

# Strikes and Disputes: Transvaal

COMPANY AND AREA	UNION	WORKERS	DATE	EVENTS AND OUTCOME
Abkins Steel Germiston	MAWU	200	07-09.10	About 200 workers at the Germiston plant staged a strike and sleep-in, demanding recognition of MAWU. The strike centred on a dispute over whether separate recognition agreements should be negotiated for the three Abkins' subsidiaries. MAWU claims this is an attempt to divide workers. Strikers returned to work while negotiations continued. The union will continue to push for a single recognition agreement.
Allied Publishing	MWASA			The dispute between Allied Publishing and MWASA over pay increases and working conditions for newspaper vendors has been resolved. Allied agreed to give vendors permanent staff status, and increased weekly wages to R60. The dispute began with a three-week strike in January.
Ciba-Geigy Isando	CWIU	200	23.10	After a wage agreement the minimum wage has been raised to R4,10/hour. This is a 27% increase in the minimum wage and reflects the concerted attempt by CWIU to achieve industry-wide minimum wages of more than R4,00/hour in 1987.
CNA	CCAWUSA	1 000	25.10	Workers considered national strike action after a deadlock in the four-month wage dispute. They demanded an across-the-board monthly increase of R105. Management has offered R85. The union applied for a conciliation board which was granted at the end of September. It met without success on 8 October. On 3 November, 348 workers went on strike at the Carlton Centre CNA and two Elandsfontein Warehouses. Workers slept in at the premises despite a court order prohibiting this action. The strike continued and by 6 November workers from 32 stores in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban were on strike.
Dunlop Benoni	CWIU	600	07.08- 16.09	Workers went on strike when wage negotiations broke down. They were locked out on 15 August and a conciliation board met to try to resolve the dispute. Negotiations broke down again on 27 August and on 1 September workers were locked out again. CWIU, MAWU and NAAWU shop stewards planned solidarity action which resulted in solidarity stoppages at PG Glass, Liquid Air, Reef Chemicals and Chesebrough. Settlement was reached when workers accepted a 60 c/hour increase to be paid in three instalments. This brings the minimum wage to R3,03 an hour. Workers initially demanded a R3,10/hour minimum, the previous minimum being R2,43/hour. The agreement also provides for four months maternity leave and a long-service award.
Farm Fare Wynberg	FAWU	500	11.09	FAWU has resolved a wage dispute with farm fare after a five-day sleep-in strike and an application by management for a court interdict to restrict workers from entering company premises. Workers have been given a R14 across-the-board increase: R8 from July and R6 from next February. Farm fare recognises 1 May and 16 June as paid holidays.
Garlicks	CCAWUSA	500	16.10	Workers at four Garlicks stores went on strike when the Minister of Manpower delayed the appointment of a conciliation board to resolve a wage dispute. The union applied for a conciliation board on

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				15 September after management offered a monthly increase of R55 in response to the workers demand of R180 across-the-board. Workers' demands would raise monthly minimum wages to R400 while management's offer would increase them to R300.
Katléhong Town Council		100	30.10	A hundred striking council police were arrested after going on a rampage outside the council offices in support of increased wages. After causing extensive damage the police were held under emergency regulations.
London Deli Restaurant Johannesburg	ACUSA		10.10	A worker was allegedly locked in a cupboard and set upon by a dog after refusing to inform on other workers whom the deli-owner accused of stealing. The worker laid charges against the owner and had to receive hospital treatment. She returned to work on 26 September but was fired after requesting time off for further treatment. The union is demanding her immediate reinstatement and has instituted legal action against the shopowner.
Manganese Steel Krugersdorp	SEAWU		23.09	Wage talks between SEAWU and management deadlocked and the dispute referred to an arbitrator. The union is demanding a R3,50 an hour minimum wage while management will agree to R2,31.
Marley Tiles Nigel	UMMAWUSA		15.10	The union is in dispute with management over the retrenchment of 19 workers, and is demanding short-time as an alternative.
Matthay Rustenburg Platinum Refiners Wadeville	CWIU		03.10.86	Workers refused to co-operate with a new shift system introduced at the Germiston plant. The new system is to compensate for lost production at the British plant where workers have been retrenched. On 3 November 200 workers staged a work stoppage protesting plans to relocate the plant in Bophuthatswana. Management failed to meet workers on 30 October to discuss accusations that it was taking advantage of the bantustan's 'union-free zone', supporting apartheid and wanting to benefit from cheap labour. Management was given until 6 November to reverse the decision, clarify its position on apartheid, provide documentary proof that wages and conditions of employment were the same in Wadeville and Bophuthatswana, and establish in writing that workers living in South Africa could work in Bophuthatswana.
Mondi	PWAWU	1 500	17.08	Union members voted in favour of strike action after wage negotiations reached deadlock. Workers rejected an offer of five cents across the board and are demanding ten cents. Negotiations between the union and management over wages and conditions of employment for certain workers at Mondi's Merebank Plant have been halted by the Industrial Court. This follows a SA Boilermakers Society application to be given full representation in the talks. Most workers are members of PWAWU, but a minority belong to SABS and are now claiming full representation rights. The application is significant as it may decide on the principle of majority unionism. This is an issue with large industrially-based unions coming into conflict with small craft-based unions.
OK Bazaars Ga-Rankuwa	CCAWUSA		08-16.10	On 8 October workers stopped work and demanded the store manager's dismissal. A dispute over the recognition agreement with CCAWUSA followed on 10 October. Workers demanded their conditions of employment be standardised with those of OK workers outside Bophuthatswana. 'Foreign' unions may not

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				operate in the bantustan and so it is impossible for CCAWUSA to negotiate for its members in Ga-Rankuwa. Management claims that it applies the South African recognition agreement when dealing with Ga-Rankuwa workers.
OK Bazaars Valhalla	CCAWUSA		10.09	A CCAWUSA member is taking legal action after a till-supervisor refused her permission to go the toilet. She relieved herself in front of customers at 10-40 am, after being told to wait until lunch time.
Pilkington Glass	CWIU	2 000	12-13.10	About 2 000 workers at five plants held a two-day work stoppage over dissatisfaction with management's response to negotiations. Workers demanded a minimum increase of 55c an hour. This follows a wage talk deadlock at the end of August when management refused to negotiate. The union applied for conciliation and prepared for a strike ballot.
Printpak Gravure Johannesburg	PWAMU	90	29.10	Workers went on strike after a shop steward was arrested at the plant. Joseph Mene was detained after being called to the manager's office. The union has declared a dispute with management after it issued workers with written warnings following the strike.
Rand Water Board	OVGWU		12.10	The RWB is using a clause in the Labour Relations Act ('the Act does not apply to persons in respect of their employment in farming operations') to prevent the union from organising workers on the board's farms. Wages on these farms are low: one worker earns R95 a month for a 14-hour day after four years of service; another earns R120 after nine years service. Farm workers have no legal protection from victimisation for union activities, cannot form registered trade unions and have no access to the Industrial Court for unfair labour practices. Also, they cannot conclude legal agreements on working conditions, minimum wages or laid-down conditions of service and have no unemployment benefits or minimum safety regulations governing working conditions. The union has 100% membership on the farm but the board will not deal with the union, allow it to have meetings on the farm or allow workers to do union work during working hours.
Robertsons Alberton	CWIU	200	22-24.09	Workers went on strike over delayed wage negotiations. Management had agreed to negotiations after recognition and procedural agreements had been signed, but then said it would be willing to negotiate wages only after the agreements had been 'finalised'.
SA Druggists Elandsfontein	SABMAMU	140	10.09	Following weeks of negotiation, management declared a dispute with the union over a plan to introduce night-shifts. Over 140 workers went on strike; 100 workers who failed to heed an ultimatum to resume work were dismissed and locked out of the plant. Six workers were arrested for intimidation and following a court appearance the case was postponed until November. The union filed papers in the Industrial Court challenging the dismissals.
SASOL 2 and 3 Secunda	CWIU	6 000	10.09	The union prepared a strike ballot after wage negotiations collapsed. Workers demanded a 34% increase (bottom grade) and a 12% increase (top grade) and rejected management's R95 (25%) increase.

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Streamline Metal Marshalltown	AAWU	2	16.09	Two union members are considering legal action after allegedly being assaulted with an iron bar and prevented from collecting their possessions when they were fired.
Summit Industries Rosslyn	PWAWU	210	19.10	PWAWU is taking the company to the Industrial Court over the dismissal of 210 workers after a work stoppage following the retrenchment of 60 workers.
Table Top Clayville	FAWU	280	11.09	Workers staged a work stoppage protesting the detention of a shop steward. Eighty workers were dismissed and negotiations between FAWU and management continued.
Town Talk Furnishers			Sept	A worker with a standard eight education who was fired in March, lodged an unfair dismissal claim in the Industrial Court which denied him an attorney because Ellerines (Town Talk's holding company) objected. Ellerines said it had not engaged an attorney for the case to avoid legal expenses. The worker challenged the matter in the Supreme Court arguing he was not qualified to conduct his own case.

## Strikes and Disputes: Natal

BTR Sarmcol Howick	MAWU	1 000		<p>The 18-month-long strike has finally reached the Industrial Court which set November aside for the hearing. Despite worker demands that the hearing be in Mphohomeni township it is being held in Pietermaritzburg. The case opened on 3 November and BTR was accused of committing an unfair labour practice by dismissing 1 000 workers. The court heard evidence of workers' long service - the average being 25 years.</p> <p>During the strike workers, facing unemployment and starvation, organised co-operatives; together with the union they conducted a local and international campaign of consumer boycotts, mass rallies and support action. The European Economic Community is sitting in Brussels to investigate alleged contraventions of the EC employment code by BTR Sarmcol. Six BTR shopstewards were refused passports to attend the hearings.</p>
Clover Pietermaritzburg	FAWU	1 500	15-22.09	<p>Following a strike in June when 230 Pietermaritzburg Clover workers were fired, 1 500 workers voted in favour of strike action. Management claimed only 166 workers were dismissed. Despite management refusal to allow ballots to be held on Clover premises, workers in eight Natal plants came out on 15 September. On 19 September workers suspended strike action pending continued negotiations with FAWU and the progressive reinstatement of dismissed workers. Management agreed to consider reinstatement should vacancies arise in Natal plants.</p> <p>During the strike two Port Shepstone Clover workers were detained with alleged management collusion. In view of management reluctance to reinstate all workers, and their general attitude, the union brought 20 charges of unfair labour practice against Clover in the Industrial Court</p> <p>On 24 September Clover obtained an interdict restraining FAWU from organising a consumer boycott of its holding company, National Co-Operative Dairies. The union, which has until 26 November to respond, decided to challenge state of emergency regulations on strikes and boycotts in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court in November. In terms of the regulations it is subversive to call or promote a consumer boycott. However, the vagueness of the regulations makes it difficult for union officials to determine</p>

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				<p>the difference between subversive and legitimate action.</p> <p>The dispute continued at mediation and on 5 November FAWU rejected management's offer to reinstate workers should a vacancy arise at any Natal plant. The union demands the reinstatement of all workers with an agreed number to return to the Pietermaritzburg plant.</p>
Rowan SA, Mobeni	NAAWU	200	15.09	After a strike and 200 dismissals, workers agreed to return to work pending negotiations.
Scotford Mills Mayville	GMTU	300	16-17.09	Workers were dismissed after striking because of dissatisfaction with severance and holiday pay. After deciding to relocate the plant in Ladysmith, management offered workers with less than a years service severance pay of R8 and those with longer service between R30 and R50.
Ugeni Iron Works	BAWU	500	19.09	Workers held a work stoppage over the proposed retrenchment of 17 workers. BAWU is trying to negotiate short-time as an alternative. A dispute was lodged with the industrial council, but management retrenched 16 workers on 31 October. Five hundred workers walked out demanding the reinstatement of retrenched workers and the union called a strike from 3 November.

## Strikes and Disputes: OFS/Cape

City Tramways Cape Town		4	18.09	An out-of-court settlement was reached following Industrial Court action by the Legal Resources Centre on behalf of four retrenched workers. A worker with 16 years' service received R5 000 severance pay, while others with less service received smaller amounts.
ESCOM Vaal Triangle	OVGWU	300	07.10	<p>Management recently announced that about 2 000 workers would be retrenched. Agreement was reached with 12 unions representing ESCOM workers over redundancy and retrenchment criteria. Workers at the Lethabo and Kragbron power stations went on strike over the planned retrenchments, fearing the loss of their homes in the ESCOM-funded housing scheme. Workers returned after discussions between the union and management.</p> <p>On 15 October management announced a retrenchment package to be implemented from February 1987. Workers will receive the equivalent of seven months wages or early retirement after a two-month notice period. Leave, bonus and pension money will be paid out while ESCOM houses may be occupied for six months at current rates.</p> <p>Meanwhile, an ESCOM worker who was fired last February after his certificate of competency was withdrawn, allegedly without reason, is to take the issue to the Supreme Court.</p>
General Motors Port Elizabeth	NAAWU	2 100	21.10-	<p>American multi-national, General Motors, has decided to sell the company to local GM executives. The company has not made a profit since 1981 and management blames this and slow political reform for the move. At a meeting held on 23 October, workers criticised management for lack of consultation over plans to withdraw. They demanded severance pay as they would no longer be employed by the company, a refund of all company and worker contributions paid into benefit funds, and the appointment of two workers on the new board of directors.</p> <p>After receiving written refusal to these demands, workers went on strike on 29 October, sleeping in at the Kempston Road and Aloes plants. Representatives from MACWUSA and the SA Iron and Steel Union</p>

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				<p>were also invited to talks between NAAWU and management on 30 October. But the same day, management was granted a court order compelling striking workers to show cause why the strike should not be declared unlawful by 3 November. The strike and negotiations continued.</p> <p>The strike has halted production on the new Opel Monza, to be launched on 23 November. This was a strong bargaining point for the workers. On 3 November management threatened to fire workers who could not show reason for not working, as their strike was illegal. The following day workers were given a final ultimatum to return to work by noon or face dismissal. At midnight on 5 November, police forcibly removed workers from the plant and 500 workers were fired. On 7 November the union announced workers would return to work and that negotiations would continue. But at a meeting held the same day workers decided to return to the plant but not work. An arbitrator has now been appointed in the dispute.</p>
Laingsdale Engineering Cape Town	EATWU	127	09.09	The union is to take management to the Industrial Court over 'union bashing'. Management threatened workers with dismissal and security force action at a worker meeting, which resulted in the union losing 70 of its 127 members. This action ended recognition negotiations as the union no longer had majority membership. Both Laingsdale and Renak (where there is a wage dispute) are owned by multinational Plessey and the union has appealed for assistance from the International Metal Federation.
Renak Diep River	EAWTU	40	08.08	Workers, already in dispute with management over wages, went on strike over the employment of students at an hourly rate higher than the workers are demanding. Students were being employed as scab labour to beat an overtime work-ban. Workers are demanding a minimum rate of R3,90 an hour. They have also objected to new security measures and harassment by management. Workers returned on condition 'scab' employment ended and security measures withdrawn.
SA Breweries Port Elizabeth	FAWU	230	25.09	Workers went on strike in protest over the dismissal of Sithembile Kawa, chairperson of the shop stewards' committee. Talks between FAWU, the SAB Shop Steward Committee and management ended in deadlock with management refusing to reinstate Kawa, who is also regional chairman of FAWU and branch chairman of COSATU.

## Strikes and Disputes: Mines

Beatrix Gold Mine (Gencor) Theunissen	NUM	8 000	07-10.09	Workers went on strike after a mine security officer fired rubber bullets and birdshot, injuring 16 workers returning from a NUM meeting. After negotiations between workers, NUM and management, strikers agreed to resume work.
Geduld Gold Mine, Welkom (Anglo American)	NUM	3 500	16.09	Workers went on strike and demanded the dismissal of a shiftboss who carried a gun underground. Workers returned after NUM and management agreed to negotiations.
Kinross (Gencor)	NUM	6 000	06-08.10	Miners went on a two-day work stoppage after the dismissal of NUM regional secretary, Eric Vala. Talks between management and the union were held to resolve the dispute.

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Kloof Mine, Westonaria Deelkraak and Doornfontein, Carltonville (Goldfields)	NUM	35 000	23-30.10	Over 35 000 workers went on strike demanding wage increases, income security for injured workers and improvements in holiday leave bonuses. Gold Fields pulled out of wage negotiations between NUM and the Chamber in July and so were not part of the substantive agreement reached on 25 October. At first management refused to talk to NUM but began negotiations on 29 October. These broke down after a demand that striking workers return before negotiations could continue. After alleged police action against workers at the Doornfontein mine, workers added the release of 18 arrested colleagues to their demands. Workers returned on 30 October after discussions between workers and NUM officials. NUM and management committed themselves to talks through the Chamber.
President Steyn, Welkom (Anglo American)	NUM	5 000	03.11	Workers went on strike, demanding the reinstatement of a shaft steward dismissed in November 1985. They returned to work on 4 November following talks between NUM and management.
Zincor (Goldfields) Springs	NUM	600	03.11	Workers went on strike demanding a 35% wage increase, free board and lodging, a 6% shift allowance, 1 May and 16 June as paid holidays, a 40-hour working week and 36 days annual leave. This follows a deadlock in wage negotiations in September. The union applied for a conciliation board but the Minister failed to act on the application. Further talks deadlocked and a NUM strike ballot on 31 October voted in favour of strike action.

### 1986 MINE WAGE TALKS END

The wage dispute between NUM and the Chamber has finally been resolved. The Chamber agreed to increases from 1 October ranging from 19,5% to 23,5% for surface and underground workers; increased accident leave for staff workers and non-staff employees; and no downgrading of wages for workers injured or disabled in accidents if they are then employed in a lower job category.

Talks began in May. NUM demanded an across-the-board increase of 30%, income security for injured workers, a shorter working fortnight, a paid holiday on 1 May and improvements to fringe benefits. NUM did not accept some of the Chamber's set pre-conditions. These included: that NUM accept a schedule indicating the mines it represents; that talks for gold and coal mines be separate; that outstanding matters from the 1985 talks not affect this year's talks; that any settlement be regarded as final; that no cost-related changes on conditions of employment be implemented before 1 July and that certain exemptions from the Basic Conditions of Employment Act be accepted.

The Chamber first offered increases of between 15% and 20% and, claiming union acceptance, implemented these on 1 July. NUM said these increases were unacceptable and talks resumed in early July. At this point Gold Fields and Rand Mines Collieries pulled out of the talks and implemented the 15%-20% offer.

Talks broke down at the beginning of July. Most issues were resolved except for wages and income security. NUM declared a dispute with 29 gold and 18 coal mines affiliated to the Chamber on 7 July. The matter was taken to the conciliation board. At the first meeting on 21 August the board adjourned due to disagreement over which workers NUM represented. The issue was resolved on 4 September and the hearing adjourned to 15 September. This round of talks deadlocked with NUM demanding 26% increases and the Chamber offering 18%-22%. NUM said it was willing to consider a split offer from the different mining houses. But talks deadlocked again on 20 September and NUM announced it would conduct a strike ballot. Mediation continued and at talks on 11 October the Chamber increased its offer by 1%.

On 16 October talks deadlocked again when the Chamber insisted NUM drop its income security demand before considering wage increases. NUM then announced plans for a strike ballot to be held from 20 October. But on that day the Chamber called a new round of talks in a bid to avert the strike. The Chamber accepted income security for incapacitated workers. On 23 October the Chamber, acting for Anglo-American, Gencor and JCI, increased the wage offer by 0,5% to between 19,5% and 23,5%. After consultation with its members, NUM accepted the offer. Rand Mines gold division offer remained at between 19% and 23%.