

# STRIKES

Entumeni Coal Mine: On the 12th September workers at Anglo-American's Entumeni coal mine went on strike. Initially only one shift of some 300 workers acted, but were soon joined by 500 others (out of a total workforce of 1 100). The workers demanded to see the mine manager who had to rush back from Johannesburg. Two mine policemen sent by the manager to the workers were assaulted. Police were called in and "stood by", but no damage to property has been reported."

The strike was said, by management, to relate to a "misunderstanding concerning the bonuses being paid to certain categories of workers at the colliery" (Natal Mercury, 78-09-14).

On Thursday, two days after the strike had started, it was reported that most workers had returned. 65 chose (?) to leave the mine - 60 workers from Lesotho and 5 from the Transkei bantustan.

Clermont Housing Scheme: 30 policemen were sent to Clermont, outside Durban, on 28 September when about 200 workers went on strike for higher wages. They were employed on a Port Natal Administration Board housing scheme.

It was reported (RDM, 78-09-29) that the District Commissioner of police "spoke to the protesters who then went home. The men were told to return (the next day) and put their grievances to their liaison committee, which would discuss the wage claims with PNAB officials."

East London Canning Factory: About 850 workers (women) went on a brief strike over overtime payment. The manager of the factory said that the women workers returned after Department of Labour officials mediated.

Some of the workers complained that "their liaison committee was a 'ja baas' one and not effective" (Post, 78-10-05).

The article published below, "A study of Strikes in the 1970s", is part of a longer study on strikes in South Africa. It was submitted to WIP in response to the editorial request asking for material on strikes. The list of strikes noted in the article is not exhaustive, but does serve to illustrate certain trends and dynamics.

The editors of WIP are keen to run further information on strikes and worker action in South Africa, and would appreciate any contributions in this area.