contagious legionnaire's disease is a type of pneumonia.

Major symptoms are rigging headaches, chest pains and fever.

It killed five patients in Johannesburg's G Stieltjie Hospital early last year after respirators sprayed infected water into some wards.

"I can tell you," said Mr Fox, "I thought I was a goner when my lungs threatened to collapse at one stage."

Fertile breeding grounds for the legionella pneumophila bacteria are found in moist, warm conditions, such as air-conditioning units and water tanks.

After a warning from the physician, the colliery cleaned out the air-conditioning units installed in all offices, according to Mr Fox.

"But I think it's more likely that I caught the disease underground."

"At the time, I had a thermometer on my leg and my resistance was down."

A Matla colliery spokesman said: "The bacteria that causes the disease can be spread by centralised air-conditioning systems."

"Matla does not have a centralised system, but uses small individual units."

Though not completely recovered, Colin Fox is back at work but has huge medical bills to pay off.

By Hamish McIndoe

"The possibility that this disease can be spread by independent units, according to the physician, is extremely remote."

Mr Fox's illness, which he contracted two months ago, has left his family in a pitiful financial state.

Mr Fox will be entitled to State compensation if it can be proved he contracted the disease on the mine.

Problems

His case will be heard by the Bureau of Occupational Diseases on November 9.

Said his wife, Mira: "At least R3 600 will have to be shelled out after Colli's medical aid society has settled their side of the bill."

"We just don't have that sort of money."

"I don't work and we're not the sort of people who live in debt. Everything we have is paid for."

"Worse, my husband has gone back to work too quickly because he cannot afford to lose time from work."

"It's like the Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads."

The disease was first diagnosed in the US eleven years ago — it killed 23 people attending a convention of American war veterans.

In the deadliest outbreak so far, 39 Britons died in a Stafford hospital three years ago.

Microbiologist at the SA Institute of Medical Research, Dr Hendrik Kornelius, said not only that legionnaire's disease is now relatively common.

"A lot of cases are mild and the disease is only a killer in exceptional circumstances. About ten proven cases are diagnosed in Johannesburg every year."
Kinross mine disaster trial may last months

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — Seven Gencon employees were due to appear again in the Witbank Regional Court today in connection with the death of 177 miners in the Kinross mine disaster on September 16 last year.

It is understood that the hearing will be postponed to October 5 and could run for as long as three months.

MINES ACT

The Kinross men, who were not asked to plead when they appeared earlier this year, are charged with culpable homicide and 13 alternative charges which all fall under the Mines and Works Act and mining regulations.

The seven are Mr John Henry James Burke, a director of Kinross Mines, Mr Jacobus Ignatius Olivier, formerly general manager of Kinross Mines, Mr Daniel Johannes Bothma, Mr Johannes Albertus Louw, Mr Donavan John Browne, Mr Thomas Joseph Coombe, and Mr Frederick Christoffel Vivers.

Mr Burke is representing Kinross Mines Limited. The others are accused in their professional and private capacities.

• The National Union of Mineworkers' assistant general secretary, Mr Marcel Golding, said the union would have attorneys and NUM officials present throughout the hearing.

The union is to hold a memorial service on October 1 near Evander for the members who died in the disaster.
52 bodies still trapped

FIFTY-TWO miners' bodies are still trapped in the lift which plunged to the bottom of the St Hélène Gold Mine's number 10 shaft 22 days ago.

The State mining engineer, Mr G P Badenhorst, said in Johannesburg yesterday that the shaft had been badly damaged and that it would have to be stabilised before the lift could be reached.

He said it would take some time before his investigation into the cause of the accident was completed.

"The biggest priority at this stage is to get the bodies out of the shaft," he said.

Mr Badenhorst said he could not speculate on the cause of the accident.
mineworkers murdered

At least 33 men who defied the miners' strike have been murdered on 13 gold and coal mines since the return to work, Mr Ken Maxwell, chairman of JCI's Gold and Uranium Division, said last night.

He said mine owners had information that 20 of those killed died because they had ignored the strike call, and suspected that this was the motive for the others as well.

"We are in a very difficult situation," said Mr Maxwell. "The workers are absolutely terrified. Systematically people are being killed outside the hostel, Pongas are being used."

He said JCI had information that the murders were carried out by workers who had obeyed the strike call.

Victims who had survived attacks - which started with three killings at ERPM on August 31 - said they were assaulted by people who had supported the strike.

A spokesman for Rand Mutual Hospital confirmed last night that there had been an upward trend in pangas attacks since the strike ended.

Rand Mutual Hospital deals only with serious injuries received by members of the mining industry.

The speaker said three JCI miners had been admitted recently with severe injuries. Two of them died.

However, the head of the South African Police Public Relations Directorate in Pretoria, Colonel Vic Haynes, said last night that he was not aware of any orchestrated attempt to murder miners who had not participated in the three-week strike.

"I am not aware of this matter. The facts must first be checked out before I can comment," he said.

The National Union of Mineworkers could not be contacted for comment today.

The killings have taken place at Randfontein, ERPM, Stilfontein, West Rand Consolidated, East Driefontein, Blyvooruitzicht, Grootvlei, Harmony, Durban Deep, Hartbeesfontein, St Helena, Kloof and Luhanon.

These are JCI, Gencor, Gold Fields and Rand Mines complexes.

JCI said it had also learnt of threats to engine accidents underground to deal with strike breakers, and threats of stage managed ethnic clashes. An instruction was issued by people who were responsible for the killings to get Shangaans from Mozambique, particularly because many had broken the strike.

The attacks included:

- A man who was assaulted in his house. He died later.
- A man was dragged out of his car and attacked with pangas.
- He died in hospital the next day.
- A miner had his nose slashed off outside his hotel.

Bodies have been found in swamps, on the roadside, in residential areas and in the veld.
Carnage of workers must be stopped

EVIDENCE is still largely circumstantial but mine management believes that at least some of the extraordinary number of miners killed since the strike ended on August 30 paid horribly for refusing to take part. Thirty-two have already died violently on 13 mines, their bodies found in swamps, at the roadside, in residential areas and in the veld. Groups have dragged workers out of a house and out of a car in attacks that could not have been spontaneous.

In a normal society, these horrible killings would raise a huge alarm. Inured as South Africans have become to a violent society, they should nevertheless seek urgent ways to put an end to this brutal revenge. If reign of terror it is, as it appears, however, it will indeed be difficult to gain the evidence needed to bring the culprits to book.

Mine management have reason to believe reprisals will continue. They quote a source as saying, "We are getting them one by one. We must get all the people who worked during the strike." They fear there are plans to engineer fatal accidents or to stage-manage ethnic fights.

This appalling situation is like the scenario from a horror movie: it is not the behaviour that should be expected from workers who have fought an honourable battle for improved conditions and have reached a truce with their employers. Spreading terror is a crude way of achieving "unity," a throwback to gangster tactics.

Because the murderous panga attacks are said to be stage-managed as ordinary fights, the police are correctly not jumping to conclusions, but the mines believe they can link the killings with the recent strike. Without locking up potential victims, they would have only limited means of ensuring their protection.

Suspicious of management motives, the National Union of Mineworkers rejects the allegation, pointing out that some of the killings took place at mines where there was no strike. However, the NUM is investigating. If it should find substance in the accusations, we hope it will not hesitate to condemn "executions" or other forms of physical revenge as a form of union discipline.
NUM to probe mine killings

Staff Reporters

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), pledging to investigate allegations that 33 miners had been killed for defying last month's strike, said today it had not been approached by the mining houses.

The union said the allegations, made by JCI gold and uranium chairman Mr Ken Maxwell, were wild and unsubstantiated.

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said today that although Mr Maxwell had claimed that the alleged killings were related to the strike, some of the mines mentioned did not even have strike action.

NUM members had been told to adhere to their code of conduct.

He said the union was unaware of the deaths, but would try to get more detailed information.

According to Mr Maxwell, mine owners had information that 20 of those killed died because they had ignored the strike call.

They suspected that this was the motive for the other killings as well.

A spokesman for Anglovaal said today there had been no strike-related murders at any of the group's mines.

In yesterday's editions of The Star, Mr Maxwell was quoted as saying that Anglovaal's Hartbeesfontein was one of the mines where a strike-related murder had taken place.

The Chamber of Mines says it will look into violence during last month's mineworkers' strike.

False start turns race into fiasco

The Grooms' Plate over 1 000 m at Newmarket yesterday became a fiasco when the outside bank of five stalls did not open as the race was to have been started.

Thirteen of the 19 ran down the track and most failed to note that the flagman was signaling a false start.

A disappointed Wolsak, a groom for trainer C J van Baalen, rode what would have been an excellent race on That's a Deal to score a four-length win over 2-1 favourite Home of Kings, only to learn that a false start had been declared.

The race-meeting stewards had no option but to abandon the race -- last of the day. They said that every effort would be made to run the race at a future date.

See Page 20.
Bytes to the rescue

Recent mine disasters in SA might have given the impression that gold and coal mines are not as safe as they should be, and that mine managements and the Chamber of Mines are not doing enough to rectify the situation.

It is therefore surprising to discover a project that has been running for some months now in the Klerksdorp area, which can pinpoint rockbursts and seismic shifts in a mine to within 20 m to 100 m of the centre of activity.

Such accuracy has cut response time down from four to five hours to five minutes, which means that rescue teams can be on their way to the right spot almost immediately. It also means that mine managers can move nearby workers to safe areas and avert the possibility of further injuries.

The system was developed by the Chamber, in collaboration with Central Data Systems (CDS), and operates on a Masscomp 5400 computer linked to 32 underground geophones scattered throughout four mining areas.

The phones continuously monitor the intensity of seismic activity at a rate of 1m samples (2m bytes) a second. As soon as a tremor is detected, a signal is transmitted via UHF (ultra high frequency) radio to the central computer in Stilfontein, where it is recorded on disc.

The signals are displayed on a graphic workstation, allowing the operator to use three-dimensional triangulation to calculate the position of the hypocentre with a high degree of accuracy.

Says CDS's Andrew Amulie, "The computer is capable of both sampling and calculating at remarkable speed, which means the mining can alert rescue squads and send them out to the correct place within minutes instead of hours."
Kinross mine disaster
seven men facing charges

Highveld Bureau

The Kinross mine disaster hearing begins today in the Witbank Regional Court.

Seven Gencor employees are to face charges of culpable homicide or 13 alternative charges under the Mines and Works Act and mining regulations.

The case arises from the underground fire at the Kinross Mine on September 16 last year when 177 miners died.

The men charged are: Mr John Henry James Burke, a director of Kinross Mines; Mr Jacobus Ignatius Olivier, general manager at the time of the accident; Mr Daniel Johannes Botma, Mr Johannes Albertus Louw, Mr Donovan John Brown, Mr Thomas Joseph Coombe and Mr Frederick Christoffel Viviers.

Mr Burke is representing Kinross Mines Limited. The last six are charged in their personal and professional capacities.
Homicide charges over deaths

Kinross Mines disaster: plea of not guilty

KINROSS Mines Ltd., represented by director John Burke, and six others yesterday pleaded not guilty to culpable homicide and a number of other charges arising from the disaster last September in which 177 people died.

The case is being heard by JVR Pettersen in the Witbank Regional Court.

The alternative to the main charge is that the accused endangered the safety of underground staff by applying and/or keeping combustible or inflammable material in a works area and then omitting to take proper precautions to prevent fire.

In a further alternative, the mine manager at the time, Jacobus Olivier, is charged with omitting to take all reasonable precautions to provide for the safety of people employed by the mine.

The alternatives are framed in terms of the Mines and Works Act.

In statements to the court Burke (on behalf of the mine), Oliver and underground managers Daniel Botha and Johannes Louw, said they would base their defence on the assertion that if any offence was committed by any individual they had taken all reasonable precautions to prevent it.

All seven are charged with failing to provide and maintain suitable fire-fighting equipment; efficient means of conveying water to all or parts of the underground workings; and permitting welding, flame-cutting or flame heating to take place and omitting to ensure adequate means were immediately available for the extinguishing of any fire which may have resulted.

Frederick Vivers is charged with using welding apparatus without testing for the presence of inflammable gas, while Donovan Browne and Thomas Coombe are accused of failing to test for the presence of gas.

There are a further seven alleged contraventions of the regulations to the Act. All but Kinross and Vivers are charged with omitting to ensure the regulations mentioned in the charges were complied with.

The first witness was Highveld district surgeon Dr Jacobus Greyling who performed post mortems on 86 victims. He said the vast majority died of carbon monoxide poisoning. Under cross-examination he said this could be a cause of death in any combustible fire.

The hearing is set to continue through October and resume early next year. A prosecution spokesman said he expected 100 witnesses to be called.
PRETORIA — A major rethink in the research approach to gas and coal-dust explosions in SA seemed unavoidable, if progress was been made, Horst Wagner of the Chamber of Mines research organisation said yesterday.

Addressing the “Safety in Coal Mining” symposium at the CSIR, he said a move towards field research from laboratory studies should be encouraged.

A revitalised coal mining research control council (CMRCC), with a clearly defined mechanism, could fulfil a coordinating role.

In his keynote address, Professor T. Atkinson of Nottingham University said “a systems approach to new designs to eliminate potential hazards was essential.”
Kinross employees face charges in wake of mining disaster

By Duncan Guy

Seven Kinross mine employees pleaded not guilty to culpable homicide yesterday in the Witbank Regional Court in a sequel to the Kinross mine disaster, which left 177 miners dead on September 16 last year.

They also pleaded not guilty to 13 alternative charges.

Kinross Mines Ltd director, Mr John Henry James Burke, represented the company. Six others, the general manager at the time, Mr Jacobus Ignatius Olivier; subordinate manager, Mr Daniel Johannes-Botma, underground manager, Mr Johannes Albertus Louw; Mr Donovan John Browne; Mr Thomas Joseph Coombe and Mr Frederick Christoffel Viviers appeared in their personal capacities.

All seven allegedly placed the safety of mine personnel in danger by having inflammable materials in a work area and/or not taking adequate precautions to prevent the spread or start of the fire and/or gas, and failing to extinguish the fire and/or spread of the gases in good time.

It is further alleged they failed to maintain fire-fighting equipment, materials and suitable containers of water for fire-fighting underground.

They are also charged with using welding and cutting equipment without ensuring they had fire-fighting equipment.

Mr Olivier faces an alternative charge of failing to take necessary precautions to secure the safety of workers.

With Mr Botma, Mr Louw, Mr Brown and Mr Coombe, he is charged with failing to comply with safety regulations laid down.

Mr Viviers is accused of failing to comply with a number of mine safety regulations.

The director, Mr Burke, said in a statement his association with the mining industry was confined to accounting functions.

He and the general manager, Mr Olivier, said they could not have taken steps to avoid the fire. Mr Olivier said the fire was in a place where there was sufficient water.

The hearing continues.
Ventilation is blamed for mining disasters

THREE recent coalmining disasters could be attributed to breakdowns in ventilation systems which at best were barely adequate, government mining engineer G P Badenhorst said in Pretoria yesterday.

Speaking at an international “Safety in Coal Mining” symposium at the CSIR, Badenhorst asked:

☐ Was the approach and commitment of management adequate?

☐ Were the supervisors properly trained, or was production pressure forcing management and supervisors alike to turn a blind eye to the suspect conditions?

There was little doubt that coal dust had played a role in some of the accidents. Three conditions could contribute to explosions — inadequate ventilation, failure to detect methane gas, and ignition source.

GERALD REILLY

The main reason for the establishment of the Klopperbos test facilities stemmed from the spate of methane gas explosions in recent years which had resulted in numerous deaths and injuries, and had cast a shadow on the safety of SA coal mines.

The facility 40km north of Pretoria, and built at a cost of R3.5m, is intended for fundamental research on underground explosion hazards. It was opened yesterday.

CSIR President C F Gabers said coal was South Africa’s second biggest foreign exchange earner next to gold. Locally it played the role of prima donna in the energy, liquid fuels and chemical sectors. Production had risen at an annual rate of 9% for the past ten years, with last year’s production at 173-million tons.
R44,766 million and R34,644 million, respectively, of which R41,214 million and R31,244 million, respectively, were allocated to the SBDC. In addition, ad hoc allocations are made from time to time for particular purposes. For example, up to 31 March 1987 a total amount of R155 million had been allocated to the SBDC for special job creation programmes.

The funds allocated to the SBDC are used by the Corporation to assist small business in various ways. Details of the assistance programmes which the SBDC has developed, as well as of the Corporation's other sources of finance, are contained in its latest Annual Report which was tabled in Parliament on 9 June 1987. The assistance includes the granting of loans to meritorious small business enterprises and is provided irrespective of population group. It is therefore, not the policy of the SBDC to furnish particulars of its clients on a basis of colour. Since its establishment in 1981 until 30 June 1987 the SBDC granted direct loans to 15,246 entrepreneurs involving a total amount R380.8 million. Furthermore, the programmes of the SBDC have resulted in approximately 58,310 jobs being created and maintained.

(a) and (b) (1) and (ii) fall away.

Kleinkrans, George

Mr C J DERBY-LEWIS asked the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning

(1) Whether a residential area known as Kleinkrans and situated near Wildekraal in the George constituency has been advertised for occupation by the Coloured population group if so (a) who (b) on what dates and (c) in what publications?

(2) (a) what has been the cost to his Department of developing this area (b) (i) how many houses have been constructed and (ii) at what price per house (c) (i) how many houses have been sold and (ii) at what price per house, (d) how many houses (i) are being rented and (ii) are vacant and (e) in respect of what date is this information furnished,

(3) (a) who is responsible for the sale of these houses and (b) what was the motivation for the decision to build them?

The MINISTER OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

(1) No, but a Coloured group area proposal was advertised

(a) Proposals for the establishment of group areas in Wilderness and environs, including a Coloured group area at Kleinkrans, were received from the District Council of George

(b) On 18 November 1966 and 10 February 1967

(c) In the "George and Knysna Herald"

(2) The construction and sale of homes are not functions of the Department of Development Planning

(3) Falls away

St Helena Mine accident

Mr C J DERBY-LEWIS asked the Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology

(1) Whether inspectors from his Department have visited the St Helena Mine in connection with the recent accident at its No 10 shaft if so, on what dates,

(2) whether there was any evidence of negligence on the part of any persons concerned with this mine, if so on whose part

(3) what were the other findings of these inspectors?

The MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TECHNOLOGY

(1) Yes. Shortly after the accident at 00h45 on 21 August 1987 the Assistant Government Mining Engineer, OFS region, and both the Chief Inspector of Mines and the Chief Inspector of Machinery, Welkom, visited the shaft. Operations are still in progress to recover bodies from the cage at the shaft bottom, and the abovementioned Chief Inspectors have since the accident visited the shaft more or less on a daily basis.

The Government Mining Engineer and one of his Deputies visited the shaft on 31 August and 1 September 1987 and the Government Mining Engineer again visited the scene on 3 and 4 September 1987.

(2) The investigation into the cause of the accident has not been completed and as yet no findings could, therefore, be made.

(3) Falls away

Central Energy Fund

Mr C J DERBY-LEWIS asked the Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology

(a) By whom and (b) on what basis is the Central Energy Fund being administered?

The MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TECHNOLOGY

(a) The Board of CEF (Pty) Ltd appointed in terms of the Central Energy Fund Act, 1977 (Act No 38 of 1977) is presently the Board of Directors of CEF (Pty) Ltd is composed as follows:

Mr R Vorster IDC, Chairman
Mr S P Elhs General Mining Corporation
Mr G C Crossen Department of Finance
Dr J A Limpopo Department of Trade and Industry
Mr M Macdonald IDC
Mr E S Paddock Formerly attached to Mobil Oil Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd
Mr L N J Engelbrecht Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs
Dr D C Neethling Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs

(b) In accordance with directions in terms of the Central Energy Fund Act, 1977 (Act No 38 of 1972)

Contribution to SWA-budget

Mr C J DERBY-LEWIS asked the Minister of Finance

(a) What was the contribution made by the South African Government to the budget of South West Africa in the 1983/84, 1984/85, 1985/86 and 1986/87 financial years, respectively, and (b) how was this contribution made up in respect of each such year?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE

(a) and (b) The contribution made by the South African Government to the budget of South West Africa in the abovementioned financial years was made up as follows:

Central Energy Fund $58

Financial Budgetary year assistance $23

Customs and Excise duties paid in terms of section 22 (1) (d) of the South West Africa Act, 1969 (Act 25 of 1969) $20

Regional services councils $20

Mr C J DERBY-LEWIS asked the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning

Whether any regional services councils (a) have been granted and/or (b) are about to be granted interest-free loans by any Government institutions or bodies, if so (i) which councils and (ii) (aa) what are the amounts involved and (bb) for what purposes are these loans intended in each case?

The MINISTER OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

(a) Yes
Kinross miner tells court of underground fire

By Duncan Guy

WITBANK — A Kinross miner yesterday described how he and a colleague tried to push over a burning gas bottle with a crowbar to stop the 3m flame from making contact with flammable "spoon" lining a tunnel 1000 m underground.

Labour gang leader Mr Klaus Mbuthuma was giving evidence under cross-examination in the Witbank Regional Court in the trial of seven Kinross Mine employees.

The men have pleaded not guilty to culpable homicide, alternatively 13 charges under the Mine and Works Act and Mining Regulations under which they face respective charges.

The court also heard of the discovery of the body of a Kinross Mine worker, known as "Picannin Danell" found 450 m from where a fire started on September 15, 1986. The fire claimed 177 lives.

Mr Mbuthuma said Danell was working as a personal assistant to one of the accused, Mr Frederik Christoffel Vivers, who faced three charges of culpable homicide because of the danger involved.

Mr Mbuthuma said "Mr Vivers ordered Danell to stop a locomotive at the mine's Shaft Number Two which was downwind from us. At the same time, Mr Vivers fled the other way to Shaft No 1."

He added that had Mr Vivers asked him to do what he asked Danell, he would have refused because of the danger involved.

Advocate Hennie de Vos, for Mr Vivers, asked Mr Mbuthuma whether Danell should have known that he, too, did not have to obey such commands Mr Mbuthuma agreed.

Mr de Vos said that, contrary to Mr Mbuthuma's evidence-in-chief, Mr Vivers had not run away from the fire but tried to shut off the leaking gas with a key.

Mr Mbuthuma denied this saying that Mr Vivers only ordered him to try and close it, speaking Fanagalo.

Mr Mbuthuma added that later he and another worker attempted to push the bottle over using a crowbar so that its flame would not spray against the tunnel wall.

The accused are Mr John Henry James Bourke, who represents Kinross Mines, of which he is a director; the general manager at the time of the accident, Mr Jacobus Ignatius Oliver; subordinate manager Mr Daniel Johannes Rothuwa, under-ground manager Mr Johannes Albertus Louw, Mr Donovan John Browne and Mr Thomas Joseph Coombe.

Mr J W Pienaar is on the bench. The prosecutor is Advocate Louw Pienaar. Advocate C Pienaar SC appears for Mr Burke, Mr Oliver, Mr Louw and Mr Rothuwa while Mr John Bird appears for Mr Coombe and Mr Browne.

The hearing continues.
Engineer testifies on the Kinross tragedy

‘Fire fighting at mine was sound’

By Therese Anders
Highveld Bureau

WITBANK — An assistant government mining engineer told the Witbank regional court yesterday that he had no criticism of the measures used to fight the underground fire at Kinross Mine in which 177 men died.

Mr Reginald Feather was giving evidence on the seventh day of evidence about the Kinross disaster. Seven Gencor employees have pleaded not guilty to culpable homicide and not guilty to charges under the Mines and Works Act and Mining Regulations.

Under cross-examination, Mr Feather said as far as he could make out every effort was made to care for the injured.

He said one of the accused, Mr Jacobus Egnaus Olivier, who was mine general manager at the time, was in control of the rescue effort.

Mr Feather said Mr Olivier’s decision not to erect a brattice curtain on the 15th level where the fire was burning, and so divert the gases, was sensible.

“There was an urgency to rescue people and with hindsight the decision was not wrong,” said Mr Feather.

Under cross-examination from Mr Henny de Vos, representing accused miner Mr Frederick Christoffel Viviers, Mr Feather said he had seen fire hoses on the 15th level store room on the day after the fire.

Mr de Vos said Mr Viviers would tell the court the hoses and two gas bottles found in his store room belonged to people who had repaired the site after the fire.

Mr James Stuart Moag, from the South African Bureau of Standards, told the court flame cutting was inherently dangerous and extinguishing equipment should always be on hand.

The hearing continues.
Star reporter barred from mine disaster inspection

A Star reporter has been barred from attending an in loco inspection in the Kinross mine disaster trial.

Senior counsel for Gencor in the trial, Mr C Plewman, yesterday refused to allow Mrs Therese Anders permission to accompany the court underground.

Mr Plewman said today if Mrs Anders wanted a reason why she had been barred, she would "get it in a complaint to The Star.”

Magistrate Mr J W R Pieterse had given his approval for the reporter to attend the inspection, but said although he had no objection to the press being present, he was unable to give permission on behalf of the owner of the property.

An attorney has told The Star that while a property owner could not prevent the court from attending an in loco inspection, he could bar the public or press.

Mr Plewman’s decision was based on "concern for Mrs Anders’s safety underground.”

"The mine is not obliged to undertake her safety, either above ground or underground, or to convey her underground. Mining is a hazardous business,” he said.

The magistrate, accused and lawyers are going underground at the Kinross mine today to the level where a fire, in which 117 miners died, broke out.

Transvaal Law Society president Mr Stan Treisman said it was "regrettable” that Gencor had barred the press.

"It is desirable that all court proceedings should be open to the public and press and we feel no one should be barred from reporting the facts.

"But in strict law the magistrate does not have the authority to allow individuals to go on to private property for an inspection in loco or for any other reason.”

The only people with a right to attend an inspection were the magistrate, accused, accused’s legal representatives, State representatives and relevant witnesses.

See Page 6.
MESSINA — Two farmers from the Letaba district, described in the Messina Circuit Court yesterday on how members of their families were killed and five injured when the bakkie they were travelling in detonated a landmine just south of the SA/Zimbabwe border in December 1985.

...Joohnes de Nyschjen was giving evidence in the trial of two men, Misothilelele Zephania Mncube, 27, of Diepkloof, Soweto, and Mzondilelele Euclid Nondula, 24, of Queenstown — facing 41 charges, including murder, attempted murder, terrorism and treason.

Describing the blast, he said: "I heard an explosion, and lost consciousness for a few seconds. I was told we had hit a landmine and could not get out of the door.

"The bakkie was in flames. There was a clump of trees also on fire. Eric van Eck was helped through the left side window. I got out the same way."

De Nyschjen said he lost his wife and daughter.

Van Eck lost his wife Kobie, daughter, Nelnie, and son Ignatius. — Sapa.
SIX miners were killed and two injured in an underground pressure blast at the ERPM gold mine at Boksburg on Saturday, a spokesman for the mine said yesterday.

He said the accident occurred 3000 m below the surface at 10am on the 80 level of the H shaft on the mine's central section.

The names of the dead and injured were being withheld until their next-of-kin had been informed, the spokesman said.

— Sapa.
Miners 'fairly serious'

Two miners injured in a rock fall 3 km underground at ERFM in Boksburg on Saturday morning were "out of danger but still fairly serious", a company spokesman said today.

Six miners were killed at the 80 m level of H shaft.

The spokesman said no further information on the incident was available and the names of the dead and injured were being withheld until their next of kin had been informed.

The incident was the latest in a series of accidents.

Sixty-three miners were killed in August when a lift cage plunged down a shaft at Gencor's St Helena Gold Mine in the Free State and a total of 800 died in 1996.
Call for mine safety

THE National Union of Mineworkers yesterday reiterated its call for a commission of inquiry into South Africa’s mine safety measures following the weekend death of six miners in a rock fall in Boksburg.

Num assistant general secretary Mr Marcel Golding said in an interview yesterday that the disaster at H shaft of the REP M mine on Saturday confirmed the union’s belief that the country’s mines were the world’s most dangerous.

“This incident was totally not unexpected. Not enough precautions are being taken to decrease mine deaths in South Africa.

“The Num has repeatedly called for a commission of inquiry into mine safety measures in the industry in order to address the problem. Very little is being done,” Mr Golding said.

Two miners injured in the rockfall 3km underground at ERPM were “out of danger” but still fairly serious, a company spokesman said yesterday.

The miners were killed at the 80m level of the shaft.
• Sixty-three mineworkers were killed in August when a lift cage plunged to 1370m below surface at Gencor’s St Helena Gold Mine in Welkom.
• A total 800 mineworkers have died in mine disasters in 1986.
Killer cage still buried

MINERS working around the clock to reach the bottom of the shaft at the St Helena Mine, near Welkom, where 62 miners died on August 31, this year, when the lift cage fell, could still be working for up to a month to clear debris.

The Government mining engineer, Mr G P "Badie" Badenhorst, said yesterday the investigation into the disaster was continuing, but that it could obviously be finalised only once the bodies of those killed were retrieved and identified.

Miners who were clearing the estimated 40-metre thick layer of broken concrete and twisted steel girders had to work "piece by piece" in a very slow process due to the danger and lack of space.

"We hope they will reach the cage soon, but it could take up to a month still, depending on circumstances."

Work on clearing the debris started only about 10 days ago because the entire mine shaft had first had to be stabilised after the disaster and made as safe as possible for miners going down. — Sapa
Still a month before bodies in mine found

Johannesburg — Miners working around the clock to reach the bottom of the shaft at the St Helen mine near Welkom where 82 miners died on August 31 when the lift cage plummeted, could still be working for up to a month to clear debris.

The Government Mining Engineer, Mr. G.P. Badenhorst, said the investigation into the disaster obviously could be finalised only once the bodies of those killed were retrieved — Sapa.
August mine lift tragedy: More bodies brought to the surface

Johannesburg — The remains of 53 miners killed in an explosion have been brought to the surface of St Helena gold mine in the Free State.

A spokesman for Gencor, which owns the mine, said at the weekend none could be identified.

He said the final death toll in the disaster was 53.

The accident happened on August 31 as an explosion ripped through a pump-chamber halfway down the shaft as the lift containing the miners passed it.

Only nine bodies were recovered in the first three days after the tragedy.

The spokesman said the explosion severely damaged the No. 10 shaft.

The men were buried under 40m of cement rubble and steel girders. The shaft had to be stabilised and made as safe as possible to prevent any further accidents.

Difficult conditions

"Working conditions were difficult for the recovery teams. That is why it took so long to get down the shaft."

"When the lift plummeted down the shaft, it took a lot of material with it."

"A shaft covers a large area. Workers found the remains of the miners last week as they sifted through the steel and concrete."

He said the weekend statement was issued at the "first and best opportunity we had."

St Helena's management would consult the next of kin about the erection of a memorial at the shaft.

The spokesman said as soon as the issue had been decided, an announcement would be made as to when the dedication service would be held.

A public inquiry into the disaster is expected to start in Welkom early next year.
Migrant Workers

BY THEMBA MOLEFE

A memorial service to pay tribute to the 43 miners who died in the explosion at the Beaufort West mine in the Western Cape Province was held.

The service was attended by family members of the miners, who were joined by a large number of people, including friends and colleagues.

The service started with a moment of silence, followed by a prayer for the deceased miners. After the prayer, family members of the miners gave speeches, expressing their grief and pain.

The service ended with a singing of the national anthem, as a symbol of unity and solidarity.

The service was a somber reminder of the severity of the disaster, and of the need for greater safety measures in the mining industry.
53 mine disaster bodies recovered

The remains of 53 miners killed 1360 m underground in August when a lift plunged down a shaft at St Helena Gold Mine in the Free State have been recovered. None can be identified.

Gencor, which owns the mine, said at the weekend that the final death toll following an explosion in the pump chamber — which occurred half-way down the shaft as the cage containing the miners passed it — was 63.

Only nine bodies were recovered by rescue teams in the first three days after the tragedy on August 31.

Gencor spokesman Mr Harry Hill said the explosion had severely damaged the number 10 shaft, where the men were barred under 40 m of cement rubble and steel girders. The shaft had to be stabilised and made as safe a possible to prevent any further accidents.

"Working conditions were extremely difficult for the recovery teams — that is why it took so long," he said.

He said that it was with regret that St Helena's management announced that "no identifiable remains of the miners" were recovered.

"When the cage fell it took a lot of material with it.

"A shaft covers a large area. As work teams sifted through the steel and concrete during the course of last week they came across the remains of the miners," he added.

In reply to a query from The Star, Gencor said last week that the recovery team was still removing debris in search of the bodies of miners.

The remains of the miners were found during the course of last week, said Gencor.

Spokesman Mr Harry Hill said the statement "was issued at the first and best opportunity we had — when we were in a position to release any new information which we had not released before."

St Helena's management would consult with the next-of-kim about the erection of a memorial at the shaft and in connection with the dedication of the memorial.

Mr Hill said as soon as the board had been decided, an announcement would be made on when the dedication service would be held.

A public inquiry into the disaster is expected to start in Welkom early in the new year.
MINING - ACCIDENTS

1988
The Argyll Correspondent

The death toll at Vail Rosha gold mine near Ochuny, Zimbabwe, has risen to six after yesterday's accident.

MINING COLLAPSE: The death toll at Vail Rosha gold mine near Ochuny, Zimbabwe, has risen to six after yesterday's accident.

Nine workers, including the cook, were rescued and taken to hospital, but the names of the dead were not given. The rescue operation is still ongoing.

The Argyll Correspondent
JOHANNESBURG — Two miners died, four are missing and nine injured after a rock fall at Vaal Reefs No 3 shaft yesterday following a seismic event measuring 4.3 on the Richter scale.

A statement from mine owner Anglo American Corporation said the fall occurred on the 71 level and search and rescue operations were continuing.

Three of the injured were admitted to hospital while the others were treated for minor injuries.

The names of the dead will not be released till next of kin have been informed.

"Three of the injured have been admitted to hospital and the others were treated for minor injuries," said Sapa.
W Tvl mine claims 7 lives

THE death toll in the Vaal Reefs mine disaster shot up to seven yesterday when a member of a rescue team trying to retrieve the buried miners was crushed to death in another rockfall, writes MZIKAYISE EDOM.

Six miners were killed in the first rockfall at the Western Transvaal mine on Tuesday night.

A spokesman for Anglo American said the rescue team member was killed during a second tremor at the mine yesterday.

"A further seismic event measuring 2.9 on the Richter scale occurred at the mine's No 3 shaft about 10am. One member of the team was injured and two others are missing," the spokesman said.

The spokesman said the tremor also caused rockfall in the mine's No 2 shaft at 72 level where six miners were seriously injured.

The spokesman said a second rescue team was now trying to find the missing team members and the miners who are missing after Tuesday's fall.

"Search and rescue operations are continuing," the spokesman said.
Earth tremor kills 2 more at Vaal mine

JOHANNESBURG — A second earth tremor at Vaal Reef's mine killed two miners and injured 19 yesterday, bringing the fatality toll to eight in two days. Rescue operations were continuing at number three shaft for the man who went missing after Tuesday's earth tremor that killed six miners and injured nine.

A total of 28 men have been injured in two days. "The names of the deceased will be released once their next of kin have been notified," a spokesman for Anglo American Corporation said.

Two years ago, eight miners died and 30 were hurt in an explosion at Vaal Reef's number eight shaft. In 1980, 31 people died when a lift cage fell — Sapa
Survivor: Mr. Horace Coopeland.

The minutes of the dead have
not been released.

"It started with the flash of a
firework. Suddenly, the
cocktail began to smolder.
I tried to put it out, but it
was too late. The whole
room filled with smoke.
I woke up with a Bang!

I ran out of the door, but
then I realized I had left
my glasses back at the
bar. I went back for them,
but it was too late. The
fire had spread to the
roof."

Mr. Coopeland was
transferred to the
W darmund Hospital in
Torbay. The fire had
destroyed his home and
caused devastating
damage to the town.

"I lost everything. But,
I am alive. I just need
to recover."

The Angus Correspondent

Miners tell of rockfall rescue horror.
Vaal Reefs toll rises

The dead toll in this week's Vaal Reefs mine accident has risen to eight, with 28 injured and one miner missing.

The eighth miner was killed in a rockfall at the mine's No 2 shaft on Wednesday morning.

Six miners were killed in the first tremor at the Western Transvaal mine on Tuesday night. A rescue team member was killed in the second rockfall the same night, bringing the death toll to seven, Anglo American Corporation said in an earlier statement.

Spokesman Mr Paul Clother said search and rescue operations were continuing and that the struck area was fairly dangerous.

Mr Clother declined to release the names of the victims before their next-of-kin were notified.

Spokesmen for the National Union of Mineworkers and organisations at Vaal Reefs could not be reached for comment yesterday.
Miners search on JOHANNESBURG — Rescue teams are still searching for one miner missing after two earth tremors caused rockfalls killing eight miners and injuring 26 at the Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney.

Six were killed in the first rockfall on Tuesday night and on Wednesday, a rescuer and a miner were killed by a further "seismic event" — Sapa
Mine accidents claim eight lives in 2 days

By REVELATION NTOULA

A SECOND tremor at Vaal Reefs gold mine on Wednesday killed two more miners, bringing the death toll of this year's first mining disaster to eight.

The first dead man was part of a search and rescue team seeking miners trapped by rockfalls caused by the first tremor on Tuesday.

A second man went missing and was presumed dead. Seven men were injured in the incident, according to Anglo American spokesman Paul Clothia.

The same tremor resulted in rock falls 2,200m underground at the mine's No 2 shaft.

This resulted in the death of the other miner and the injury to 12 others. Eight of them were hospitalised.

A total of 28 men have been injured in the two days.

The spokesman said the names of the dead would be released once their next of kin had been informed.

The National Union of Mineworkers was not available for comment.
MURDER AT SHAFT NO. 3

FOUR miners were killed and 67 injured when a group of more than 400 allegedly attacked others who were drinking at a Randfontein Estates Mine Cooke 3 shaft baseball that is being boycotted. The incident took place on Wednesday evening, the mine's management said. Hundreds of miners at Cooke 1 and 2 shafts yesterday refused to work, demanding to know circumstances leading to the incident at Cooke 3 shaft. The general manager at Cooke 3 shaft, Mr. W.J. van der Meulen, issued notices in the morning urging all "mining employees participating in an illegal strike to refrain from this action." By SELLIO RABOTHATA

Mr Bertram said order was later restored and everyone was calmer. A miner who spoke on condition that his identity is not revealed said the problem started on Tuesday when some of their colleagues were told not to go underground. No reason was given. When miners had changed shifts on Wednesday evening those who had been underground were told that other miners were waiting to fight them. He said the group was attacked by those on the surface and they fought back. Two miners were killed during the confrontation. A number were injured.

Grievances

It was later established that two others had died. The miner said yesterday morning they were refused to go to the mine and told that only eight and Shangane workers could go underground. Mr. van der Meulen said all striking workers are therefore informed that if they do not return to duty order their next normal shift they will be summarily dismissed and will have to vacate hostels accommodation forthwith. He said management was prepared to discuss and resolve grievances but would not tolerate further disruption to production.

The National Union of Mineworkers was not available for comment.

SOWETO' pensioner, Mrs. Elizabeth Xaba, was evicted from her house in Vry Park by the Soweto City Council yesterday. See Page 3.
3 die, 1 hurt in mine rockburst

JOHANNESBURG. — Three men were killed and one was injured in a rockburst at the Anglo American-administered Western Deep Levels gold mine, about 60km west of here, early yesterday. Anglo said in a statement that the rockburst occurred on 118 level, 3500m below surface, at the mine’s No 3 Shaft, at 2.30am yesterday.

"Rescue operations are under way to find one person still missing," the statement said.

The names of the dead will be released once their next of kin have been informed.

The accident occurred in a stope gulley adjacent to a dike, Anglo added. — Sapa

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**City Hall revamp:**

**R10m plan**

**Municipal Reporter**

ARCHITECTS who studied the City Hall for over a year have recommended that R1 million a year for 10 years be budgeted for its renovation and restoration.

But a spokesman for the city treasurer’s department said yesterday that it was unlikely that more than R200 000 would be set aside for this purpose in the coming financial year.

The City Hall, which dates back to 1905, was "basically remarkably sound", according to the study, by Mr John Rennie and Mr Pat Riley.

Its exterior is a national monument, as are the Grand Hall and two marble stairways.

Certain repairs — such as the patching of leaks — were urgently needed, according to the report.

It recommended "total re-roofing" after the parapet balustrades were restored, but leaks...
THREE men were killed and one injured following a rockburst at the Anglo American administered Western Deep Levels gold mine, about 60 km west of Johannesburg, early yesterday.

Anglo said in a statement to Sapa the rockburst occurred on 118 level, 3,500 m below surface at the mine's number three shaft, at 2:30 am yesterday.

"Rescue operations are underway to find one person still missing," the statement said.

The names of the deceased will be released once the next of kin have been informed.

The accident occurred in a stope gulley adjacent to a dike, Anglo added.
Four killed in rock burst

JOHANNESBURG — The death toll in Thursday's rock burst at the Western Deep Levels mine near Carletonville has risen to four with the discovery of the body of a missing worker.
Union-mine safety pact 'first' for SA

JOHANNESBURG — The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has announced the signing of what it claims is the first ever health and safety agreement between a mine and a union in South Africa.

The NUM described the agreement, reached late last year with the Palaborwa Mining Company (PMC), as a breakthrough, and criticised members of the Chamber of Mines for their failure to enter into similar accords. PMC is not a member of the chamber.

According to the union, the agreement provides for the recognition of about 100 safety stewards as representatives of workers' interests in the field of health and safety.

Safety stewards will be informed immediately in the event of any accident and will participate in any inspection and inquiry held thereafter. After the inquiry the stewards and management will meet to discuss the lessons of the accident.

Elected stewards will receive time-off for training by both management and the union.
Safety agreement for mine

PALABORA Mining Company (PMC) GM George Deyzel said on Friday he believed the health and safety agreement, recently signed with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), would help make the mine's operations even safer and more efficient than at present.

The NUM last week applauded the agreement — the first between a union and a mine — as an important breakthrough.

It provides, among other things, for the recognition of elected safety stewards, their training and regular consultations between them and management.

Deyzel said PMC believed that safety, loss control, productivity, efficiency and profitability went hand in hand. Safety had therefore always been given high priority.

He added any safety programme had to be driven from the top. But its success depended on the state of mind and involvement of every employee.

Deyzel said the election and training of safety stewards was scheduled to take place during the first half of this year, after which the agreement would be fully implemented.
Mine casualty rates queried

SOUTH African mine fatality and injury statistics tend to create a more favourable picture of mine safety than is warranted by the actual facts. This is the contention of UK mine safety expert Hubert Bamber and Wits University researcher Jean Leger in an article published in the latest edition of the Journal of the SA Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.

The authors say the usually-published accident rates on SA mines do not distinguish between surface and underground accidents. Because most deaths and injuries occur underground, it is necessary to differentiate in order to monitor the actual risk involved in underground work.

In the six years to 1983, the 1.69 per thousand average annual underground fatality rate was some 25% higher on gold mines and about one third higher on collieries than the overall figure.

The authors say while SA gold mine figures are not comparable with overseas operations, underground coal-mining fatality rates are in that period, the death rate on South African collieries was twice as high as that in the US and eight times the fatality rate on UK collieries.

Eister and Leger also argue that the substantial fall in reportable injuries from 1970 to 1985 (by more than half on gold mines and nearly 75% on collieries) could partially be due to factors other than a decline in the number of accidents.

They note that while this substantial fall in injury rates occurred, the fatality rate declined only marginally. They suggest this may be due to pressure on injured miners for an early return to work. Injuries become reportable when 14 or more days are lost.

Among other things, they say, this could have been caused by concerted efforts by managements to achieve the five-star safety rating.

A chamber spokesman comment on the article would be supplied once it had been studied.

Opec calls for stability in prices

AMSTERDAM — An official of Opec yesterday called for co-operation between oil producing countries, oil companies and consumers in stabilising world oil prices.

In an address at an oil industry conference, — Petroint’ 93 — Opec chief spokesman James Audu said the “net outcome” of oil price-shocks, both upward and downward over the past 15 years, “revolves around the fatality of conflict” within the oil industry.

He said attempts by oil consuming countries to drive down oil prices as low as possible are as counterproductive as past attempts by producer nations to maintain unrealistically high price levels.

Imbalances

Audu said the current softness of world oil prices following the 1986 world oil price collapse represents a new set of imbalances in the oil industry that eventually will be corrected. But he did not indicate the likely time period in which this could occur.

Without being specific, Audu said Opec had noticed a “maturing of attitude” toward a general willingness to try to stabilise volatile oil markets even from unexpected quarters. Noting that over the past year, Opec had sacrificed its production to bring oil prices back up to more realistic levels, Audu said the oil cartel was “confident that tools exist for a stable oil industry” — AP-DJ.
Kinross: dramatic turn as charges dropped

By Therese Anders
Highveld Bureau

WITBANK — The Kinross Mine disaster trial took a dramatic turn yesterday when it was announced that the State would drop some of the charges.

And as the State closed its case, the defence team applied for the accused to be discharged on most of the remaining charges.

A decision on the application will be given today.

Yesterday was the 15th day of the Kinross trial in which seven Gencor employees have pleaded not guilty to culpable homicide, alternatively 13 charges under the Mines and Works Act and mining regulations.

The accused are Mr. Simon James Burke, a director of Kinross Mines; Mr. Jacobus Edgar Ernst; Oliver, general manager; Mr. Daniel Johannes Botha, subordinate manager; Mr. Johannes Albertus Le Roux; Mr. Donovan John Brown; Mr. Thomas Joseph Coome; and Mr. Frederick Christoffel Vinniers.

Mr. Burke is representing Kinross Mines Limited and the other six are charged in their professional and private capacities.

A total of 177 men died in the Kinross fire on September 16, 1986.

After consulting the Attorney-General on Tuesday, the prosecution announced yesterday that the State would not be proceeding with three of the charges against the first four accused.

The charges dropped were those of failing to comply with mining regulations and statutory requirements laid down by the inspector of mines in connection with safety, failing to provide and maintain suitable fire-fighting equipment, and permitting welding, flame cutting or flame heating to take place and omitting to ensure adequate means were immediately available for the extinguishing of any fire which may have resulted.

Mr. C. Plewe, acting for the first four accused, then applied to have the main charge of culpable homicide withdrawn.

All charges against Messrs. Browne and Coome were withdrawn except for two counts — failing to have adequate means immediately available to extinguish a fire when using flame cutting equipment, and failing to test for gas when cutting work was being done.

The seventh accused, miner Mr. Frederick Christoffel Vinniers, is to have all charges withdrawn except the main charge of culpable homicide and further counts of using a welding apparatus without testing for inflammable gas and using welding equipment without a written authorisation.
Kinross fund: 108 benefit

The dependants of 108 victims of the September 1986 Kinross disaster have so far received payments from the disaster fund established by Gencor after the accident in which 177 miners died.

Chairman of the board of trustees of the fund, Adriaan du Plessis said yesterday the fund paid according to a formula of 12 times the annual salary of the deceased, with a minimum of R10 000. He was unable to supply the amount of the total payout thus far.

The fund is processing claims by dependants of another 27 victims said Du Plessis, who is also Gencor CEO human resources, mining. It was still experiencing difficulties in contacting dependants of the remaining victims.

After the accident, Gencor announced it was putting R2m into the fund. Du Plessis said the group's gold mines were continuing to make contributions on a monthly basis.
Disaster dependants paid out

Johannesburg - The dependants of 108 victims of the September 1986 Kromoss disaster have so far received payments from the disaster fund established by Gencor after the accident in which 177 miners died.

The chairman of the board of trustees of the fund, Mr. Adriaan du Plessis, said yesterday processing claims by dependants of another 27 victims said Mr. Du Plessis, who is also Gencor's chief executive officer, human resources, mining.

He was unable to supply the amount of the total payout so far. He said the fund was still experiencing difficulties in contacting dependants of the remaining victims - DDC.
Disaster payout tops R1-m

By Therese Andries
Highveld Bureau

Gencor has paid out more than R1 million to the families of the men who died in the Kinross Mine tragedy on September 18 1986.

This announcement came on the eve of today's judgement in the Kinross Mine case in Witbank. Seven Gencor employees are charged with culpable homicide.

A total of 177 men - 173 of whom were black - died in the disaster which occurred when the foam walls of Kinross's 19th level were set on fire by a burning acetylene tank.

Gencor's mining division chief executive of human resources, Mr Adriaan du Plessis, said yesterday that the Kinross Initiative Trust - set up days after the tragedy by Gencor with a contribution of R2 million - had so far paid out amounts to 108 of the dead miners' families.

Another 27 claims were currently being processed.

Mr du Plessis added that the amount paid to each family was 12 times the deceased's monthly salary, with a minimum payment of R10 000.

One of the trustees is the National Union of Mineworkers' Evander regional organiser, Mr Tshediso Mothupi. All of the black workers who died in the fire were NUM members.
NUM appeal against court imposed fine

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) is to petition the Attorney-General to support the union in a request for an appeal against yesterday's Kinross disaster accident finding, which it described as "scandalous".

NUM general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said the union would pay the fine for Frederick Christoffel Vivers, the miner found guilty of contravening the Mines and Works Act.

"We will pay his fine because we feel that the entire Kinross management should have been found guilty. There is no sense in placing blame for the disaster on one welder who is way down in the mine's hierarchy and has little authority."

"The magistrate has pegged the lives of the deceased miners at R1.77 each. This is scandalous," said Mr Ramaphosa.

OK rejects union demand for mine closure

In another development, the NUM has rejected the mine's demand for closure.

Wells have been re-pump for an additional payout of the bonus.
Gencor homicide acquittals

WITBANK — Seven Gencor employees were acquitted in the Regional Court here yesterday on charges of culpable homicide following the Kinross Mine disaster in 1986 in which 177 men died.

However, one of the accused, a miner, Mr Frederick Christoffel Viviers, was found guilty of two contraventions under the Mines and Works Act — failing to test for gas and failing to get written permission before doing welding work underground.

In his judgment the magistrate, Mr J V R Pietersen, said the state had failed to prove that the accused could have reasonably foreseen the “catastrophic situation” which occurred after a defective acetylene tank had set fire to a foam wall underground.

He said Kinross Mine had been misled to believe that fire retardant polyisocyanurate foam — which it had contracted for — had been supplied, when in fact the more flammable polyurethane had been installed.

At the time of the installation in 1981 fears had been expressed about the safety of using the foam underground.

However, tests were conducted from samples and results gave no reason for concern.

Mr Pietersen fined Mr Vivier R50 on each of the two charges of contravening the Mines and Works Act — Sapa.
JOHANNESBURG — Three mineworkers died and two were still missing yesterday evening after a rock burst at the Doornfontein Gold Mine, near Carletonville, yesterday.

A spokesman for Gold Fields South Africa said 51 other miners were injured in the incident, 2,000 m underground. Two were serious and 21 were discharged from hospital. — DDC
Race against clock to find trapped miners

By Gien Elsas, West Rand Bureau

Rescue teams are fighting against the clock in an attempt to find two miners who are trapped more than 2 km underground after a rockburst killed three people and injured 51 at Doornfontein Mine near Carletonville yesterday.

Mr Attie Roets, public relations officer at Goldfields, said today the rockburst occurred at 11.20 am at a section of the mine which is 2,500 m underground. He said the intensity of the burst measured 3.3 on the Richter scale.

The burst killed three men instantly and injured 51, most of whom were taken to the Goldfields' group hospital in Carletonville.

Two of the men were admitted in a serious condition while 21 were discharged after being treated for minor injuries. The condition of the two seriously injured miners had stabilised by today.

Initially four miners were trapped underground, but last night two of them were rescued uninjured.

STRUGGLED

Several rescue teams struggled throughout the night through fallen rock and mining rubble in a desperate attempt to locate the two missing men.

"We cannot say whether these men are still alive, but we do not hold out much hope that they are still living," Mr Roets said.

He added that the names of the dead and injured would only be released later.
3 miners die in rock burst

JOHANNESBURG — Three miners died and four were still missing early yesterday evening after a rock burst at the Doornfontein gold mine, near Carletonville, yesterday.

Gold Fields SA senior public affairs spokesman Mr Attie Roets said at least 31 other miners were injured. Rescue teams had failed to find the four missing workers eight hours after the accident.

The injured, two of whom are in a serious condition, are being treated at the Leslie Williams Hospital in Carletonville.
Missing miner rescued

THE fourth miner who was missing after Monday's rockburst at the Doornfontein Gold Mine near Carletonville has been rescued suffering only minor injuries, a spokesman for Goldfields said yesterday.

PRO Mr Attie Roets said the miner, who survived for 30 hours at two kilometres underground after the rockburst, was brought to the surface "more dazed" than injured.

The body of another miner was recovered earlier yesterday.

Four miners were killed and 52 injured in the rockburst at the 27/25 longwall faces of the mine. The intensity of the burst measured 3.3 on the Richter Scale.

Most of the injured were taken to the Leslie Williams Hospital. Two men had serious injuries while 21 were discharged after being treated for minor injuries.

Originally, four miners were missing in the burst. "Late" on Monday night, two were rescued, unjured — Sapa
Rescued miner has injury to his spine

West Rand Bureau

The Doornfontein, Carletonville, miner who was rescued, apparently virtually unscathed, after spending more than 24 hours trapped in a tunnel underground, is being treated for a spinal injury in the intensive care unit of the Leslie Williams Hospital.

Mr Attie Roets, PRO for Goldfields, said the miner, whose identity has not yet been released, appeared to be unhurt when he was found. He had been trapped in an air pocket about 2,500 m underground after a rockburst at the Doornfontein mine on Monday.

Four people were killed in the incident and 52 were injured, most of them not seriously. The last trapped miner was found on Tuesday afternoon and appeared to be unhurt.

He was taken to the Goldfields’ Group Hospital for a check-up as he was suffering from shock. Closer examination showed that the man suffered a spinal injury.
Statistics of Aids carrying miners released

JOHANNESBURG — The number of Malawian mineworkers identified as Aids carriers had more than doubled since 1986, the Chamber of Mines said yesterday.

A major study of the disease’s prevalence on the mines was carried out among a general sample of mineworkers in 1986.

A Chamber spokesman said in a statement that 2,000 Malawians were identified as carriers, but “many of these had completed their contracts and left the country.”

“Non-Malawians identified as HIV positive total about 90, of which about 40 are South Africans,” the spokesman said.

Reports that there were 4,000 HIV carriers in the mining industry, including 500 non-Malawians, were incorrect, he said.

The spokesman said it was not yet possible to say what the increase in the incidence of the disease was among non-Malawians since the Chamber’s 1986 study.

He said it could, however, be assumed that some increase had occurred in non-Malawians.

There are about 20,000 Malawians in the mining industry’s workforce of 756,000 — Sapa
The MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TECHNOLOGY

(a) No, because it is confidential commercial information of a private sector company which is not at the disposal of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs and it is suggested that you direct your enquiry directly to Sasol
(b) Falls away
(c) (i) and (ii) Fall away

Overseas visitors: guests of Bureau for Information

684 Mr C J Derby-Lewis asked the Deputy Minister of Information

With reference to his reply to Question No 547 on 7 October 1987, how many overseas visitors who were guests of the Bureau for Information in 1987 were unable to meet representatives of (a) the National Party, (b) the Progressive Federal Party, (c) the Conservative Party, (d) Inkatha and (e) the Soweto Civic Association as a result of the itineraries of these guests not permitting of such meetings?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION

The Bureau for Information does not have a foreign guests programme but handles guests of the Department of Foreign Affairs on an agency basis. The basic guideline for each guest programme is however compiled by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

No records are kept of meetings that did not take place as a result of itineraries that could not accommodate them

(a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) Fall away

Accident at No 10 shaft of St Helena Mine: investigation

713 Mr C J Derby-Lewis asked the Minister of Economic Affairs and Technology

(1) Whether, with reference to his reply to Question No 527 on 7 October 1987, the investigation into the cause of the accident at the No 10 shaft of the St Helena Mine on 31 August 1987 has been completed, if not, (a) why not and (b) when is it anticipated that the investigation will be completed, if so.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

(2) whether there was any evidence of negligence on the part of persons concerned with this mine, if so, on whose part,
(3) what were the other findings in this regard?

The MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND TECHNOLOGY

(1) No

(a) As a result of the extent and conditions of the accident, a large number of witnesses is involved and the enquiry, in terms of article 5(1) of the Mines and Works Act, 1956 (Act 27 of 1956) is time consuming
(b) It is expected that the enquiry will be completed by June 1988

(2) Falls away
(3) Falls away

Committee in Pretoria: financed by Bureau for Information

718 Mr C J Derby-Lewis asked the Deputy Minister of Information

Whether the Bureau for Information is involved in financing a certain committee in Pretoria, the name of which has been furnished to the Bureau for the purpose of the Deputy Minister's reply, if so, (a) why, (b) to what extent per annum and (c) what (i) are the aims and objects and (a) is the name of this committee?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INFORMATION

No

(a) and (b) Fall away
(c) (i) and (ii) Fall away

Own Affairs

Christmas cards sent out

51 Mr P G Soal asked the Minister of Local Government, Housing and Works

(1) Whether (a) he and/or (b) his Department sent out Christmas cards in 1987, if so, (i) what total number of cards was printed, (ii) to whom were they sent, (iii) what was the total cost of producing and distributing these cards, and (iv) who was responsible for preparing them, in each case,

(2) whether postage stamps were used to send out these Christmas cards, if not, how were they distributed?

The MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING AND WORKS

(1) (a) Yes
(b) Yes
(i) 1 275

(2) The Minister's Christmas cards were distributed as official postal material

In the case of the Head of the Department only Christmas cards, by virtue of his office, were distributed as official postal material.
NUM petition over Kinross

THE National Union of Mineworkers has circulated 250,000 pamphlets asking its members to support a petition asking the Attorney-General to appeal against the Kinross Mine disaster judgment.

Last month seven Gencor employees were acquitted of culpable homicide and other related allegations following the Kinross fire in October 1986. The fire, the worst disaster at a South African gold mine, killed 177 men.

NUM's safety officer, Dr Denis Ruber, said the union wanted to appeal against the judgment.

Petitions were being circulated at mines throughout the country, and he said it was hoped most of the union's 250,000 members as well as friends and supporters would give their signatures.

The pamphlet says: "An appeal against the finding of the magistrate can be made, but the families of the dead cannot appeal and the NUM cannot appeal. "Only the State can make an appeal because it brought the case to court." — Sowetan Correspondent
## Plight of paralysed heroes of the war waged underground

Still plights of workers paralysed in mining accidents has become the focus of a new drive by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for higher levels in the industry to be improved.

Dennis Rubel, a doctor in NUM’s Health and Safety Department, says some 100 workers become paralysed as a result of mine accidents every year.

To deal with the range of problems facing these men, Rubel says should be treated as “war heroes,” the union plans to hold a national paralyses conference before June.

The task of the conference, says Rubel, will be to draft a programme designed to improve the physical, mental and social conditions of workers paralysed underground.

Peter Banks in the Chamber of Mines, said the mining industry has also begun an inquiry into the conditions in which paralysed men lives and the possibility of making improvements to those.

An interim report has been produced by the board of inquiry, he said, but cannot be made public this stage because of its provisional nature.

Research by Jean Leger, of the University of the Witwatersrand, and Shirley Arkles, of medical sociologists, shows that the mining industry accounts for two-thirds of all black workers who are permanently injured each year in industrial accidents.

They note that the rehabilitation system for miners, administered by the Rand Mutual Association on behalf of the government, is generally inadequate for the task.

“Since compensation is based on wages, wage levels are crucial for determining levels for adequate compensation for disabled workers and their families,” they add.

Arkles “Designs the 300 percent raise as real wages between 1971 and 1983, the majority of which went to white workers, was a way of offsetting wages earned by black men often close to the poverty datum line.”

The vast gap between white and black miners’ wages also affects compensation levels. More than 12,000 men are injured and 600 killed in mining accidents each year. Of these, 100 workers become paralysed. EDDIE KOCH reports on moves to improve conditions in the industry.

## Minerve Belwane’s back is broken. Now he’s too afraid to go home

BY EDDIE KOCH

While Belwane Mzwawla was working at the shipyard on the Durban docks, he fell into a blower and received severe burns and cuts on his hands. He was taken to hospital and then discharged.

Belwane Mzwawla was living with his family in Eerste River, near Cape Town, but he had no job and no money to support his children.

When he returned home, he found that his wife had left him and taken the children with her. He was devastated and did not know what to do. He decided to go back to the shipyard to earn some money, but he did not have any money for transport.

He had no choice but to walk to the shipyard, a distance of about 20 kilometers. He was very tired and weak, but he continued on his way. When he arrived at the shipyard, he saw that there were many other workers who had also been injured.

Belwane Mzwawla decided to become a cleaner at the shipyard, but he was not able to work for very long because his back was broken. He was refused compensation by the shipyard, but he did not give up. He continued to work as a cleaner and eventually managed to support his family.

Belwane Mzwawla is now 65 years old and lives in a small house with his wife and children. He is still unable to work, but he is happy and content. He thanks his family for their support and says he will always be grateful to them.

Belwane Mzwawla’s story is just one of many among the thousands of workers who have been injured or killed on South Africa’s mining and shipyards. They have no choice but to continue working despite their injuries.

As a result, many workers are left with permanent disabilities and are unable to support their families. They are forced to work long hours under dangerous conditions and are not given the compensation they deserve.

As a result, the NUM has launched a campaign to improve conditions in the mining and shipyards. They are calling for higher compensation payments and better working conditions for all workers.

The NUM is also calling for the government to take action to improve the situation. They say that unless action is taken, many more workers will be left with serious injuries and disabilities.

Belwane Mzwawla’s story is a reminder of the need for workers’ rights and better compensation for those who have been injured. It is a call to action for everyone who cares about the well-being of workers in South Africa.
Sunday Times Reporter

TEN black miners were killed and two hurt in a shaft accident 960m below the surface at Rand Mines' Harmony Gold Mine near Virginia yesterday.

A descending lift cage door was ripped off and the 10 fell to their death, said Rand Mines spokesman Mr Greg Kukard.

He said rescue work was "long and difficult" at the mine's Number Four shaft.

The accident brings this year's mine accident toll to 26 dead and 82 injured.
10 gold miners killed

JOHANNESBURG Ten miners died and two were slightly hurt in an accident that sent men plunging down the number four shaft at Harmony Gold Mine near Virginia in the Free State early on Saturday.

The names of the dead were being withheld till their next of kin have been informed, a spokesman for Rand Mines, the owners, said.

The accident was "believed to have been caused when the door of a conveyance transporting men underground came adrift as it struck an "as yet unknown obstacle or object, causing miners to fall into the shaft," he said. — Sapa.
Ten miners die in-shaft plunge

TEN miners died and two were slightly hurt in an accident that sent men plunging down the number four shaft at Harmony Gold Mine near Virginia in the Free State at 4.55am on Saturday.

The accident was believed to have been caused when the door of a conveyance transporting men underground came adrift as it struck an as yet unknown obstacle or object, causing miners to fall into the shaft," a spokesman for Rand Mines, the owners, said.

The spokesman originally reported six deaths and two miners missing.

"But during the course of rescue searches, the bodies of four other miners were discovered.

It was initially difficult to determine the exact number of missing workers as "the shift was still underground; they had to stay there for some time after the accident because of the damage."

The exact number of missing men became known once the shift had been brought to the surface again. Subsequently, rescuers discovered the bodies of the four men.

The names of the dead were being withheld until their next-of-kin have been informed, the spokesman said.

"The accident comes at a time when Harmony has been at the forefront of safety in the SA mining industry — having won the Chamber of Mines Millionaire Safety Shield (for 1-million accident free working hours) for the 19th time earlier this year," the spokesman said. — Sapa.
Mines to open after fighting

BRENNYN ADAMS

GENCOR's Trans Natal Mining is today expecting to re-open two of the three mines at Matla, near Kriel, which were closed last Wednesday after fighting between groups of miners, GM (Operations) Piet Henderson said at the weekend.

Between 300 and 400 workers, largely non-union members, demanded to be removed from Matla and temporarily accommodated on another mine after two miners were killed and 22 injured, Henderson said.

He said the mines were shut when the 400 refused to return to work and sporadic incidents of fighting continued underground on Thursday.

The absence of such a large proportion (almost 20%) of the workforce had affected production and required a great deal of reorganisation, Henderson said.

Negotiations with both the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the 400 were underway, he said, an investigation to determine the cause of the fighting.
Six murders, 12 rapes in Soweto

Crime Reporter

Six murders, three attempted murders and 12 rapes were reported in Soweto in what police described as a "relatively quiet" weekend.

Soweto police spokesman Major Noel Hartwell said 41 stolen and suspected stolen vehicles were recovered by detectives, who made 11 arrests.

Two men were arrested in connection with attempted-murder allegations while another two armed robbery suspects were also being held, he said.

One suspected rapist was also arrested.

Major Hartwell said 26 cases of theft, including six vehicles, were reported. Four suspects were arrested and faced theft charges.

Liquor Squad detectives arrested 13 people, including four women, under the Liquor Act and confiscated 190 dozen beers.

Two men were arrested by narcotics squad detectives and faced charges of possessing dagga.

Nearly 1,2 kg of dagga relating to the two cases was seized, said Major Hartwell.

Best Persian at the Pamper club

Mike Fowrie of Pretoria and the

Cause of mine accident unclear

Mine officials are still investigating the cause of the accident that claimed the lives of 10 miners at Harmony gold mine near Virginia, in the Free State, early on Saturday.

Rand Mines spokesman Mr Greg Kukard said last night it was still not clear exactly how the accident happened.

He said the door to a descending cage was ripped off and the 10 men fell 1,500 m down the shaft. "But what caused the cage door to come adrift is one of the aspects officials are investigating."

The cage was carrying about 100 people at the time. Two others were slightly injured in the incident.

The names of the victims will be released once their next of kin have been informed.
NUM ‘excluded from mine probe’

The National Union of Mineworkers has claimed in a statement that the management of Harmony gold mine had refused it access to the mine to take part in the investigation of the accident on Saturday in which 10 workers fell to their death from a moving conveyance at No 4 shaft.

The company has replied, saying it is not mine management’s decision whether the union participates in the investigation.

In a statement last night, the mine management said the investigation was being conducted by the Government Mining Engineer, a statutory body which investigated all major mining accidents.

“It is their decision whether NUM participates or not,” the statement said.

The union said it was baffled by the refusal as the mine was claiming to be in the forefront of safety in the industry.

SAFETY RECORD

“The NUM views the refusal as an indication that, contrary to the claim of being a frontrunner in safety, the mine management has many things to hide from both the workers on the mine and the general public.”

NUM says it represents more than 10,000 workers at the mine, making it the largest union on the mine.

This is disputed by management, who say that, according to stop orders, membership was only about 5 percent of eligible employees.

The union said it had participated in many accident investigations and inquiries in the industry since the inception of the union.

Harmony management said the mine’s outstanding safety record was “the result of dedicated effort by all employees on the mine and not the result of complacency.”

NUM said “We would like to reiterate our position that only through the total involvement of workers, through democratically-elected representatives, will the mines be a safe place to work in.” — Sapa
were beyond recognition.

About 50 miners who were trapped underground for hazardous conditions despite being aware of danger,

vomited unconsciousness. Fused to a fuse box adjacent to the mine, the men were rescued.

Mr. E. R. F. Fernando, 35, one of the men rescued, stated that the explosion occurred when the most

serious, attended the first aid to the injured. "I have never seen a place like this in my life," Mr. Fernando said.

Fernando stated that he was at the entrance to the mine when the explosion occurred. He was

survived by his wife and two children. Mr. E. R. F. Fernando and Mr. M. W. M. M. who were

the chamber, a network of ventilation conduits were two

among the four ST Lewis employees who received

injuries in 1966.

The mine was abandoned for the fourth time since it was

shutdown in 1969.

Mr. E. R. F. Fernando was killed in the blast,

which injured three others. fernando, 35, and his wife,

were rescued from the mine shaft in a makeshift lift, to rescue the trapped miners.

Mr. E. R. F. Fernando was a foreman for the coal mining company.

The explosion occurred at the entrance to the mine, which was

at the entrance to the mine. The President of the Chamber of Mines, Mr. W. L. Fernando,

last August, is the first coal mine explosion in

Brave Miners Honoured
My trip into hell, by the mine disaster ‘VC’ hero

WELKOM — Mr Nick Venter, hero of the St Helena mine disaster last year, spoke this week for the first time of the event for which he was awarded the mines’ ‘VC’.

Mr Venter, who has been in the mining industry for 26 years, rescued five colleagues after an explosion that wrecked a shaft at St Helena, killing 63 men.

He said modestly: “If you know mining people, you will know that they moan and groan, but comes the crisis and everyone pulls together, from the beginning to the end of the rescue operation. The team was fantastic.

“There was only one small cage working at the wrecked shaft after the explosion,” he explained. “Four of us went down to inspect the damage.

“Suddenly we heard the sound of men shouting — they may have seen the spotlights we were using. We yelled back at them to stay where they were and that we would help them.”

Mr Venter described how they had tried desperately to reach the men, but were unable to go far enough down because of the damage to the shaft.

The engineers then decided to lower someone in an adapted oil drum suspended below the cage. As I had had experience with a bosun’s chair I volunteered,” Mr Venter said modestly.

“When I was about 3 m above the pump station where the men were trapped, I told them to stop lowering me. I was afraid that if I went right down the men would rush to the shaft.

“I shouted to the men to stay where they were until I was out of the drum. Two could walk although they were injured. The other three were still conscious, but two had been badly burnt.”

Mr Venter described how he went to the men and calmed them before helping them into the drum which lifted them to a first-aid station higher up the shaft.

After making sure there were no other survivors, he was pulled up himself and helped with first aid.

One of the rescued men died later. But the other four were there to see Mr Venter receive the Chamber of Mines Supreme Award for Bravery this week.
Rescue teams find bodies of four miners

Sunday Times Reporter

Rescue teams yesterday recovered the bodies of the remaining four miners trapped after a rock burst at Western Deep Levels gold mine at Carletonville.

This brings the number of deaths to seven in the explosion at the world's deepest gold mine (W德)

The rock burst occurred on Friday night in the west shaft about 2 000m underground.

Three bodies were recovered immediately and rescue operations continued until the rest were found yesterday afternoon.

The names of the dead are being withheld until next of kin have been told.

The mine operates at very deep levels and is in a geologically unstable area, Anglo American spokesman James Duncan said.
7 die in mine

RESCUERS found the bodies of four more miners, bringing the death toll to seven from a rockburst in the world's deepest gold mine.

The bursting of the rock which is caused by underground earthquakes or tremendous pressures at great depths, occurred on Friday night in a stope at 2000 m beneath the surface at Western Deep Levels gold mine. Three bodies were recovered immediately and rescue operations had continued until the rest were found on Saturday evening.

The races of the dead were not immediately known, but a spokesman for the mine owner, Anglo American Corporation, said they were probably all black since their next of kin had not yet been notified. Most black miners are migrant labourers whose families live in distant rural areas or other countries.

The rockburst occurred in the western shaft, one of two shafts at Western Deep Levels, which extend 4000 m underground.

The mine, located 69 km west of Johannesburg, is unique in that it operates at such deep levels and is in a geologically unstable area, said Anglo spokesman, Mr James Duncan.

The mining company has pioneered in methods of predicting and ameliorating rockbursts, "but they are a fact of life there," said Mr Duncan.

Western Deep Levels utilises a method of excavation called long-wall stoping which was designed to reduce the chance of rockbursts in the system, a series of stope faces is mined in one general direction around the mine shaft and the mining faces are kept as closely in line as possible, creating the appearance of steps, with less pressure concentrating in one place — Sapa-AP.
Govt ad campaign 'not secret'

Own Correspondent

Johannesburg — The advertising contract for the government's R4.7-million campaign to promote participation in the municipal elections was awarded last year and there had been a long run-up to the final report approved by the cabinet last month.

The Minister of Information, Dr Stoffel van der Merwe, said yesterday it was a long-standing project and was not intended to be secret.

He said he would reveal the details of the campaign this week.

Conservative Party allegations that the campaign was designed to promote the National Party were "nonsense", Dr Van Der Merwe said.

He said the intention was not to promote any party but to promote government policy to have local elections.

Uncertainty over municipal voting

Own Correspondent

Johannesburg — It is uncertain if thousands of blacks, coloureds and Indians living legally in central Johannesburg will be eligible to vote in October's municipal elections.

As matters stand they are disqualified from the vote. This has been confirmed by the chairman of the management committee, Mr Francois Oberholzer, who said he had lobbied for Indians who lived legally in the greater Johannesburg area, to be granted representation on the council's advisory Lenasia management committee.

Mr Oberholzer said he expected the State President to deal with the question of voting rights in so-called grey areas before October when amendments to the Group Areas Act and the Settlement Areas Bill are to be discussed in Parliament.

But, the director of constitutional development, Mr Len Dekker, said the Group Areas Act and the Settlement Areas Act, had nothing to do with voting rights and dealt only with "where people can live".

He said the question of voting rights now resides with the provinces, each of which would determine rights in terms of voting ordinances.

Transvaal's local government MEC, Mr Olaus van Zyl, could not be contacted for comment and no policy statement on the issue has been made.

The leader of the PFP in the City Council, Mr Tony Leon, said: "Thousands are going to be completely disfranchised. This exposes the hypocrisy and untruthfulness of Chris Heunis's claims that everyone will be voting in the municipal elections on the same day."

Rockburst: Death toll rises to 2

Johannesburg — Rescuers found the bodies of four dead miners on Saturday, bringing the death toll to seven from a rockburst in the world's deepest gold mine.

The rockburst, caused by underground earthquakes or tremendous pressures at great depths, occurred on Friday night in a stope at 2,000 metres beneath the surface at Western Deep Levels Gold Mine.

Three bodies were recovered immediately. The others were found on Saturday night.

The rockburst occurred in the western shaft, one of two shafts at Western Deep Levels, which extend 4,000 metres underground.

The mine, 69km west of Johannesburg, is in a geologically unstable area, said an Anglo American Corporation spokesman — Sapa-AP.
Work resumes after rockburst

Johannesburg — Production at Western Deep Levels gold mine, Carletonville, where seven miners died in a rockburst, has been resumed after a safety test.

But the area where the rockburst occurred on Friday is still closed.

The burst registered 2.6 on the Richter scale. The mine recently received a safety award.

The names of the dead will be disclosed when their families have been told — Sapa.
Anglo names miners killed in rockburst

The names of the seven miners who died in a rockburst at Western Deep Levels on June 3 were released by Anglo American Corporation today.

All the dead men are Transkeians. They are Mr Ernest Temble-Jange (32), Mr Mntakalelwa Yifaka Zibekele (33), Mr Sikheliyana Msuywa (36), Mr Nelson Bossman Donkile (26), Mr Aaron Bhekakobo Nkame (32), Mr Goodman Lungile Godola (26) and Mr Thembunkos Sgoromana (24).
Three miners injured in shaft blast

Three miners were injured, one of them seriously, when an explosion occurred in Shaft No. 4 at Grootvlei Mine near Springs early today.

One of the miners sustained third degree burns to his face, arms and hands. He was taken to the Far East Rand Hospital, where his condition was stabilised before he was transferred to Johannesburg's Cottesloe Hospital.

A second miner sustained third degree burns to his left arm and a third had severe fractures to his right hand. Both are at Cottesloe.

East Rand Bureau.

Reeva Farm blast two days ago

By P. Reeva Farm Farm

A Rand Supreme Court of Appeal judge yesterday awarded two of Reeva Farm's Success Dympna and Mrs. Success Dympna and Mrs. Dvorsky R50,000 in a case arising out of the 1985 edition of the 'Army' newspaper.

The judge, Mr. Justice Dvorsky, awarded Reeva Farm farm R50,000 to Reeva Success.

The judge said two companies should include the 'Army' in the 'Army' for expert
Num out to uplift working conditions

By MOKGADI PELA

The health, safety and compensation units of the National Union of Mineworkers is daily fighting for adequate standards for all their members nationwide to end the average death rate of two people and 34 major injuries a day.

With a membership of 350,000 — the job is not easy. The health, safety and compensation staff say “the conservatism of mine owners made their job more difficult.”

Mr Hazzy Sibanyoni, who is the health officer for the union, said “Part of my job includes investigating and doing thorough research on health hazards faced by workers. I also have to look at the effects of noise on the workers.”

He said his unit disseminated information to the general membership. That was done either through seminars or leaflets.

Dr Dennis Rubel, the safety officer for the union, said “In uranium plants like Phalaborwa workers have to be informed about the dangers of radiation. People get affected by uranium as it gives off some radiation.”

NUM has signed a health and safety agreement with the Phalaborwa Mining Company and officials wished other mining companies to follow that example. Dr Rubel said one other issue that worried NUM as the “medical repatriation.” In terms of which a worker who loses a hand is sent back to his place of origin.

**Compensation**

Then the compensation officer Miss Nomsa Nkwancza stepped in to explain how workers were compensated after they sustained injuries at work.

She said “Compensation varied according to the injury sustained. Payment also depends on the extent of disability.” The loss of either two legs or two arms was regarded as 100 percent disability.

“Compensation also depended on the salary one gets, the fact that blacks are paid very low wages means they get almost nothing.”
JOHANNESBURG —
Twelve miners were injured early yesterday in an explosion at the Grootvlei gold mine near Springs, reports said.
Two of the injured — Mr W C Hanckom and an unidentified black man — are in a serious condition.
Ten other black men suffered minor injuries.
A police spokesman said the cause of the explosion is being investigated — Sapa.
News in Brief

Burst kills shift boss 3 die in mine blast

JOHANNESBURG — A shift boss died and three miners are missing following a pressure burst on Saturday morning at the East Rand Proprietary Mines in Boksburg. Two miners were rescued from the area.
Four miners killed

FOUR miners were killed in an accident at Rustenburg Platinum Holdings' Amandelbult mine 200 km north-west of Johannesburg when they were struck by a hopper—a small railway track—which ran down the shaft when the winding rope snapped at about 2.30am on Friday morning.

Consulting engineer, Mr Bruce Sutherland, said a group of eight miners were working in the shaft when the hopper rolled down the sloped shaft.

The four miners were killed instantly. One person sustained bruises. — Sapa.
RIGHT and left-wing unions are showing a rare unity in Bills designed to protect workers' health and safety in the workplace.

Unions, from the right-wing white Mine Workers Union (MWU) to the left-wing National Union of Mine Workers (Num), have flung their support behind the Occupational Diseases Bill and the Compensation for Occupational Diseases Bill.

The unions say the laws will narrow the criteria used to declare a worker's illness as a occupational disease. This will ensure that more illnesses can be declared as occupational diseases.

The two Bills, released for comment earlier this year, are aimed at removing barriers that prevent workers from seeking compensation for workplace-related illnesses.

For once, right and left agree: The new health Bill is ailing

A new Bill to regulate workplace safety takes one step forward (racial criteria are scrapped) and several steps backward, complainers warn. A new occupational diseases bill is planned.

The Bill is a bid to regulate workplace safety and health. It includes provisions for the protection of workers from exposure to hazardous substances, and for the maintenance of safe working conditions.

The Bill has been met with resistance from various groups, including the trade unions, which have expressed concern that it could undermine the rights of workers.

The Bill has been passed, but it is unclear whether it will be implemented.

The Bill has been met with mixed reactions. While some welcome the provisions for workplace safety, others are concerned that it could weaken the rights of workers.

The Bill has been passed, but it is uncertain when it will come into effect. The government is expected to announce its implementation date shortly.
First mining house's hospital privatised

By KERRY CULLINAN

RAND Mines Collieries Hospital in Witbank this week became the first mining hospital in the country to become privatised.

According to the company, this means that anyone in the area can now use the R10-million hospital on a fee-paying basis, instead of it being reserved solely for mineworkers.

Previously, mineworkers were engaged on a contract basis, which meant that their accommodation, food and medical care was free.

However, Rand Mines maintains that since 1986 when it introduced "market related wages" to the collieries, it also introduced medical aid schemes.

The National Union of Mineworkers believes free medical treatment is a basic right for its members and is currently involved in a dispute with Rand Mines over the withdrawal of free medical services.

"The NUM regards both the privatisation of the mine hospitals and the introduction of medical aid schemes as attempts by mining houses to wash their hands of their responsibilities and force the low-paid workers to pay for their own medical care," said Dr Dennis Rubel, of the NUM health and safety department.

In February 1966, the government declared most of District Six a white area and in 1968 workmen began razing it. Coloured residents were forced to move to outlying townships.

The removal left a scar on the slopes of Cape Town's picturesque Table Mountain which has never healed. Three churches and a mosque, all that remain of the community, now stand isolated among a wasteland dotted with piles of rubble.

A technical college and government buildings went up and District Six was renamed Zonnebloem, a Dutch word for sunflower, but few people could be persuaded to move into an area with such a painful history. — Sapa
AN INQUIRY into the Kinross mine disaster in which 177 miners were killed, begins today, a spokesman for the National Union of Mineworkers said.

NUM official, Mr. Hazzy Sibanyoni said the union hoped that the inquiry, which will be held in Evander, would uncover the causes of the disaster "with a view to preventing similar occurrence in future."
Kinross disaster inquiry 'a sham'

The inquiry into South Africa's worst gold mine disaster, in which 177 men were killed in 1986 after a fire at the Kinross Mine, was completed in Evander yesterday in only three hours.

Following the Government Mining Engineer's (GME) inquiry, the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) health and safety officer Mr Hazy Shoneyi called the proceedings "a sham".

"I can't believe that an inquiry of this magnitude can be completed in just three hours with some witnesses not even being questioned," he said.

However, the inquiry's presiding officer, assistant GME Mr Hennie Liebenberg, denied the inquiry had been a "mock" one, saying, "this was a strict inquiry in terms of the Mines and Works Act".

He said there would be no finding, but copies of the day's proceedings would be handed to the Attorney-General and the GME for any possible further action.

The inquiry opened on a dramatic note when Mr Liebenberg refused the NUM permission to cross-examine witnesses.

The NUM's legal representative Mr Edwin Cameron notified the inquiry of the union's intention to get a Supreme Court ruling on the matter. He also applied to Mr Liebenberg for an adjournment of the proceedings pending the ruling. This was denied.

Mr Cameron said the NUM objected to the assistant GME's refusal to allow the union to cross-examine "as it is our view that the presiding officer has the discretion to allow it (in terms of the Mines and Works Act)".

Mr Liebenberg said section 6.2 of the Act would be enforced strictly and only parties entitled to cross-examine in terms of this section would be allowed to do so.

The GME's original probe into the fire formed the basis for the State laying charges of culpable homicide and related charges under the Mines and Works Act against seven Gencor employees.

After a lengthy trial, all were acquitted except a welder who was found fined for contravening the Act's regulations.
EVANDER — The government's mining engineer's inquiry into the 1966 Kinross mine disaster, in which 177 miners died, started dramatically yesterday when the NUM was refused permission to cross-examine witnesses.
Drama at inquiry

THE Government Mining Engineer's inquiry into the 1986 Kinross mine disaster in which 177 miners died, got off to a dramatic start yesterday when the National Union of Mineworkers was refused permission to cross-examine witnesses.

The NUM legal representative, advocate Mr Edwin Cameron, told the inquiry that the union would go to the Supreme Court for a ruling on the issue.

He applied to the inquiry's presiding officer, assistant Government mining engineer, Mr Henne Liebenburg, to have the inquiry adjourned pending the Supreme Court ruling.

This was denied.

Mr Cameron said the NUM objected to the presiding officer's ruling on cross-examining rights "as in our view he has the discretion to allow it (in terms of the Mines and Works Act)."

Mr Liebenburg said that if the Supreme Court rule that the GME inquiry should have allowed the union the right to cross-examine, then the inquiry would be re-opened.
Kinross inquiry ‘sham’, says NUM

‘Buzzer’ backs battered Boris

The Argus Foreign Service

LONDON.— Tennis superstar Boris Becker has received a formal apology from Wimbledon chairman “Buzzer” Haddingham over the treatment the two-times champion has received at the hands of the British tabloid Press.

Mr Haddingham said he had written to Becker about the headlines describing Becker as “Banking Boris”, “Tight Gil” and “Sour Kraut”.

The chairman said he had been “applied” by the coverage of Becker’s exchange with a Wimbledon car-park attendant and had protested to Daily Mirror owner Robert Maxwell.

His letter to Becker said the young West German was a credit to his country and to tennis.

Secret of the Centre Court

The Argus Foreign Service

LONDON.— A mystery millionaire who has been giving away Centre Court tickets at Wimbledon has been identified as Mr Peter Graf, father of tennis star Steffi.

The softly spoken West German has been touring the ticket queues looking for forlorn fans — then handing over tickets without disclosing his identity.

“I get two complimentary tickets a day that I don’t use,” he explained.

“Mr Peter Graf

The boys and girls are thrilled.”

Two West German girls, Cornelia Korthen and Astrid Balko, screamed with delight when Mr Graf gave them tickets.

Ashe puts his heart in

The Argus Foreign Service

LONDON.— Former Wimbledon champion Arthur Ashe, who came within an ace of death from heart disease after defeating Jimmy Connors in the 1975 final, was back at the Centre Court this week, telling people how to avoid the disease.

In a move to support the Family Heart Association’s cholesterol awareness campaign, he demonstrated to fans a quick and simple blood test which monitors a heart condition.

He also advised people to cut down on saturated fats, increase exercise, lose weight and give up smoking.
Kinross inquiry: ‘a token formality’

JOHANNESBURG – Tuesday’s inquiry into the Kinross disaster would do little to allay National Union of Mineworkers’ members concern over the safety of working conditions in mines, the NUM said yesterday.

“The impression that the inquiry was a token formality will do little to allay the union and its members’ concern over the safety of working conditions in the South African mining industry, or the adequacy of the current legal provisions to detect and prevent hazards which claim hundreds of lives every year,” Mr Haszy Sibanyoni, NUM’s health and safety officer, said.

The inquiry into the Kinross disaster of September 1986 in which 177 workers died, took place at the Evander Club on Tuesday, 21 months after the disaster.

Due to run for three days, the inquiry was disposed of in little over three hours, NUM said.

NUM’s legal representatives were refused the right to cross-examine any of the witnesses.

This was the only time the company and its officials were called to account for the circumstances that led to the disaster, NUM said.

“At the inquiry, the witnesses read out their statements and were subjected to minimal cross-examination by the presiding officer.

“The evidence led at the inquiry goes no way to explaining how the deadly rigid foam came to be applied to the mine’s tunnel walls despite the fact that it has been prohibited elsewhere, is known to be extremely dangerous, and has led to the loss of lives in other accidents on South African mines,” Mr Sibanyoni said — Sapa.
Legal row over Kinross inquiry

By EDDIE KOCH

Hazzy Sibanyon said witnesses then read out their statements and were subjected to minimal cross-examination.

The inquiry had been called for an inquiry for nearly two years. “Due to run for three days, it was disposed of in little over three hours,” said Sibanyon.

“The impression that the inquiry was a token formality will do little to allay the union’s and its members’ concern over the safety of working conditions in the South African mining industry.”

The Kinross gold mine near Evander was the scene of one of South Afri

can’s worst mining disasters in September 1986. 177 miners were killed by noxious gases from polyurethane foam that had been used to line an underground tunnel.

Cameron told the Weekly Mail he would file papers in the supreme court within the next week.

During the hearing Liebenberg, who is also the assistant government mining engineer, said the inquiry could be re-opened if the court ruled in favour of the union.

Evidence at the inquiry was presented by seven officials who earlier this year faced charges of culpable homicide and related charges under the Mines and Works Act. No other witnesses were called.

All seven were acquitted except for a welder who was found guilty of using the underground oxyacetylene torch which sparked the blaze. He was fined R100.

At the time Num offered to pay the fine as a sign of protest at the ruling. “The evidence led at the inquiry goes no way to explaining how the deadly foam came to be applied to the mine’s tunnel walls despite the fact that it has been banned elsewhere in the world and had led to loss of lives, on South African mines in the past,” said Sibanyon.

Jean Leger, who conducts research into mine accidents at the University of the Witwatersrand, said the use of polyurethane foam to seal underground tunnels had led to at least two other major mine accidents during the 1980s.

In September 1982 a fire at the Buffelsfontein mine killed 12 miners. It was later found they had inhaled gases given off by burning polyurethane foam.

In October 1983 a government inquiry into an accident at Vaal Reefs number 4 shaft found 10 people had died from “inhalation of noxious gases and vapours from an underground fire. The fire originated at an air crossing. Polyurethane foam used to seal the crossing ignited while holes were being cut in one of the steel beams with flame cutting apparatus.”

Leger, noting the causes of the 1983 accident appeared to be the same as those of the Kinross disaster, expressed concern about the brief nature of this week’s inquiry.

He pointed out it was no longer necessary for the government mining engineer to make public the findings of inquiries into accidents, even though “the starting point of these investigations should be a determination to prevent another accident of the same nature from taking place”.

After the hearing Liebenberg said he would make no immediate finding and would instead hand copies of the proceedings to the Attorney General and the government mining engineer.
Labour Update

NUM meets lawyers over Kinross issue

THE National Union of Mineworkers is consulting its lawyers over the Kinross Mine disaster with a view to seeking the re-opening of the inquiry into the occurrence.

Num official, Mr Hazzi Sibanyoni, said the move followed the decision by Mr Hennie Liebenburg, a presiding officer at last week’s inquiry into the disaster, to refuse the union’s legal representative permission to cross-examine witnesses at the hearing.

There was drama at the inquiry last week when a Num legal representative, Mr Edwin Cameron, was refused permission to cross-examine the witnesses. The union is seeking a Supreme Court ruling allowing Mr Cameron to cross-examine witnesses.

The Num official said the Government Mining Engineer's inquiry into the mine disaster — which claimed 177 lives in 1986 — had failed to satisfy the Num's desire to see similar occurrences prevented. The inquiry proceedings ended after three days instead of taking place over three days as scheduled, he said.

Objections

Num's objections against the inquiry included that:

- Evidence led at the inquiry did not explain how "the deadly rigid foam came to be applied to the mine's tunnel walls despite the fact that it had been prohibited elsewhere.
- The inquiry did not satisfy the union's desire to see similar disasters prevented by "a proper examination of the dangers present during the Kinross disaster, including the use of faulty equipment;" and
- The inquiry did not give hope that the use of "rigid foams" in South African mines would be more closely monitored by the Government’s mining engineer.

Response

Responding to Num's statement, Gencor said in a statement: "The tragic circumstances of the Kinross accident have been fully addressed according to the law. "All the questions of fact raised by the Num were dealt with at the criminal trial in the Witbank Regional Court which was conducted publicly. The Num statement disregards the facts established at the criminal trial as contained in the court record;" the Num official said.

HAZZY Sibanyoni

the company added.

Mr Sibanyoni said the criminal trial itself could not be regarded as "an adequate substitute for proper inquiry;" “The union has good reason to believe that the technical evidence led by the company at the prosecution should be subjected to cross-examination and is at variance with the opinion of safety experts," the Num official said.
Fire at mine has been contained

A FIRE which broke out at the West Driefontein Gold Mine has been contained and is being smothered, mine spokesman Attie Roets said last night.

The fire was reported on Monday night at the 26th level of No 6 shaft, he said.

There was apparently a slight rockfall before the fire broke out.

"It appears a timber pack caught fire. The area was sealed off then. There were no casualties."

It was difficult to estimate how long it would take the fire to die, he said.

"It might have a minor impact on production if they cannot get production from elsewhere in the mine, but it is likely they will be able to do that," he said.
The 5 most dangerous mines, by the NUM

NEARLY one in every 100 underground workers at Gencor's St Helena gold mine lost their lives in industrial accidents during 1987, says the National Union of Mineworkers.

According to a recent report by the union, the five most dangerous mines in South Africa last year were St Helena, the small Erfdeel mine, Angle's Western Deep Levels and Vaal Reefs mines, and Goldfield's Kloof mine.

Dr Dennis Rubel, head of Num's Health and Safety Department, says in the report St Helena had a death rate in 1987 of 9,23 for every 1,000 workers employed underground.

The fatality rates for the other four mines were: 5,34 at Erfdeel, 4,34 at Western Deep Levels north mine, 3,33 at Western Deep Levels south mine, 2,57 at Kloof and 2,38 at Vaal Reefs west mine.

Rubel says his statistics are based on an analysis of the Chamber of Mines official death and injury rate tables for all gold, coal and other mines in 1987.

The report, produced annually by the chamber, has for the first time given separate statistics for underground and surface workers.

According to the chamber's tables, the death rate for underground workers during 1987 was 1,42 for every 1,000, while the combined rate for underground and surface workers was 1,13.

Rubel says underground statistics are the real indicators of mining hazards. Surface statistics serve only to make the underground dangers more palatable statistically.

He has also made a distinction between deep-level mines and "not-so-deep level" mines. On the 29 deep-level mines in the country, Rubel says the chamber's figures indicate there were a total of 473 deaths underground and a fatality rate of 1,64 for every 1,000 workers.

A representative of the Chamber of Mines said a mine's safety performance could not be judged by looking at figures for one year only.

He said a single disaster could happen in any one year which could create fatality figures that run counter to the mine's performance over a number of years.

Thus St Helena was high on Num's list, even though it has one of the best safety records and won the industry's most prestigious award for safety in 1983. The high fatality rate for 1987 was due to a single accident which killed 63 workers.

While the union has welcomed the publication of separate figures for underground deaths, it is less happy with the Chamber of Mines' method for reporting of injury rates.

The official tables indicate that more than two out of every 100 underground workers were seriously injured in accidents during 1987. The injury rate for underground workers was 22,35 for every 1,000 workers while the combined rate for underground and surface workers was 11,80 out of every 1,000. Both these figures show a sharp drop in the injury rates for 1987.

But Rubel argues that the figures do not reflect the real situation as only injuries that caused a worker to be off work for 14 days or longer are included in the tables.

"We know of workers who have had fingers amputated, or have had forearm bones broken in accidents, who have been put back on light duty before the end of the 14-day period. This is in line with the emphasis on prizes and shields for those mines improving their accident figures," his report says.

Herbert Eissner, an international expert on mine accidents, has argued in a recent article that the apparent decline in injury rates on the mines since 1970 reflects a more favourable picture than the actual number of injuries.
Men buried under wet concrete and scaffolding WALL CRASHES - 3 DIE

By ALI MPHAKI
AT LEAST three workers were killed yesterday when scaffolding and concrete reinforcements crashed down at the Cresta shopping centre in Randburg, firemen said.

Another worker is missing and feared dead in the rubble, rescue workers at the scene said as firemen desperately dug through the huge pile of scaffolding and wet concrete.

Another eight men, all believed to be construction workers, were injured, said Randburg fire chief Mr Nick van Dyk. Eyewitnesses said the scaffolding, erected in front of the Wimpy fast-food outlet, collapsed at about 11:20am while workmen were pouring concrete into reinforcements in the ceiling on the lower ground floor.

Mr van Dyk said it took an hour to dig out the first body. He had little hope that the missing man would be found alive.

Construction worker Mr Abraham Molefe (62), was on top of the scaffolding when it fell.

"I just closed my eyes and said my prayers as I flew to the ground," he said.

Mr Molefe's knee was slightly injured.

CONSTRUCTION workers removing some of the debris after a wall fell at Cresta shopping centre near Randburg yesterday killing three workers and injuring seven others.

Pic LEN KHUMALO
Mine has a history of fatal accidents

By Therese Anders, Highveld Bureau

There had been five accidents involving 19 fatalities at Gencor's Ermelo Mine between 1981 and the April 9 underground methane explosion that killed 34 men last year, an inquest court was told yesterday.

Mr Abraham Johannes Cilliers, Ermelo Mine's chief environmental control officer at the time of the accident, was giving evidence at the resumption of the Ermelo Mine inquest inquiry.

The case is being heard by Ermelo chief magistrate, Mr J V Marais, with Assistant Government Mining Engineer, Mr Errol de Wet, as an assessor.

Advocate Erwin Cameron, for the National Union of Mineworkers, asked Mr Cilliers if he had known of Ermelo Mine's reputation as "a dangerous mine."

Mr Cilliers acknowledged that he had been aware of previous fatal accidents at the mine. Mr Cameron then listed the mine's accidents since 1981.

"In March 1981 six people had been injured, in November 1982 11 miners died, in November 1983 one man died, in October 1984 six died and in November 1984 one person died."

Mr Cameron then asked Mr Cilliers if he did not think this was "a lot of incidents."

Gencor's legal representative objected to the reference to previous accidents on the mine, claiming it was hearsay evidence that would prejudice the company.

On leave

Mr Cameron contended Mr Cilliers' knowledge of the mine's past accident record was "first-hand evidence" and not "similar-fact evidence", as the defence had claimed.

Mr Marais ruled in favour of Mr Cameron, saying that the question had to be answered.

Earlier Mr Cilliers had given evidence that he had gone on leave, 12 days before the accident.

The hearing continues...
Mine accident kills two

JOHANNESBURG — Two miners were killed and three injured during a massive fall of ground at Gold Fields' West Driefontein Gold Mine yesterday morning. Two workers are still missing.
Mine rockburst
kills 3, injures 12

JOHANNESBURG

Three workers were killed and 12 injured in a pressure burst at Deelkraal gold mine about 11am yesterday, mine owner Gold Fields said yesterday afternoon.

A Gold Fields statement said a “seismic event” measuring 2.5 on the Richter scale was recorded in the area.
Mine official's evidence queried

By Therese Anders,
Highveld Bureau

ERMELO — The number of self-rescuer masks available to miners underground at the time of the methane explosion which killed 34 men at Ermelo Mine last year, was disputed in an inquest court yesterday.

Underground manager Mr Jacobus Frederick van Wyk said there were 48 men in the section of the mine where the explosion occurred and 55 "Oenco" masks.

Advocate Edwin Cameron for the National Union of Mineworkers, said that the mine's acting general manager, Mr Snyman, had said in a sworn statement before the court that there were 62 men underground and only 62 masks.

Earlier a mine overseer, Mr Jan Daniel Koch, denied that there were 62 people underground in the explosion area but added that "if there were then something went wrong".

Evidence was being given on the sixth day of the Ermelo Mine inquest, which is being combined with an inspector of mines inquiry.

The case is being heard by Ermelo's chief magistrate, Mr J V Marais, with assistant Government mining engineer Mr Errol de Wet as an assessor.

In previous evidence an Ermelo Mine team leader, Mr Hainson Zwane, said the self-rescuer masks had saved his life and that of 10 others he knew.
The Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union is to embark on an anti-asbestos awareness programme through the use of videos as part of its campaign.

BAMCWU is no newcomer to the campaign — as early as 1982 the union fought a long battle with mining companies calling for the closure of asbestos mines. According to the publicity secretary of BAMCWU, Mr Mbulelo Rakwena, thousands of workers employed in those mines face a danger of contracting asbestos.

He said members of the community were invited to participate in the video cassettes. The shows would be at their offices countrywide. Coupled with that, a team of medical personnel would resume their visits to rural areas where people were exposed to the mineral.

BAMCWU, he added, would also consider litigation against companies for having exposed the workers and the community to the asbestos dust. The victims of this deadly disease were mainly in the North Eastern Transvaal and the Northern Cape where the mineral was mined.

The inhalation of fine asbestos dust can create a chronic disease leading to the malfunctioning of the lungs.

**Symptoms**

Asbestos has as its symptoms, fatigue, difficulty in breathing, coughs and lassitude. Asbestos dust affected all those who came into contact with it. Figures released by the Mine Bureau of Occupational Diseases between 1967 and 1983 show that more than 6000 fell prey to the dust particles.

In the light of the hazards people faced with asbestos, Mr Rakwena said, BAMCWU launched a national campaign for the closure of all asbestos mines in the country.

Internationally, restrictions on its mining and manufacture have been imposed. Britain and the United States have imposed stringent controls on levels of asbestos dust in their workplaces.

Scandinavian countries have, on the other hand, completely outlawed the product, he added.

"In our country, fairly little has been done. Legislation does not protect workers and the community neighbouring the mines from the disease. Our research shows that communities living near asbestos mines and dumps are in danger of contracting asbestos," he went on.

In the North Eastern Transvaal alone about 500,000 people could contract the disease. He listed three categories of people likely to contract the disease as:

1. Those mining or milling asbestos
2. Those working in the construction, transport and chemical sectors dealing with asbestos
3. Those occupying buildings with asbestos fibre or living next to its dumps.

**Charged**

He said as a result of BAMCWU's campaign, many groups charged with the responsibility of monitoring the effects of asbestos on the community were established. The level of awareness since increased.

Secondly, the mines have been forced to introduce safety measures like never before. An asbestos built school near Penge Mine in the North Eastern Transvaal was destroyed by the General Mining Corporation (Gencor) and replaced with a brick structure.

Mr Rakwena said messages of support from the communities have been received by the union urging it to continue with its campaign.

Further, in 1985 BAMCWU was party to the International Labour Organisation Conference in Geneva on asbestos.

He said initially South Africa had 26 asbestos mines but today there were only eight. Those still in operation were mainly in the Northern Cape and in the North Eastern Transvaal.

**Roofing**

Mr Rakwena said there were about 3000 uses of asbestos.

Among those were roofing, heating, building and construction.

He said the latency period for the disease ranged between 10 and 20 years. His union held the view that the non-protection of black workers from occupational disease was deliberate and in line with the exploitation and degradation of blacks.

Regarding the compensation of workers BAMCWU said the complexity of the State and the mining industry is denoted by R24,000 plus monthly pension for white workers as against R1790 given to black workers.

**Inhalation of fine asbestos dust can create chronic disease**
Rockfall kills two miners

JOHANNESBURG — The body of another miner has been recovered, bringing the death toll in a rock fall at Western Deep Level's West Mine near Carletonville today to two. The press officer for Anglo American, Mr. Paul Clothier, said a rescue operation in the search for four missing miners was continuing. — Sapa

Emergency 'to fight on'
Mineworkers still missing

JOHANNESBURG — Three mineworkers are still missing at the Western Deep Level's West Mine near Carletonville after one more body was recovered early yesterday, bringing to three the number of bodies recovered in the wake of Thursday morning's rockfall at the mine.
JOHANNESBURG — The body of a sixth miner missing since a rockfall last week, was recovered in the Western Deep Levels West Mine near Carletonville yesterday, an Anglo American spokesman said.
The deaths of 177 mine men remembered by union thousands

TOMORROW thousands of National Union of Mineworkers members and workers from unions and the public will commemorate what is commonly known as the "Kinsross Day" in services to be held countrywide.

Kinsross Day services will be held to remember one of the worst tragedies in mining history this century. The death of 177 and injury of 230 mine workers in an underground accident at Kinslos on September 10, 1986.

Most of the victims in the accident were NUM members. It was on October 1 of that year that the NUM held a service for its members which was attended by 325000 of its members and 275000 workers from other industries countrywide.

Gather

This weekend services will be held by NUM and Cosatu branches countrywide. Those already confirmed are Klerksdorp, Rustenburg, Kimberley, Newcastle, Phalaborwa, Natal, Welkom and at the City Hall in Johannesburg where all the neighbouring NUM branch members will gather.

Health

Mr. Ramaphosa also said since the Kinsross Disaster in 1986 the NUM has placed the health and safety of its members on the agenda.

A union safety official yesterday said: "We view the Kinsross Day as a symbol for organsing around health and safety issues. Our objective goes beyond the day itself because we realise our primary task as not only to mourn the dead, but to prevent a recurrence of such accidents."

In a build-up to the weekend's Kinsross Day services the NUM released Press statements and issued posters and stickers articulating the views of its members. A striking message on one of the giant posters reads: "In 88 years the mines have killed 50000 workers. Organise or die!" A large picture of several coffins lined up with two levtho flags raised at half moss in the background occupy the centre of the poster.

Views

The NUM says the mines alone kill 800 workers and injure another 10000 every year. This is despite the fact that several mines have been awarded the highest safety recognition award - NOSA's five-star rating (NOSA stands for National Occupational Safety Association).

The health and safety record of the South African mines is the worst worldwide, according to NUM, which blames the exclusion of unions from inquiries by mine bosses and the ignorance of workers on which mine bosses thrive. A glance through the safety records of the mine accident history confirms NUM's claim.

Inquiry

Among the worst accidents to hit the industry was the death of 122 workers at the Was Gold mine in 1989. In 1960 the Cosbrook Mine caved in killing 435 workers underground. A commission of inquiry was set up to investigate the cause but to date the report has not been made public.

In 1969 at Buffelsfontein 60 workers were killed in a mining accident. And then came the Hobane gas explosion in 1983 which killed 68 workers.

The Kinsross Disaster in 1986 which killed 177 workers came while memories of the Hobane Disaster were still fresh in every worker's mind. Thus the NUM is presently demanding the following rights for its members:

- That they elect safety stewards.
- That they have access to information on health and safety hazards at the workplace.
- Be trained in health and safety awareness.
- Have the right to inspect the work place regularly, and
- Have the right to stop work in case they discover a dangerous situation at the workplace.

The NUM scored a safety victory when it signed two contracts with mine bosses over the safety of its members and officials said the agreements made all excuses that safety was a management prerogative.

The union believes that health and safety are an integral part of industrial relations and as a primary union responsibility as the union has the task of safeguarding the interests of its members — among which their lives come uppermost.

Safety

The NUM states that all unions should launch health and safety campaigns on an ongoing basis and not only when there is a major accident. It also says the bosses have little regard for health and safety because they view these as the causes of
Lung-damaged Kinross survivors fight for compensation

By EDDIE KOCH

A ROW between the National Union of Mineworkers (Num) and management of the Kinross gold mine has erupted over the plight of more than 300 workers whose lungs may have been damaged in the catastrophic underground fire two years ago.

The union accuses Gencor, owners of the mine, of reneging on an agreement made earlier this year to finance a thorough survey of the lungs of all workers who lived through the blaze that killed 177 workers at the mine on October 1 1986.

A pilot survey, conducted by the union in December last year, found a significant number of the survivors had diminished chest functions and are at risk of developing emphysema-type diseases because of exposure to noxious gases released by burning polyurethane foam.

Num’s health and safety officer, Hazzie Sibanyoni, told the Weekly Mail Kinross management had indicated, in talks with the union, that it was not satisfied with the reliability of the union’s preliminary lung-function survey and wanted to carry out another series of pilot tests before agreeing to fund a full-scale examination of the survivors.

“They also refused to give workers time off so that they can take part in the survey,” said Sibanyoni. “The union is now trying to arrange its own test to be held on weekends because of fear of dismissals.”

A spokesman for Kinross Mines said the company has been committed for over a year to the idea of having an unbiased lung study performed by the Medical Bureau for Occupational Diseases.

“The Num has however to this day not confirmed agreement to the protocol drawn up by the Medical Bureau setting out ways in which a scientifically valid study had to be conducted,” he said.

“Kinross Mines is proceeding with a study conducted by the appropriate experts with or without the Num and wishes to reiterate its willingness to have an unbiased and scientific study completed as soon as possible.”

The union fears the lungs of 334 survivors who were hospitalised for more than two days after the fire may have been damaged by exposure to burning polyurethane foam and that they could, as a result, lose between 10 and 15 years of their lives.

Under the existing system of compensation for occupational diseases, miners will qualify for a lump-sum payment of about R2 000, says the union. Num hopes to include workers with diminished lung functions to be included in the disaster fund set up by Gencor for the families of Kinross victims.

Meanwhile Num and the Congress of South African Congress of Trade Unions have jointly organised commemoration services tomorrow for the workers who died at Kinross.

“October 1 has been declared a health and safety day — a day on which workers will not only commemorate the Kinross disaster but will also mobilise around health and safety demands,” a union press release said.

May Hermanus, who works in Num’s health and safety department, told the Weekly Mail the union was mounting a campaign for more of its members to be appointed health and safety officers on the mines.

The Mines and Works Act is due to be amended so that it can make allowance for health and safety officials to be appointed from the workforce — in line with standard practice in other industries.
Lung-damaged Kinross survivors fight for compensation

By EDDIE KOCH

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A spokesman for Kinross Mines said the company has been committed for over a year to the idea of having an unbiased lung study per-
Miners throughout the country are considering stopping work every time a miner dies in an accident, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) general secretary, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, said in Johannesburg at the weekend.

"Addressing a memorial service to commemorate the death of 177 miners in the Kinross disaster of September 1986, Mr Ramaphosa said "the time has come for the union to show management that safety comes before profits".

Mr Ramaphosa said workers at every mine with a union presence would discuss a proposal that the death of every miner be "mourned in the same way that we mourned the victims of Kinross".

Thousands of mineworkers stopped work on October 1 1986 to commemorate the Kinross dead.

Mr Ramaphosa said this proposal was made after workers realised that "the lives of the men who died at Kinross were worth R100."

Mr Ramaphosa said the court proceedings, where mine officials were accused of culpable homicide achieved little more than fining a welder R100.

"If you divide that R100 by 177, the resultant figure shows you just how much our lives are valued at.

Each miner's life was worth the "millions of rands the mines made in a day," he said, calling for October 1 to be recognised as Health and Safety Day.

NUM's chairman of the Health and Safety Committee in the Witwatersrand region, Mr Obed Maila, said that for years management argued health and safety was their prerogative.

"In our view it is the attitude which has killed so many of our workers. Many of these accidents take place in the rush for higher production.

"Since the Hlobane disaster in 1983, health and safety has been on NUM's agenda. It was after this disaster that the introduction of self-rescuers (an oxygen apparatus) became mandatory, but this law has not been enforced by the Government," he said.

Mr Maila said that the union had already signed two health and safety agreements with management, however many mines had refused to negotiate.

"We are now appointing our own shop stewards to monitor the situation."
KINROSS WARNING

MINEWORKERS throughout the country might stop work every time a miner dies in an accident, the National Union of Mineworkers' general secretary Mr Cyril Ramaphosa said in Johannesburg at the weekend.

Addressing a memorial service to commemorate the death of 177 miners in the Kinross mine disaster in September 1986, Mr Ramaphosa said "the time has come for the union to show management that safety comes before profits."

Mr Ramaphosa said workers at every mine with a union presence would, from yesterday discuss a proposal that the death of every miner be "mourned in the same way that we mourned the victims of Kinross."

If workers adopted the proposal they would inform managements.

"Thousands of mineworkers stopped work to commemorate the Kinross dead on October 1, 1986. At the time of going to press, comment from the Chamber of Mines was still pending."

Mr Ramaphosa said this proposal was made after workers realised that "the lives of the men who died at Kinross were worth R100."

Mr Ramaphosa said the court proceedings, where mine officials were accused of culpable homicide achieved little more than fining a welder R100. "If you divide that R100 by 177 the resultant figure shows you just how much our lives are valued at. Even the coffins we buried our workers in were worth more."

Each miner's life was worth the "millions of rand" the mines made in a day, he said, calling for October 1 to be recognised as a health and safety day.

He urged workers to ensure that disasters like Kinross would never happen again. — Sowetan Correspondent.
From MONO BADELA
JOHANNESBURG. — The National Union of Mineworkers (Num) has warned the country's mine bosses that from this week its members would demand tools for every registered miner's death in the industry.

The stern warning was delivered here by Cyril Ramaphosa, tough-talking general secretary of the more than 300,000-strong union.

Ramaphosa told nearly 1,000 miners in Johannesburg on Saturday that black miners were "sick and tired of the senseless killings" being perpetrated daily in South African mines.

Disquieting

"The death rate on the country's gold mines — some of them the richest in the world — is disquieting," he said.

"At least some 800 black miners die each year in the industry. Some 50,000 of them have lost their lives digging rich gold in some of the deepest mines on earth during the past 88 years.

"We won't stand for another Kurnoss — ever. Enough is enough. The killings must stop. If the mine bosses don't think otherwise the workers are ready to bring the killings to an end. We will halt production every time a miner dies."

Renewed vow

The Num decision was conveyed to the Chamber of Mines this week.

Members of Num, largest affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), renewed their vow taken in 1986 that future deaths in South Africa's rich mining industry would be mourned.

The decision was reached at the weekend when hundreds of thousands of black miners commemorated the death of 177 miners killed in the Kurnoss gold mine disaster in September 1986.

On October 1, 1986, more than 600,000 people, including 300,000 miners, stayed away from work or observed a three-hour work-stoppage called by Num to mourn the 177 miners lost in the Kurnoss disaster.

The stayaway cost the mining houses that day alone some R8-million in lost profits, according to the Labor Monitoring Group (LMG).

"Every time a mineworker dies underground, his colleagues will simply down tools," said Ramaphosa.

"They will simply mourn the dead one. It will not be a strike. We believe that in this way the accident rate in South Africa's deep mines will be reduced to a bare minimum.

Stop digging

"Each gold mine in this country yields a daily production that easily amounts to more than R1 million. If a miner dies in future the workers in that particular mine will simply stop digging and the mine will stand to lose that amount.

The far-reaching decision was delivered at an important venue — the Johannesburg City Hall, where celebrated political

Ramaphosa hit out at the mine bosses' lack of consultation on health and safety

"By observing October 1 we are not only paying tribute to the 177 miners killed at Kurnoss, it is also an attempt to make it very clear to the mine bosses that we take the health and safety of mineworkers seriously, that we have not forgotten those who died in 1986,"

Ramaphosa said the life of a black mineworker was worth less than R2 to the mine bosses and the South African government.

"Gencor, owners of Kurnoss gold mine, were fined only R100 for the disaster that resulted in the death of 177 miners in 1977. This means a miner's life is worth less than 200,” he said.

Ramaphosa and Num president James Matlala had earlier addressed another rally in Welkom, where a similar resolution was adopted by miners.

Other commemoration services were held at Secunda, Witbank, Rustenburg, Kimberley, Northern Natal, Cape Town and in Namakwaland.

The weekend's commemoration services were the first major successful solidarity action organised by Num since last year's one-month strike when nearly 500,000 black miners downed tools and challenged the might of the South African Chamber of Mines.
Thousands of miners recall Kinross tragedy

By SELLO SERIPE

The death of 177 mineworkers at Kinross mine on October 1, 1986, was commemorated last weekend at a moving service at the Johannesburg City Hall.

The 3,000-odd crowd, mainly members of the National Union of Mineworkers, heard speakers condemn mine management's interest in profit at the expense of worker safety. Miners pledged that October 1 would be commemorated as a holiday from next year.

"In future, the death of a single miner will be treated in the same way," a speaker said.

The service was punctuated by revolutionary songs as miners toiled inside the hall that is often used by the National Party.

Though the service was a sombre occasion, the thousands of miners, mainly from neighbouring states, celebrated moments of joy, especially when the group Bayete performed.

Lead singer Jabu Khanyile said the song "Mbombela" tells about a train which "takes you to the mines where you reap nothing and you die-

Federation of Transvaal Women's "Zaza-Jona" pledged solidarity with the NUM and called on women to fight injustice.
SA mines’ stars ‘don’t save lives’

By Therese Anders, Highveld Bureau

A five-star mine safety rating on a South African mine does not necessarily mean low fatality or reportable injury rates, says a scientific paper in the international Journal of Occupational Accidents.

In a paper written jointly by leading British mine safety expert Dr Herbert Enever and South African mining researcher Mr Jean Leger, the Chamber of Mines’s safety rating system has come under fire as being “star saturated” — 80 percent of gold and coal mines have four or five stars — and encouraging complacency.

It says there is no correlation between star rating and either fatality or reportable injury rates.

CRITICAL COMMENTS

The paper admits that most of critical comments are based on the International Safety Rating (ISR) system, which the chamber replaced with the “very similar” Mine Safety Management System (MSMS) last November.

South Africa’s leading mining group, Anglo American, is using a revised ISR system.

A spokesman for Anglo American told The Star: “At the Gold and Uranium Division of Anglo American Corporation, we constantly review our safety management systems. In 1987 we revised our safety rating system following discussions with the International Loss Control Institute (ILCI). The system we use meets with the institute criteria and is accepted by it.”

The paper says that star ratings have gradually increased since the ISR’s introduction in 1978, so that by 1986 most mines had achieved 5-star status and most mines had four or five stars.

“Thus, for the majority of mines, there would appear to be no room for improvement. This is unfortunate, as whatever the real effect of the ISR scheme on injuries and fatalities — that is on safety — it has not reduced them to such an extent as to make additional effort in accident prevention superfluous or impracticable.”

“On 14 of South Africa’s major gold mines, more than 15 workers are generally killed each year, yet nine of these mines hold 5-star status.”

The paper says that while the ISR is labelled as “international”, the ISR is not used widely in European or United States mines.

“Despite glowing testimonials from the chamber and local safety concerns, there is no substantially significant evidence that it has reduced injury and fatality rates by improving safety.”

“The ISR covers some areas of mine safety to a high standard, but coverage is not consistent. Certain areas are dealt with only in generalities, and others neglected. In particular, rock bursts, which are the second most important killer of workers, are given no attention.”

RECENT DISASTERS

“The practicality of objectively and thoroughly auditing a mine is questioned, given the system’s long checklists and the great detail required by some questions, and the limited number of auditing staff.

“While ostensibly high standards are set for scoring, more than 80 percent of gold and coal mines have been awarded four or five stars. Recent disasters have highlighted inadequacies of the system.”

The paper says a danger of the scheme is the degree of complacency it appears to have engendered.

“Attempts to reduce South Africa’s high underground fatality rates must first come to grips with this.”

A Chamber of Mines spokesman said no comment would be made to the press, but it would respond to a scientific journal.
Disaster at Gencor mine
‘due to poor ventilation’

EDITH BULBRING

THE methane gas explosion which killed 35 miners at Gencor’s Ermelo coal mine was caused by a build-up of methane roof layers and inadequate ventilation, a chief Inspector of Mines told the Ermelo Inquest Court yesterday.

Mineral and Energy Affairs senior official Johannes van Sittert said he would have doubled the ventilation.

At the time of the explosion, on April 9 last year, the area was ventilated at 17m³/second and he would have increased this to 40m³/second, he said.

The inquest continues today.
Fatal accident could have been prevented, court told

Union blames 'slapdash managers' for mine deaths

Ermelo Mine, where 35 men died last year in a methane explosion, had a "slapdash" system of management which disregarded some safety requirements that could have prevented the fatal accident, an inquest court was told yesterday.

Advocate Edwin Cameron, for the National Union of Mine-workers, was presenting argument on the final day of the case.

He said a finding of culpable homicide should be made on the part of the mine itself and on the part of those management officials who had been responsible for ventilation, testing and management supervision at the mine.

Ermelo Mine is part of Transnatal, Gencor's coal mine operation.

The joint inquest-inquiry was presided over by Ermelo's chief magistrate, Mr J V Marais, with the assistant Government Mining Engineer, Mr Errol de Wet, as an assessor.

"Air quantities and velocity fell grossly short of what a reasonable mine official would have ensured for the working area," Mr Cameron said.

"Particularly so in the light that Ermelo Mine was known as a gassy mine and that there had been four previous fatal accidents since 1962."

He said the last methane test conducted in the panel where the explosion occurred was 15 days before the accident.

The last test in the returning airways was conducted nine days before, and two days before testing was done in a nearby unworked area.

"It appears to be a haphazard pattern of testing," said Mr Cameron.

The pattern indicated that there was no realistic appreciation of the danger which lay in the under-ventilation of a temporarily unworked coal mining area.

Gencor's legal representative, Mr E Joubert, said the ventilation at the accident site had not been a "lucky dip" situation.

The air velocity had been a calculation based on the known facts.

He said that tests done in the area for a year before the accident had only twice shown any methane present.

No culpability

Mr Joubert said that in the absence of any other evidence it appeared that the explosion took place after hoiling (ventilation short-circuiting) which rocked the balance of the reticulation.

He said there was no culpability of any nature as the event could not have been foreseen.

Mr Marais will give his findings on November 25.
Fatal accident could have been prevented, court told

Union blames ‘slapdash managers’ for mine deaths

Ermelo Mine, where 35 men died last year in a methane explosion, had a “slapdash” system of management which disregarded some safety requirements that could have prevented the fatal accident, an inquest court was told yesterday.

Advocate Edwin Cameron, for the National Union of Mine-workers, was presenting argument on the final day of the case.

He said a finding of culpable homicide should be made on the part of the mine itself and on the part of those management officials who had been responsible for ventilation, testing and management supervision at the mine.

Ermelo Mine is part of Trans Natal, Gencor’s coal mine operation.

The joint inquest-inquiry was presided over by Ermelo’s chief magistrate, Mr J V Marais, with the assistant Government Mining Engineer, Mr Errol de Wet, as an assessor.

“Air quantities and velocity fell grossly short of what a reasonable mine official would have ensured for the working area,” Mr Cameron said.

“Particularly so in the light that Ermelo Mine was known as a gassy mine and that there had been four previous fatal accidents since 1982”

He said the last methane test conducted in the panel where the explosion occurred was 15 days before the accident.

The last test in the returning airways was conducted nine days before, and two days before testing was done in a nearby unworked area.

“It appears to be a haphazard pattern of testing,” said Mr Cameron.

The pattern indicated that there was no realistic appreciation of the danger which lay in the under-ventilation of a temporarily unworked coal mining area.

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He said there was no culpability of any nature as the event could not have been foreseen.

Mr Marais will give his findings on November 25.
The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has called for the immediate removal of polyurethane from South African mines after the death yesterday of seven miners in an underground fire at the Western Deep Levels gold mine.

The fire occurred yesterday morning at about 2,800 m in the mine's No. 3 shaft.

A mine spokesman said today that of the 43 workers admitted to hospital, 39 were still there for observation. Four were undergoing intensive treatment.

The fire, whose cause is unknown, ignited a number of materials, including polyurethane. Management said polyurethane was used for insulation.

 Burning polyurethane caused the death of 177 miners at the Kinross mine in 1986.

A NUM spokesman, Mr Marcel Golding, said the death of seven miners and the injuries to 43 others is one of the biggest crimes committed against workers in the industry.

**REPEATED CALLS**

At Western Deep Levels, workers had repeatedly, in meetings with management, called for the removal of polyurethane, "but management had refused to do this."

"We want to know why the mine continued to use polyurethane when its dangers are well known. We demand a full list of all mines where the substance is used so that it can be removed immediately," said Mr Golding.

The union also called for the establishment of a relief fund for the injured and for the families of the dead miners.

It attacked the Government's "unwillingness" to appoint a full inquiry into mine disasters, though it did so for all accidents.

Anglo American, which has launched an investigation into the accident, said yesterday that polyurethane was being used where there was no substitute.

- A rockfall caused by a "seismic event" killed six people at Western Deep last month.
INADEQUATE ventilation, "slapdash" management and haphazard methane testing caused last year's explosion at Gencor's Ermelo Coal Mine which killed 26 people, the Ermelo inquest court heard yesterday.

NUM legal representative Edwin Cameron said the mine had had a history of accidents and no reasonable mining official could have assumed the mine was free of methane gas emissions.

Gencor's legal representative John Bird said minimal methane emissions had been recorded in areas only where coal was being produced.

Another Gencor legal representative, J Joubert, said ventilation of the mine was not a "lucky dip situation" as Cameron suggested.

The court will return a finding on November 25.
'Kinross' foam linked to deaths

BURNING polyurethane foam — which killed 177 miners at Kinross two years ago — may have been responsible for the deaths of seven Western Deep Levels' No 3 shaft employees in an underground fire yesterday.

Of another 43 miners admitted to hospital for observation, two were in a serious condition last night.

Anglo American gold division Transvaal MD Theo Pretorius told journalists yesterday a layer of polyurethane used as an insulating material and encasing refrigeration columns was among the materials that ignited at 5am along a 300m section of haulage about 2,000m underground.

He had been "staggered" to learn this.

Special further precautions had been taken after the Kinross disaster to prevent fires involving hazardous materials, including polyurethane.

The material was now used only where there was no substitute. Extensive tests by both Anglo and the Chamber of Mines had determined that cladding it with 6m-lengths of galvanised iron each 54m would act as a firebreak.

"It did not, and we want an urgent and rapid inquiry to find out why," he said.

Initial signs that the fire was sparked by a fault at an electrical substation now appeared incorrect. He expressed regret at the deaths.

Marcel Golding said the union was "shocked and horrified" at the loss of life and also called for a inquiry.

NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa said 12 days ago at a meeting to commemorate the Kinross disaster that members were considering staging work stoppages when miners died.
Seven miners killed

Mineworkers who died at the Kinross mine in 1986. The union also vowed to take firmer action against the mining industry in the event of another mine disaster occurring.

(Handwritten notes: 7 miners die, 4/10/86)
Seven die as fire breaks out in 'safe' mine

By CHRIS STEYN

SEVEN miners were killed and 43 admitted to hospital early yesterday when a fire broke out deep underground at the Western Deep Levels mine, near Carltonville.

The fire burnt along a 300-metre section of mine access tunnel despite the fact that all refrigeration columns at the mine had recently been "made safe" according to specifications set out by a safety committee.

Anglo American Corporation spokesman Mr Paul Clother said last night that the mine had clad the columns with six-metre lengths of galvanised iron at 54-metre intervals.

"Extensive test work by Anglo American and the Chamber of Mines has shown that this system should control any fire within 54 metres and not propagate beyond.

"This was considered safe and was implemented by the mine. The reason why these measures have not been effective will be investigated fully and urgently," he said.

Mr Clother said among materials burnt was a layer of polyurethane used as an insulating material.
Seven die as fire breaks out in 'safe' mine

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Johannesburg — The death of seven workers at Western Deep Levels was "one of the biggest crimes committed in the industry", said a spokesman for the National Union of Mineworkers, Mr Marcel Golding.

The insulation which caught fire was the same deadly substance — polyurethane — which caused the death of 171 gold miners at Kinross two years ago.

"As if the ghastly slaughter of 171 workers was not sufficient to demonstrate the dangers of polyurethane, mine management at Western Deep Levels continued to use the insulant."

"Anglo American's crime against miners is made all the more serious, because it was brought to their attention during frequent negotiations at mine level."

"They refused to take notice of the workers' demand to remove it from the places where it had been used."

"What will it take to make Anglo and the rest of the mining industry realise the dangers of polyurethane?" Mr Golding asked.

He said both industry and the State had refused to hold a full-scale inquiry into safety and health in the mining industry.

The union has requested that a meeting with the management be convened to discuss circumstances surrounding the fire, Mr Golding said.

The continued use of polyurethane in Western Deep Levels would be the main subject of the meeting — Sapa.
We've tried to cut mine fire hazard, says Anglo

MIKE SILUMA

THE underground fire which killed seven workers at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels gold mine this week occurred despite extensive and ongoing research to reduce fire hazards in South African mines, senior industry officials said in Johannesburg yesterday.

Addressing a press conference, the Transvaal managing director of Anglo's gold division, Mr Theo Pretorius, said five survivors were still in hospital. Four were taken off the critical list yesterday. A total of 43 workers were taken to hospital after the accident.

Mr Pretorius said the cause of the fire had not been established, although a preliminary inspection had shown that a number of materials had caught fire, including cables and polyurethane foam used in refrigeration columns.

Burning polyurethane caused the death of 177 miners at the Kinross gold mine in 1996.

Precautions

"It is vital that we find the cause of the fire, so that we can take the necessary precautions. We are looking at a possible replacement for polyurethane — phenol formaldehyde — which is being tested at a number of mines," said Mr Pretorius.

The senior general manager of operations at the Chamber of Mines, Dr Horst Wagner, said the chamber had worked for many years to reduce the fire hazard on mines.

Particular emphasis had been placed on timber, plastics and other inflammable substances.

Dr Horst said a full-scale investigation would be undertaken into why the fire was able to spread past underground fire breaks which had been shown in tests to be effective.

Tests had shown that cladding polyurethane with galvanised iron every 64 m would halt the spread of fire, he said.

A memorial service for the dead miners will be held next week, while post-mortems are scheduled to be conducted at the Deep Kloof mortuary, outside Johannesburg, by an outside pathologist.

Three miners were killed and an unknown number injured in a pressure burst at Gold Fields Kloof gold mine yesterday.

A mine statement said a number of workers were injured.
Cop handcuffed woman to beam

JOHANNESBURG — A Port Alfred woman, Mrs Joyce Mbevu, who was suspended with handcuffs from a beam and forced to urinate in front of a policeman, has been awarded R5,500 damages by the Supreme Court, Grahamstown, City Press reported yesterday. — Sapa.

Three GFSA miners killed

JOHANNESBURG — A pressure burst at Kloof gold mine west of here killed three miners on Thursday, Gold Fields of South Africa said yesterday.
Mines testing safe foam

DAYS before last Thursday's fire which killed seven miners at Western Deep Levels (WDL), management had ordered for testing a new, non-toxic material which could eventually replace deadly polyurethane foam as an insulating agent underground.

But the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said it had last year unsuccessfully demanded of WDL management that all polyurethane be immediately removed, and it reiterated its demand.

Some mines have been testing the formaldehyde-based substance, a phenolic insulating foam, for two years — since shortly after the Kinross disaster.

"A local manufacturer — Sentracem — said the material was fire resistant and non-toxic, and its use would eliminate the dangers experienced at Kinross and WDL.

A company source said, however, phenolic foam was more expensive to install, and he wondered whether this was why it had not yet been widely used.

Spokesmen for two mining groups — Gencor and Anglo American — denied this was a factor. They said safety was the only concern and large-scale installation of the new material would begin soon as tests had been finalised and proved positive.

Anglo Transvaal gold division MD Theo Pretorius and Anglo safety specialist Dick Stroh said testing of the phenolic foam had been proceeding for some time. At this stage there were technical difficulties.

Vaal Reefs had been testing phenolic foam "for some time" and WDL was beginning the process.

Pretorius said WDL management had decided immediately after the accident to remove quantities of the polyurethane, used as refrigeration pipe cladding, at fire-breaks.

But NUM assistant general secretary Marcel Golding reiterated the demand for its total and immediate removal and replacement with a safe substitute.

"First 177 deaths at Kinross and now this. What will it take before they realise the dangers of polyurethane?"

Golding said the union was demanding the establishment of a relief fund for the injured and the families of the deceased.

He said government's failure to hold a full-scale inquiry into the Kinross disaster had contributed to the lack of urgency by the mines.

Mines test alternative to 'killer' foam

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Gencor senior health and safety consultant George Kraft said tests on the new product had been ongoing at the Beatrix mine for two years. Although it was not as effective as polyurethane, its use was favoured because of the safety factor.

Anglo said it used some 600km of polyurethane-clad refrigeration pipe on its mines, and there could be no overnight changes.

"Its removal would cause overheating underground, and this would be a safety risk," said Pretorius.

He reiterated Anglo's support for full participation by employee representatives in safety matters. He said this could include the involvement of union-nominated specialists in macro issues.

Pretorius said the corporation would be prepared to supply the NUM with details on the use of polyurethane, as demanded last week.
Gold Fields replaces 'killer' foam

GOLD FIELDS yesterday became the second mining house to confirm that it no longer used polyurethane foam underground for any purpose. This followed weekend reports that Rand Mines had totally replaced the substance, in view of the Winross disaster and seven deaths at Western Deep Levels last week.

An Anglovaal spokesman said the group used a fire-retarded form of polyurethane to insulate refrigeration pipes, and that firebreaks of vermiculite or galvanized metal had been installed every 27m.

Anglo American and Gencor have indicated they will replace polyurethane when tests on substitutes have been satisfactorily completed.

A statement from JCI on whether its mines still used the material was being awaited.
Mine fire survivors may testify

By Stan Hlophe

Three miners, who survived an underground fire at the Western Deep Levels gold mine, are likely to be called to testify before a commission of inquiry to be held soon, an Anglo American spokesman said yesterday.

The disclosure follows attempts by The Star to interview the survivors of last Thursday's fire at a depth of about 2,800 m in the mine's No 3 shaft.

Seven miners died and 43 others were admitted to hospital.

The spokesman said no interviews would be granted until the commission of inquiry had taken place.

An underground investigation was carried out at the mine last week.
Five killed in Rusplats mine accident

Meanwhile, Gencor has begun removing all polyurethane foam from its mines and replacing it with the safer phenolic foam, executive director Colin Officer said yesterday.

A JCI spokesman said only one of two group mines equipped with refrigeration plant used polyurethane, and special precautions had been taken with it. Officer said at mines with large quantities of polyurethane it may take more than a year to complete the process.

The new foam had been approved recently, in spite of the fact that testing had shown it tended to break easily and needed to be made more robust.

"We have not been idle on this question. Because of the fire-resistant and non-toxic qualities of phenolic foam, this is the route we are taking."

The material's toxic fumes have been blamed for the deaths in fires at Kinross in 1985 and at WDL last week.
Mine's tests before tragedy

Days before last Thursday's fire which killed seven miners at Western Deep Levels, management ordered testing of a new, non-toxic material which could eventually replace deadly polyurethane foam as an underground insulating agent. Business Day reported yesterday.

But the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said it had last year unsuccessfully demanded of WDL management that all polyurethane be immediately removed and it was now reiterating that demand.

Some mines have been testing the formaldehyde-based substance, a phenolic insulating foam, for two years, since shortly after the Kinross disaster.

Marcel Golding... demand.

A local manufacturer — Sentrachem subsidiary, Sagox — said the material was fire-resistant and non-toxic, and its use would eliminate the dangers experienced at Kinross and WDL.

A company source said phenolic foam was more expensive, however, to install, and he wondered whether this was why it had not yet been widely used.

Spokesmen for two mining groups — Gencor and Anglo American — denied this was a factor. They said safety was the only concern and large-scale installation of the new material would begin as soon as tests had been finalised and proved positive.

NUM assistant general secretary Mr. Marcel Golding has reiterated the demand for its total and immediate removal and replacement with a safe substitute.

"First 177 deaths at Kinross and now this. What will it take before they realise the dangers of polyurethane?"

Golding said the union was demanding the establishment of a relief fund for the injured and the families of the deceased.
Mine deaths continue

THE eight miners who died last week in an underground fire at Western Deep Levels mine, near Carletonville, brings to 17 the number of miners who have lost their lives at the mine in the past five months. Forty-two miners were admitted to hospital after the latest disaster.

The fire came barely two weeks after the anniversary of South Africa's worst mining disaster at Grierson's Kilross gold mine. About 50,000 miners have died this century in mining accidents.

This month Cyril Ramaphosa, general secretary of the 500,000-strong National Union of Mineworkers, warned that for every fatality workers would down tools, costing management about R1-million in production daily.

The Deep Levels fire, thought to have been started by an electrical fault, raged for 300 metres despite the mine-owners having installed equipment to contain a fire within 54 metres.
Rustplaats secretive on mine deaths – union

By Tim Olen

The Rustplaats mine in Rustenburg, where a recent explosion killed six miners, has remained silent about the deaths. The mine's management has refused to release any information about the accident. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has criticized the mine's handling of the incident.

The NUM's general secretary, Michael Sisulu, said there had been a lack of communication from the mine. He called for an independent investigation into the deaths. The trade union has also called for a moratorium on mining activities until the accident is fully investigated.
The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) wants the right to negotiate at all levels of the industry on health and safety issues, union safety officer Hazy Sibanyoni said this week.

Speaking after three accidents which claimed 15 miners' lives in the space of six days, Sibanyoni noted an increasing willingness by mine and mining group management to involve workers and their representatives in safety matters.

But, he added, a serious shortcoming was that management only wanted union "assistance" in safety matters. This effectively made the union a rubber stamp rather than a decision-maker.

Anglo American's Bobby Godsell confirms management does not see safety as a matter for negotiation, but defends this position.

Godsell believes the issue of safety is, by its nature, one of "partnership" between management and organised labour, and draws distinctions between it and other matters best resolved through negotiation.

Wage negotiations, for example, involve a direct conflict of interest between management and labour.

But there is no such direct conflict on safety matters, where both parties are concerned to maintain safety standards, he argues.

The second major difference is a technical one, in that a third factor — technical expertise — is involved.

"The real question is how do you determine an acceptable level of risk and render a workplace as safe as possible, short of closing it down, which would be in no one's interest?"

He asks.

Godsell concedes that, because of the element of mistrust, this partnership may initially require each party to nominate its own experts to play a role.

But, he says, the best example of a joint safety endeavour he has seen is in West Germany, where it is governed by a research institute jointly funded and controlled by unions and management — with a role, too, for unorganised workers.

In the meantime, he says, it would be a tragedy to turn mine safety into a war between management and unions.

For the NUM, one of the key elements of an acceptable safety agreement is recognition by management of the right of workers "to refuse to do work which may be a danger to him or herself."

The union did, in fact, manage to convince management of the independent Palabora Mining Company to include such a clause in the first-ever safety agreement signed by the NUM a year ago.

This is effectively the provision which makes safety an issue of collective bargaining — the equivalent of a strike.

But, concedes Sibanyoni, it has so far proved impossible to win this concession from any of the major mining groups, where the negotiation of safety agreements is just beginning.

Godsell explains why. He argues it is "crazy" for any technically unqualified person, be it a worker or a member of management, to be entitled to make a unilateral decision on such an issue. It would require expertise.

In reply to NUM concerns that a "partnership" formula ultimately leaves worker representatives powerless to protect their interests, Godsell stresses that tokenism forms no part of his vision.
Grim tally

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has approached Anglo American asking that a period of mourning be granted for the seven workers recently killed at Western Deep Levels.

With mine fatalities running at a very high level — the unions claim an amazing 800 annually, the Chamber of Mines suggesting a lower figure — a day of mourning in each case would obviously seriously affect productivity.

While Anglo's Bobby Godsell says it would be a tragedy to turn mine safety into a war between management and unions, the NUM feels that the death rate is unacceptably high enough to be termed "slaughter." "As long as management take the view that health and safety is their prerogative, things will not improve," says NUM safety officer Hazzy Sibanyoni.

Other union demands before management at the moment include the establishment of a full-scale commission of inquiry to examine health and safety in the industry.

Godsell has made it clear that Anglo American is not prepared to negotiate on health and safety in the same way that it does on the wage issue. He has expressed his preference for "partnership" and joint consultation, stressing the need for expert judgment on safety criteria.

The question of who is doing what is typically clouded by conflicting claims from both sides.

Anglo cites a set of principles agreed upon earlier in the year facilitating worker and union involvement in safety management and monitoring at mine level. One agreement incorporating these principles has been negotiated between management and the NUM at Vaal Reefs West.
REGULATIONS providing for safety officers and representatives in the mines and works sector were welcomed yesterday as a great step forward by National Occupational Safety Association (Nosa) MD Benny Matthysen.

However, Wits University researcher and mine safety specialist Jean Leger said the regulations, published in September, had serious drawbacks and compared unfavourably with international standards and with regulations applying to SA's manufacturing sector.

The regulations require management to appoint trained safety officers to each mine with more than 33 employees, and to appoint one trained employee safety representative for each 50 employees.

Involvement

The safety officer must meet the safety representatives and carry out regular inspections of the workplace. He must report any hazards to the person in immediate charge. He may make recommendations for submission by management to the relevant government inspector.

Matthysen said the regulations would encourage greater involvement in safety. That participants be trained was important, and Nosa already had orders to train 1,200 safety representatives.

However, Leger said the new system had evolved as there were insufficient funds for an adequate number of more capable government inspectors.

A major criticism was that the regulations did not provide representatives access to senior management, which would often mean reporting to the person responsible for the safety hazard.

He also believed safety representatives should be elected, rather than appointed by management.
Seven copper miners still missing

Staff Reporter

Seven copper miners are still missing, believed dead, after the Kombat mine near Windhoek was flooded during exploration on Tuesday.

The flood occurred 530 m underground after a water burst.

"The underground workings are flooding and all production has ceased. Attempts are being made to save the eastern section of the mine by installing concrete plugs in the two interconnecting underground drives," a mine statement said.

"During the quarter ended September 1988, the underground section of the Kombat mine accounted for approximately 15 percent of total tons treated, 21 percent of the copper in concentrates produced, 16 percent of the lead in concentrates and 11 percent of the silver in concentrates.

"It is impossible to estimate, at this stage, how long it will take to recover the underground section of the mine," the statement said.

The mine is one of three operated by Tsumeb Corporation, which is wholly owned by Gold Fields of South Africa's affiliate, Gold Fields Namibia Ltd."
Mine officials responsible for 35 deaths

ERMELO — Gencor's Ermelo mine and five officials have been found responsible for the death of 35 coal miners in a methane explosion last year.

Magistrate Mr Johan Marais, in an inquest here yesterday, gave a finding of "homicidal death".

The Ermelo mine employees named as responsible for the deaths were Mr C J Els, Mr P J Sayman, Mr J F van Wyk, Mr A van Aardt and Mr A Olliers.

The inquest finding will now be forwarded to the Attorney-General for a decision on possible charges.
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Court: Mine to blame for 35 deaths

ERMELO — Gencor's Ermelo Mine and five of the mine's former officials have been found responsible for the deaths of 35 coal miners in a methane gas explosion last year, an inquest court found yesterday.

Ermelo magistrate Mr Johan Marais made a finding of "homicidal death". He found their deaths had been caused by carbon monoxide poisoning after an underground explosion at the mine on April 9 last year.

All but one of the 35 men died on the day of the explosion. Tractor driver Mr Louis Makina, 41, died of his injuries a week after the accident.

The Ermelo Mine employees named in the inquest finding as being responsible for the deaths were Mr C J Els, Mr F P J Snyman, Mr J F van Wyk, Mr A van Aardt and Mr A Cilliers.

The finding will now be forwarded to the attorney-general for a decision on possible charges.

Ermelo Mine is a joint venture between Unito Mining (owned by Transnet), Gencor’s coal mining arm, Total, and British Petroleum SA.

The National Union of Mineworkers said from Johannesburg yesterday the inquest results confirmed that safety in the mining industry was unsatisfactory — especially in ventilation. NUM general-secretary Mr Marcel Golding said the NUM would file for increased compensation for the dependants of the deceased. The NUM hoped there would "be an immediate prosecution".

"In the last five years there have been five major mine disasters in which more than 30 people were killed — yet only two have had inquiries in which the union was represented," Mr Golding said.

In the two worst — at the Kimross Gold Mine where 177 people died and at the St Helena gold mine where 60 people were killed in a lift — the union was not allowed representation.

"The attitude of the Government Mining Engineer in preventing the union from addressing questions or limiting participation has the effect of ensuring that a thorough examination by a group with a material interest in the safety of the mine is not being fully addressed," he said — Sapa.
Inquest blames mine and officials for 35 deaths

...
Death stalks Taung

THE inhabitants of Taung Village in the North-Eastern Transvaal are facing a grave, but certain death from asbestos.

They may be simple and unlettered people, but they blame the incompetence of the mining authorities and the Lebowa Government for their condition. They say before 1986 mining authorities used the area as a dumping ground and in 1986 Lebowa allocated residential sites to them on the same place.

In terms of proper health and safety standards the authorities are supposed to cover the asbestos clumps as an inhalation is hazardous to health.

The victims of this killer disease are mainly female mineworkers and the mining communities living near asbestos dumps can lead to the malfunctioning of the lungs.

The common symptoms are fatigue, difficulty in breathing, coughs and hoarseness. Most of the people spoken to complained that they had either been insufficiently compensated or given nothing at all.

They also said their diseases were treatable to the contact they had with the asbestos mineral.

Mrs Madomela Mavuso, an organiser for the Black Allied Minerals and Construction Workers Union who is victim of asbestos disease, said: "I have always wondered why the Lebowa has a health department because in this case its duty was to advise the Government against the allocation of sites in 1986."

She added that he worked at the Pongola mine from 1959 to 1974 as a filling clerk. When he was diagnosed as a sufferer of the killer disease and claimed compensation from the pension office he was told that Lebowa had no money.

He said all he got was a letter saying that he must apply to the company for a grant for medical expenses. He claimed a father of four said he had had constant chest pains for years.

Another victim of death was Mrs Sara Mabuza, who worked at the mine as a cleaner. She complained, that she was not compensated.

She said her daughter Avani, died years ago after contracting the disease. She left her sister to raise the children.

Mr Skiriri Komana, a mining community leader, said that the Taung villages were previously found difficult to fathom the dangers of the mineral but the residents had come to terms as a result of their experiences with the asbestos.

In reply to the Taung residents complaints, the Secretary for Health in Lebowa, Mr D. M. Msipa, said that he had no personal knowledge concerning the allocation of sites at Taung in 1986.

The Department of Health has no jurisdiction over the allocation of any sites. He added that his department had identified similar problems in Mafikeng and was presently doing a survey.

In London a housewife Mary Welker wished the overall of her husband unaware that she was inhaling lethal quantities of asbestos dust which came from boilers her 66-year-old husband Leslie dismantled. She was diagnosed with lung cancer.

As a result she developed a malignant tumour on her lung. She died five weeks ago after complaining of chest pains.

He said his wife kept going back to hospital for x-rays, finally a spot was found and advanced mesothelioma was diagnosed.

STEEL WINDOWS

CASH AND CARRY
Association defends use of polyurethane foam

By Mike Siluma

The Polyurethane Association of SA (PASA) yesterday defended the use of polyurethane foams in gold mines, saying a prohibition on the use of the material could limit gold production and affect the entire economy.

PASA was responding to recent calls by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for the removal of all polyurethane from South African mines.

PASA chairman Mr Brent Becker told a press conference in Johannesburg: "Extensive fire studies, conducted by leading authorities locally and worldwide, have shown that the most harmful gas emitted in the majority of fires is carbon monoxide."

Other toxic fumes generally played a secondary role with most resultant deaths ascribed primarily to carbon monoxide or factors such as the depletion of oxygen and "super-heated air."

"Thus, even in cases of fire where no polyurethane is present, deaths are equally possible and the obvious and only answer is for personnel to evacuate the fire area quickly, before excessive inhalation of fumes. To single out polyurethane as the only enemy, therefore, is to misrepresent the facts of a real fire situation," said Mr Becker.

REAL ENEMY IS FIRE ITSELF

He said that, having established that polyurethane presented no greater hazard than any other materials used underground in mines, "PASA would suggest that the real enemy is fire itself ... calling for the removal of a particular material does not remove the risk of fire."

Mr Becker said that, because South African gold mining operations were carried out at much greater depths than elsewhere in the world, they required vast quantities of chilled water in insulated pipes for effective cooling.

"Polyurethane foams have, so far, been found to be the most effective insulators for this purpose. To deny their use could seriously limit gold production and, in turn, affect the entire economy of the country," added Mr Becker.

Addressing the conference in his personal capacity, Mr Hans Dannenfieldt, head of the fire engineering division of the SA Bureau of Standards, said the problem could be addressed by "making gold mines safe by not allowing dangerous procedures to be carried out in places where they could start fires."
Manufacturers defend toxic foam

TRADE union demands for the total elimination of polyurethane foam in mining operations were misdirected and unfair. Polyurethane Association of SA (Pualaf) chairman Brendt Becker said at a Press conference yesterday.

The real solution, he said, was its correct usage and application, including its isolation from any possible ignition source.

Two National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) safety officials arrived and asked several questions at the conference at a Johannesburg hotel. Several other union officials staged a picket outside but left after hearing the hotel management had called police to remove them.

The NUM has repeatedly called for the removal of the substance underground, particularly after the Kinross and Western Deep Levels accidents where a total of 164 miners died, most from inhaling carbon monoxide given off by the burning foam.

Becker said that all organic substances — including plastics, wood, fibres and rubber — would emit toxic gases and smoke of differing degrees of intensity. There would still be fires, even if all polyurethane, the most efficient insulating agent available, was removed.

He believed polyurethane foams used in mining operations could be made safe. Mines should also ensure the availability of breathing apparatuses and avenues of escape, he said.

SABS fire expert Hans Dannenfeldt, present as an "independent expert", agreed there were alternatives which were less or non-combustible, but their characteristics meant a loss of efficiency. "Eventually it comes down to rands and cents," he said.

low speeds un
ALMOST 200 people have been killed by fires connected to polyurethane during the past 11 years in South African mines.

This was revealed by a National Union of Mineworkers safety officer, Mr Hazzy Shanyeni, at a Press conference called by the Polyurethane Association of South Africa in Johannesburg this week.

The association called the conference to respond to calls for the withdrawal of polyurethane in the gold mines. The director of PASAF, Mr Brent Becker, said the NUM had in the past called for the banning of polyurethane from the mines.

The latest NUM call was after the recent Western Deep Level accident where several black workers lost their lives. This also followed vigorous campaigns by the union to have the organic material banned completely, especially after the Kinross mine disaster where 177 black miners lost their lives.

An independent observer at the conference, Mr Hans Dannenfeldt, said polyurethane was more inflammable than a car tyre.

PASAF attributed the accident rate in the mines to the incorrect use of the material. Everybody dealing with the substance has to have knowledge about its proper use," a spokesman for PASAF said.

Polyurethane is used to insulate pipes underground and according to PASAF, it is the most efficient material available.

The NUM held the view that other ignitable substances could be used as alternatives and because of their safety rates, the number of deaths could be reduced.

NUM also maintained that all combustible materials should be removed from underground.

PASAF said its recommendations to the mining industry would be that polyurethane be removed from any ignitable source and that ignitable substances be used to cover it, but it would not like to see the material banned because no material matched it in terms of efficiency.
Mines in major safety move

IN a major safety-related policy decision, the Chamber of Mines announced yesterday the mining industry would discontinue the use of all polyurethane foam in any permanent installation.

A chamber spokesman said all existing polyurethane underground would either be removed or rendered inert. The foam is used underground largely to insulate chilled water pipes.

The announcement followed a Press conference on Wednesday at which the Polyurethane Association of SA defended the product against calls for its banning in the mining industry.

It is understood the industry has decided polyurethane is unsuitable, compared with alternatives, because of the rate at which it burns. This gives people less chance to escape.

The NUM welcomed the move, saying it as a response to union pressure, but health and safety chief Mavis Hermanus said it had taken the industry a long time to heed local and foreign warnings. Further, the NUM believed it was unwise to experiment with making the material inert.

According to the NUM, 208 people had been killed in fires involving polyurethane in the past 11 years.

An Anglo American spokesman said yesterday all polyurethane was being removed from group mines. Glass fibre was being used in the interim. But as its insulating qualities were inferior, a satisfactory alternative was being sought. He said polyurethane would from now on be used only as an emergency firefighting material — as is the case internationally.

General senior health and safety consultant George Kraft said no new polyurethane was being used on group mines. Where it existed as an insulating agent, stringent safety measures were adhered to.
NUM calls for ban on polyurethane use in mines

By Mike Siluma, Labour Reporter

Controversy surrounding the use of polyurethane (PU) in South African mines continued yesterday when the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) reiterated its demand for the banning of all PU on South African mines. The NUM said the material posed the greatest hazard during underground fires.

The NUM was reacting to a statement on Wednesday by the Polyurethane Association of SA (PASA) defending the use of the foam as an insulant in the mining industry. PASA claimed that the banning of the material could affect production in the gold mining industry.

PU was not the only dangerous material used. In a statement, the NUM said PU was used "in large quantities and in virtually continuous lengths in many mines." According to the union, there were more than 150 m of polyurethane-clad refrigeration pipes at Western Deep Levels Gold Mine alone. (Seven workers died at the mine when materials including PU caught fire at the mine last month.)

In the event of an underground fire, a mine's ventilation system would feed the fire with fresh air, ensuring making it possible for the fire to continue burning.

The NUM said PU was a major hazard because:

- The smoke from burning PU is "so dense that signs marking entrances to refuge bays are likely not to be seen."
- While PU is not the only material which gives off carbon monoxide when burning, it ignites easily and is the only material present underground in quantities large enough to cause a major disaster.
- Air heated by burning PU and moved through tunnels by the ventilation current burned anything flammable, resulting in a PU fire being able to "jump" underground fire breaks.

According to the NUM, the use of PU underground has been banned in British mines since 1968, and is "severely restricted" in other countries.

The union said there have been 208 deaths resulting from PU fires in South African mines since 1977.
Miner saved from horror burial

By IVOR CREWS

A MINER was plucked from the jaws of death this week in a dramatic rescue after being trapped 1.1km underground for 35 hours.

Teams of rescue workers formed human chains worked around the clock at the Western Holdings gold mine in Welkom to remove tons of rock and to give life-saving oxygen to the stricken man.

Mr Johnny Key nel, 68, a shaft tumberman, is in the intensive care unit of the Ernest Oppenheimer hospital in Welkom after suffering multiple injuries.

He had been inspecting a blockage in an ore chute when it gave way. He fell down the shaft and was trapped under eight metres of rock, an Anglo American spokesman said.

"Rescue operations were immediately put into effect."

Mr Key nel’s son, Gideon, 38, of Odendaalsrus, and family members — who maintained a constant vigil at the mine — were praying for his recovery.

"My dad is due to retire in February."

The Anglo spokesman said Mr Key nel suffered a broken nose and injuries to his lungs and kidneys.

As the hours ticked slowly by during the rescue, the family was kept informed by teams of exhausted workers who returned to the surface after repeated, vain attempts to reach him.

A hospital spokesman said yesterday Mr Key nel was "comfortable."
NUM calls for
the banning of
polyurethane

THE National Union of Mineworkers has reiterated its call for the banning of polyurethane from South African gold mines, writes MOGADI PELA.

In a statement released to the Press, NUM said the substance was lethal in fire incidents and in the past 10 years 208 people had died from polyurethane fires, the worst being at Gencor’s Kinross Mine in 1986.

The union said polyurethane was being used in large quantities and in continuous lengths in many mines.

“At Western Deep Levels alone there is more than 150 kilometres of polyurethane clad refrigeration pipes underground,” NUM added.

NUM was reacting to the refusal by the polyurethane Association of South Africa to call on the mines to prohibit the use of the material.

Pasaf insisted last week that there was no other known material that matched polyurethane in terms of efficiency.
Result of pressure, says mine union

Govt bans use of polyurethane underground

ALL SA mines have been prohibited from installing polyurethane products underground from January 1, government mining engineer (GME) Jan Raath said yesterday.

"I. He said all mines had been notified of this by letter in terms of a clause in the Mines and Works Act which allows the inspectorate to prohibit dangerous working practices.

2. The order stated that existing polyurethane "shall be removed at the earliest opportunity or rendered inert", Raath added.

3. It is internationally accepted temporary use to starve fires of oxygen would be permitted.

Raath said he had informed the Chamber of Mines on October 31 of his intention to ban the use of the substance.

This was 18 days after a fire at Western Deep Levels ignited polyurethane cladding on chilled water pipes and killed seven miners.

Union demands for the abolition of the material were first made after the Kinross disaster in September 1996.

Last week the chamber announced its members had resolved to discontinue using the product.

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ALAN Fine

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has welcomed the moves by the Chamber and the GME, seeing them as a response to intense union pressure.

But, said NUM health and safety chief Mavis Hermanus, it had taken the industry a long time to heed the local and foreign warnings.

Further, the NUM still believed it was unwise to experiment with making the material inert. It should be removed completely.

Inferior

An Anglo American spokesman said all polyurethane was in the process of being removed from group mines. Glass fibre was being used in the interim. But, while glass fibre was not toxic or flammable, its insulating qualities were inferior, and a satisfactory alternative was being sought.

Gencor senior health and safety consultant George Kraif said no new polyurethane was being used on group mines. Where it existed as an insulating agent, there were stringent safety measures.
Polyurethane products ban for SA mines

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG — All South African mines have been prohibited from installing polyurethane products underground as from January 1, government mining engineer Mr Jan Raath disclosed yesterday.

He said all mines had been notified of this by letter last week, in terms of a clause in the Mines and Works Act which allows the inspectorate to prohibit dangerous working practices.

The order stated that existing polyurethane "shall be removed at the earliest opportunity or rendered inert", Mr Raath added.

Its internationally-accepted temporary use to starve fires of oxygen would be permitted.

He said he had informed the Chamber of Mines on October 31 of his intention to ban the use of the substance. This was 18 days after a fire at Western Deep Levels ignited polyurethane cladding on chilled water pipes and killed seven miners.

Last week the chamber announced its members had resolved to discontinue use of the product.

Union demands for the abolition of the material were first made after the Kinross disaster in September 1986. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has welcomed the moves, seeing them as a response to intense union pressure.

But, said NUM health and safety chief Ms Mavis Hermanus, it had taken the industry a long time to heed the local and foreign warnings.

Further, the NUM still believed it was unwise to experiment with making the material inert. It should be removed completely.
Polyurethane is banned in all SA mines from Jan 1

By Mike Siluma, Labour Reporter

The use of polyurethane in all South African mines has been banned by the Government Mining Engineer (GME) from January 1, except where it is used as a temporary sealant to fight fires.

The GME, Mr J B Raath, said the step, which has been welcomed by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), was taken after his department had investigated the use of polyurethane for a number of years.

They first had to find out what was going on in other parts of the world and whether or not there were suitable substitutes that were not as dangerous as polyurethane.

Satisfied

They were satisfied that there were substitutes.

The use of polyurethane as a temporary fire seal, which would be removed as soon as possible after a fire, would still be permitted.

While welcoming the ban, the union said it was saddened by the fact that the use of polyurethane had been prohibited only after it had taken our union two years of vigorous campaigning and seven more lives at Western Deep Levels.

"The Western Deep accident has convinced us that unless the State acts to bar certain activities, the mine bosses will continue to employ dangerous materials for the benefit of profits," said NUM spokesman Mr Hazy Shonyon.

The union called on the GME to promulgate immediately regulations on the use of polyurethane, taking into account international standards. It also urged the GME to "issue guidelines for instances where the foam is to be rendered inert and to monitor the removal of the foam, not leaving it to mine bosses."

Mr Raath said he had informed the Chamber of Mines in October that he intended banning the use of polyurethane.

A similar message was conveyed to non-chamber member mines by regional inspectors.

The chamber had subsequently informed Mr Raath that it would no longer apply polyurethane underground and that old applications would be made inert or removed.
THE impending ban on polyurethane in mines will cost suppliers an estimated R2.5bn a year.

Polyurethane Association of SA (Pasa) chairman Brent Becker added yesterday that the government mining engineer's ruling would also mean the loss of 100 jobs.

He said there was a great deal of bitterness among members because they had not been consulted before the decision was made.

"A great deal of money invested in research and development, aimed at making the product safer, has gone down the drain," said Becker.

He added the future of the three main polyurethane manufacturers was not in jeopardy because mining accounted for less than 5% of their turnover.

Processors and converters, however, faced serious difficulties.

Becker confirmed that, when Pasa held a Press conference eight days ago, to defuse the product against calls for its prohibition, he was not aware the ban, which takes effect from January 1, was in the pipeline.

He said processors and converters were "still in a bit of a state of shock" and had not yet made plans for dealing with the ban.

Becker said they would not be able, for example, to convert overnight to processing materials which the mining industry was now using as an alternative to polyurethane.

"But they are going to have to make major changes," he said.

Polyurethane has been blamed for adding to the hazards of fire and explosions underground.
Polyurethane controversy burns

By CONNIE MOLUSI

The National Union of Mineworkers wants polyurethane foam banned from underground use in SA's mines.

The renewed call follows the Koskoss disaster in which 177 people died and the recent fire at Western Deep Levels mine, which left seven dead. In both tragedies polyurethane was blamed.

NUM recommends that inorganic substances with low combustion properties be used instead, and that combustible materials be removed from underground, because of the fire hazard.

Polyurethane has good insulating properties, but a report on mine safety by the Commission of the European Communities said: "The polyurethane foam has severe safety disadvantages. If applied too thickly, it may burn spontaneously."

It is toxic fumes from burning polyurethane that kills, and there is rarely any escape from those as people usually travel faster than people can run.

PASAf said it was prepared to cooperate with NUM in addressing the use of polyurethane. It would recommend that polyurethane be removed from flammable sources and that other inorganic substances be used.
Johannesburg — A man was killed at the Hartebeestfontein gold mine after a side wall in a centre gully collapsed yesterday. The fall occurred in the No. 6 Shaft area at midday.
Polyurethane ban not total prohibition

SUSAN RUSSELL

THE ban on polyurethane in mines does not seem to be the sort of ban miners were expecting.

Polyurethane Association of SA chairman Benno Becker said at the weekend prohibition of the material — blamed for the deaths of many miners this year in underground fires — was not absolute.

He added Government Mining Engineer Jan Raath had not placed a total ban on its use.

Becker was commenting on the outcome of a meeting he had with Raath recently after he requested clarity on the December 12 banning order.

Becker said Raath told him the ban was not total and applied only to expanded polyurethane foams. Solid polyurethane was not affected by the ban.

Raath's order stated all mines would be prohibited from installing polyurethane foams from January 1.

The order added that existing polyurethane "shall be removed at the earliest opportunity or rendered inert".

Its internationally accepted temporary use to starve fires of oxygen will still be permitted.

"The Government Mining Engineer would like to see liaison between the Chamber of Mines, SA Bureau of Standards, the Polyurethane Association and other interested bodies in establishing standard specifications," Becker said.

He added a priority now was for his association to get together with the Chamber of Mines and the Sabs in the new year so they could establish acceptable specifications.

Raath was not available for comment at the weekend.
NUM renews polyurethane ban call

Hermanus said yesterday "Time and time again the department (GME) has demonstrated its unwillingness to stand above the interests of the mining and manufacturing sector."

She added miners' lives would be put at risk if the GME failed to follow the findings of internationally recognised experts on the subject.

The NUM attributes 200 deaths over the past two years to the use of highly flammable and toxic polyurethane.

THE NUM has reiterated its call for a total ban on polyurethane in mines.

The plea comes in the wake of news this week that the ban, originally announced by Government Mining Engineer Jan Raath, was not total and applied only to polyurethane foams.

NUM health and safety chief Mavis...