

DIARY OF IMPALA CONFLICT IN 1991

- ★ On July 4 workers strike for higher wages and better conditions of work.
- ★ On August 16 one worker was found shot dead no one has been arrested.
- ★ Workers Representative Committee members were subjected to pressure and some were threatened with violence. White workers were going to work armed.
- ★ On August 15 workers embarked on a 4-hour go-slow strike in an attempt to advance their wage demands and recognition of the NUM. A go-slow strike by 40 000-strong workers rendered Impala unworkable and the bosses suffered heavy losses in terms of profits.

In a desperate attempt to crush the strike, management-instigated violence erupted the following day. Alleged management-sponsored vigilantes launched brutal attacks at the striking workers under the cover of darkness, killing 8 workers.

Despite these attacks workers refused to be intimidated and the go-slow continued. The killers are still at large despite management's R25 000 reward. Some of the attackers told newsmen that they were bought by a member

of mine management to kill the striking miners. These attackers were part of about 100 vigilantes allegedly hired by management to break the go-slow.

- ★ On September 3, management locked out 8 000 miners at Bafokeng North claiming continued go-slow.
- ★ On September 10, Bophuthatswana police shot and killed Ezekiel Mokutume Segano on mine premises.
- ★ On September 25, workers win wage increases ranging from 15 to 16 percent.
- ★ On September 28, management-instigated faction fighting erupted at Bafokeng South and 11 mineworkers were killed.
- ★ On October 15, mineworkers at Wildebeesfontein North staged a sit-in underground protesting dismissal of fellow Comrade.
- ★ 26 October Wildebeesfontein mine closes for 11 days.
- ★ 27-28 October Wildebeesfontein North and Bafokeng mines were closed as workers were harassed by mine security and others

face dismissals.

- ★ 29 October mineworkers return to work after settlement with workers' representative committee.
- ★ 30 October violence erupts again on the mines. NUM marshalls assist in apprehending "criminal" elements exploiting the strike to start more violence.
- ★ 1 November, union lawyers and officials instructed to leave mine premises by Company's head office representative while attending scheduled meeting.

- ★ 5 November, members of Worker's Committee arrested by Bop police from the hostel.
- ★ 7 November, more workers arrested under Bop Security laws including leading figures Isaac Mayoyo and Goodman Mzazi.
- ★ 9 November, ruthless dismissals of about 360 workers.
- ★ 11 November, strike by all workers demanding reinstatement of dismissed colleagues.

MINERS CALLED TO VOTE FOR DEMOCRACY COMMENT ON LESOTHO ELECTIONS

By JAMES MOTLATSU — NUM PRESIDENT

NUM is concerned about the oncoming general elections in Lesotho. Union members who are in the mine from Lesotho would definitely be affected by the unfolding political process.

We give our unqualified support to the democratisation of the mountain kingdom. Lesotho's history is one of brutalisation by one regime after another and nothing short of true parliamentary democracy can address the problems caused by the past undemocratic political forces.

British colonialism grossly distorted the history of Lesotho until independence in 1966. It was not long after independence that democracy was subverted culminating with despotic rule.

When despotic rule was wiped out it was replaced by a military dictatorship. We call on all workers from Lesotho to take full advantage of this opportunity to elect into government parties they believe would serve their best interests.

However, we want to state categorically that NUM as a trade union of mineworkers irrespective of political affiliations, can not choose one political party against another in a free country which is also an OAU member. Mineworkers have to decide individually about such choices.

We will however, not be sitting back as the situation will be monitored closely to ensure that democracy is not subverted.

If democratic processes are undermined, the NUM has a democratic right to take decisions befitting the situation without asking permission from anyone.

NUM PRESIDENT SLAMS NEIGHBOURING STATES

The attitude of the neighbouring states towards their nationals working on South African mines is appalling.

What is primary for the authorities in these countries is the taxes paid to them by migrant workers.

It has become a long established tradition for these states to indoctrinate migrant miners against fighting for their rights at workplace and within the broader society.

Mineworkers from the neighbouring states thus become hostile or totally indifferent to joining NUM not to mention political organisations and parties.

The situation created by these uncaring states is one of total ignorance of one's basic workers with consequent losses of millions of rands of benefits to South African government.

The main culprit is Mozambique government. There are 244 former mineworkers at Anglo American Corporation from Mozambique who have not responded to our call to come to NUM offices to their share of the R2 million the union won in a legal battle as payment for those dismissed during the 1987 strike.

Several attempts were made by the NUM to track these workers down without success. Mozambiquan Labour ministry was given all the relevant information about these mineworkers with a view of making it easier for the government to facilitate their movement to our head office in Johannesburg, to receive their monies but to no avail.

It is highly hypocritical of these states to claim to be acting in the best interests of their citizens whereas victims of dismissals and retrenchments are left to starve while their benefits are forfeited to the Pretoria regime.

We challenge the Labour Ministry in Mozambique to work jointly with their trade union federation, OTM, to ensure that the dismissed mineworkers are found and helped to come to Johannesburg to collect their monies.

It is advisable for the neighbouring states to encourage migrant workers to participate fully in the struggles of the people of South Africa so that they should form part of the emerging democratic South Africa.

Failure to heed this comradely advice will only be at migrant workers' peril much to the detriment of the future of the whole development of Southern Africa.

WORKERS WIN BATTLE FOR RECOGNITION AT IMPALA PLATINUM MINES

VIVA IMPALA WORKERS!!

Mineworkers at Impala Platinum Mines (IMPLATS) made a major breakthrough for democratic trade unionism in Bophuthatswana bantustan by signing a recognition agreement with the company.

The recognition agreement was signed last month with the union structure known as Central Council of Workers to extend collective bargaining rights to Implats workers.

In terms of the agreement workers will have collective bargaining rights on wages and conditions of employment.

The recognition agreement will enable workers to negotiate and settle procedural and other agreements with the bosses. Another major gain made is the recognition of full-time shaft stewards provided in terms of the agreement.

Recognition comes after many years of bitter struggles waged by Implats workers demanding trade union rights.

In 1986, the Gemmin-owned mine brutally crushed workers strike by dismissing 26 000 workers.

It was not until 1991 that workers started to regroup and challenged the rampant trampling of their rights by Implats.

With all machinery of repression at the disposal of the company — mine security, Bop security forces and repressive Bop labour laws — workers confronted the bosses with demands for higher wages and recognition of the union their own choice — National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

Bosses resorted to the use of force and violence in an attempt to crush the workers upsurge but failed as the mine was rocked by a wave of strikes, work stoppages, sit-ins and stay aways.

Meanwhile 26 000 workers of the 48 000-strong workforce joined the NUM in defiance of Bop labour laws which prohibit activities of so-called foreign unions.

When the bosses came to the negotiating table with the NUM influenced workers committee to work out the recognition agreement more than 30 workers had already been killed and hundreds injured and maimed while the company lost over R100-million in production.

BREAKTHROUGH AT ESKOM WORKER PARTICIPATION

A historic summit between Eskom management and representatives of ten Trade Unions was held on 7 and 8 September 1992 to consider key issues affecting all parties concerned.

The Summit came after months of tension and conflict between Eskom and workers organised under the National Union of Mineworkers and other unions. Workers' were opposed to Eskom's unilateral restructuring of the industry which had already cost 20 000 jobs since 1985.

It was only after a national campaign to save jobs was launched that the power of organised workers was felt throughout the country as protest actions and rallies rocked almost all Eskom Power Stations.

A massive March on Eskom's Megawatt Park finally stopped the Company's restructuring programme.

The key issue of the Summit was worker participation in the running of Eskom.

Related issues identified for further consideration were ways of ensuring long-term viability of Eskom, training and development of workers, accommodation and related matters.

To carry this process forward the Summiteers agreed to form various task groups to address identified issues in detail and to make recommendations as part of an ongoing process.

The success of this process could go a long way in ensuring that Eskom become a viable economic establishment to serve the needs of all South Africans. Workers could benefit from economic growth likely to be stimulated in the process.

The Summit was attended by 50 Eskom managers and 150 representatives from NUM and nine other trade unions.