

NUM SUPPORT COMMITTEE

BEFORE the strike the NUM Strike Support Committee was formed to assist with support functions. It included health, community and service organisations as well as individuals.

The support they gave included collecting food, blankets, money and arranged function such as the Rock for the Miner Concert. The health organisation gave medical assistance while individuals provided transport and person-power, when various tasks had to be done. This included silk-screening 2 000 T-shirts.

During the strike the union provided temporary accommodation for over 100 workers. Although the conditions were not very comfortable, the workers remained united. Comrade Irene Barendilla, who co-ordinated the daily routine of cooking, purchasing food and arranging cultural activities, said that more than R17 000 was spent to cover the needs of the workers.

"There were other problems which we had. The Administration Board Officials harassed workers in Grasmere, after complaints from the people in the area. Workers there had to move around constantly, which caused a lot of discomfort.

"To keep workers occupied we held educational programmes, a cultural day and a sports day. In spite of everything, the workers' spirits were high and they made the best of the situation," she added.

More than R19 000 was collected. The donations included:

- Cape Town Municipal Workers Association — R2 000
- Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union — R650 as well as food parcels.
- Food and Canning Workers Union — R1 000
- South African Council of Churches — blankets valued at R700
- Overseas donations — R10 000

The union also received small amounts from various youth and community organisations.



Cultural evening in Grasmere

International support

International support and solidarity action was also forthcoming. They included messages of support from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), various national trade union centres and International Trade Secretariats (ITS). The following statement was sent to the NUM following an emergency consultation meeting on South Africa, which was held in Brussels on August 25 1985.

"The International Free Trade Union Movement supports the demands of the NUM. The ICFTU and the ITS meeting in Brussels express their total support for all demands made by the NUM of South Africa in the current round of negotiations with the Chamber of Mines.

"The world's miners unanimously backed by the international trade union movement insists that all the

paid leave, the abolition of job discrimination and other discriminatory practices are wholly justified in the light of internationally recognised standards relating to practices in labour matters."

The meeting pledged its support for the NUM's efforts to have the present state of emergency lifted and an end to apartheid.

The following national trade union centres gave their support:

- TUC - Great Britain
- DGB - Federal Republic of Germany
- AFL-CIO - United States of America
- FGTB - Belgium
- LO - Sweden
- LO - Denmark

European Trade Union Centre
The following International Trade Secretariats also endorsed the statement:

- MIF - Miners International Federation
- ITF - Transport workers. They have also committed themselves to assist in stopping movements of coal from South Africa.

UIF - Food and Drink workers

PSI - Public Services

FIET - Clerical employees and technicians

ICEF - Chemical workers

PITI - Post and Telecommunications workers

There have also been hundreds of messages of support from various unions, anti-apartheid organisations and individuals including members of parliament all over the world. They include:

- Cardiff University; National Union of Mineworkers (Wales area committee); Labour and Trade Union Group in Northern Ireland; Militant Irish Monthly; UAW; Dave Nellist British MP; Coalition of Black Trade Unions; Fed. Fodes Travaux (France); Danish Socialist Party; Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers Union; Norwood Labour Party Young Socialists; Municipal Union of France; Greater London Association of Trade Councils; Indonesian Seafarers Union; French

Dock Workers; Ron Brown British MP; Nordic Council of Unions; Swedish Metal Workers Union; General Federation of Labour in Israel; Greek Seamen; Italian Trade Union Confederation and 420 people signed a petition on the streets of Washington DC. There were hundreds more letters of solidarity but they cannot all be mentioned.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS WISHES TO THANK ALL THE ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR SUPPORT AND SOLIDARITY.

SEVEN PEOPLE were arrested, including three NUM members, on Friday October 18 when Johannesburg came under siege for a few hours after police lost control in the city centre.

They were arrested after a peaceful memorial service for the hanged African National Congress militant, Benjamin Moloise, turned into a violent confrontation between police and angry workers and onlookers.

One bystander was shot at point-blank range while attempting to flee from gun-wielding policeman. Many others were injured as police baton charged and hit people randomly. Police dogs also savagely bit everyone in sight. Two policemen were allegedly stabbed.

How it started...

The confrontation started when people attending the memorial service in Khotso House began to sing as they left the meeting.

Many police had gathered armed with guns, batons and quirts. The area was cordoned off by the traffic police. The singing and chants became bolder as the police lined the streets. Suddenly, objects were thrown by people from the nearby flats into the crowd. The mourners retaliated with stones.

Police attack

Without warning, the police moved in and arrested some of the people. More police reinforcements arrived. This time the dogs were used to disperse curious onlookers, mostly workers who were returning home from work. This move made everyone very angry.

People fled in all directions as police started lashing out at everyone. And shopowners who shouted

JOHANNESBURG UNDER SIEGE — THREE NUM MEMBERS ARRESTED



Bystander shot by police

abuse and stopped people from entering their shops, who were looking for protection, became the victims of the "crowd".

A NUM official explained how the workers were arrested:

"We were all standing on the pavement and singing. The police came with their dogs and batons. They started hitting us and their dogs started biting. They chased those workers who had union T-shirts on, until they caught them. As they were taking workers to their van, the dog bit another member in the leg. They shouted at him and then arrested him."

Racist remarks by white pedestrians were met with physical attacks. Shop windows were broken and some shops and bottle stores were looted.

Control lost

Police lost control of the situation. The small crowd of mourners now grew to thousands of people, mostly workers returning from work. The siege of the city spread and police were unable to contain the anger of the "crowd".

The conflict continued until 6 pm. More police and reservists arrived. They patrolled the streets and the running battles came to end.

● The seven people arrested appeared in the Johannesburg Magistrates' Court on October 21, but their case was postponed to the 28th October pending investigations.

● On November 28 they were released on bail.

- Sandile Gxowa — R1 000
- Herbert Masela — R200
- Peter Bakhile — R800
- Naiogi Sithebe — R200
- Lillian — R200
- Anthony Mcingane — R500
- Armando Shashe — R500