

Mange, that the trial judge's perceptions of him had been clouded by the atmosphere of the trial, where the accused refused to participate, were contemptuous of court proceedings, sang and disrupted the hearings.

In the judgement handed down, the Chief Justice upheld the appeal against the death sentence, and substituted a sentence of 20 years imprisonment. Chief Justice Rumpff said that while South African courts had thusfar been lenient towards offences of treason, a complete change of attitude would be neither surprising nor unjustified. At present South Africa was being subject to "blatant terror", said the judge.

I use the word 'terrorism' to describe violent attacks on, inter alia, completely innocent persons - more often than not committed by people from the Republic who have undergone military training in foreign countries. Trained terrorists seek....to kill innocent people in order to overthrow the State. This is terrorism in any language".

(Appeal Court, Bloemfontein, 11.09.80).

Jeremiah Kgokong Majatladi (23), Thami Gerald Mkhwenazi (38), Ronald Ephraim Mamoepe (18), Lebogang Christy Mokone (18), Petrus Karel Senabe (22), Andrew Mosti Phala (18), Deacon Sikibela Mathe (22), Cornelius Mpheti Leeuw (18), and a 16-year old youth.

As reported in WIP 12, pp41-43, the accused were convicted under the Terrorism Act and sentenced to 7 years imprisonment (Majatladi and Mkhwenazi), and 5 years (the other 7 accused). The trial magistrate found that Majatladi and Mkhwenazi had conspired to assist others to leave the country for military training, while the other accused were found guilty of either

recruiting, or being recruited, for ANC military training.

The appellants have submitted that

the sole and only interest of Mkhwenazi in the other men accused with him was to write a story about them in Post newspaper and also to further his career as a journalist.

Mkhwenazi also claims that it was not his intention to assist others to leave the country for military training.

As far as the other accused are concerned, the appellants have argued that

The court should have found that the version of the accused that they wanted their photographs taken so that these could be publicised in the newspapers in the event of their being detained was reasonable and possibly true.

The state has argued that the photographs were taken so that they could be published after the men had left the country for military training.

Judgement has been reserved.

(Pretertia Supreme Court).

2 youths.

On April 6, 1978, a group of youths aged between 14 and 16 were found guilty of Sabotage in the Port Elizabeth Regional Court, and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment each. (These are presumably some of the children Pik Botha denies are serving sentences on Robben Island). They appealed against conviction to the Eastern Cape Supreme Court, but this was turned down. 2 of the youths further appealed to the Appellate Division in Bloemfontein, and in September 1980 the appeal was upheld, and sentence set aside.

It was found that the trial magistrate had acted irregularly by refusing to accept

a plea of not guilty by the accused's legal advisor, and then directly questioning the accused at length, thereby obtaining certain admissions highly prejudicial to the accused.

(Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Bloemfontein, 11.09.80).

LABOUR ACTION general

Itereleng Workshop for the Blind (Ge-Rankuwa): See WIP 13, page 32, WIP 14, page 50 for earlier events at the workshop. 41 of the 300 workers who had earlier lost their jobs were refused reinstatement and paid 'back pay' running from R21 to R28 - this for workers who had been at Itereleng for up to 27 years.

One worker said that Itereleng still fell under South African authority and that the supposed BophuthaTswana authority and responsibility was being used as a 'shield' by the management and the Transvaal Society for the Blind (see Star, 11.09.80).

Frametex (New Germany): See WIP 13, page 35, WIP 14, page 53 for reports.

'Fears of generating further industrial unrest' were said to behind the reconsideration by Natal Attorney-General Rees of charges against 298 Frametex workers (Star, 05.09.80).

The charges and summonses were under the

Black Labour Relations Act, and related to strikes by about 6 000 workers at Frim group factories during May of this year.

Workers could pay admission of guilt fines of R30 by end September, or appear in court on October 1. The Federation of SA Trade Unions (FOSATU) said that workers had been advised not to pay fines, and that the summonses had not been individually served but simply left at the factory in one batch.

City Deep Abattoir (Johannesburg): Meat inspectors refused to accept an increase in the slaughterline speed from 10 to 11 carcasses per minute. They walked off the job twice, the first time on Wednesday, August 27.

Ben Kruger, chairperson of the Abattoir Corporation, said that the inspectors were being unfair in that the line was designed for 12 carcasses per minute and had been running at 10 per minute.

Slaughterers worked through the night on Thursday to catch up on the backlog of 1 500 sheep.

Border Boxes (East London): Post reported (11.09.80) that the entire labour force at this factory refused to work after the chairperson of their workers' committee had been fired.

They said that the foreman had threatened to fire all committee members who were also members of the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAMU).

About half of the labour force of 64 were reemployed on Thursday, September 11 (RDM, 12.09.80).

Majolica Pottery (near Roodepoort): Workers

went on strike briefly after a fellow worker in the despatch department was fired - allegedly for being away from work because of illness.

The worker involved, Ivy Masigo, said that she had produced a doctor's certificate.

The secretary of the Building, Construction and Allied Workers' Union, Frank Mohlale, the union representing the workers at Majolica, said that the strike had rapidly spread to other departments (Post, 17.09.80).

Batawanagere Transport (Mabopane Depot): Grievances over the pension scheme led to a strike at the firm during the week ending Friday, September 12.

D Viljoen, general manager of Bophutha-Tswana Transport Holdings, said that there had been no 'organised strike, but admitted dissatisfaction over pensions and that some services could have been affected.

Also see references in WIP 8, and WIP 11, pages 29-30, to this transport company and labour dissatisfaction.

Amalgamated Packaging Industries (Industria, Transvaal): Twenty-five workers, transferred two weeks earlier from Fuchs (Alberton) to the API plant, refused to work on Friday, August 29.

Their complaints related to transport and accommodation problems caused by the transfer. It meant that the shifts they worked inconvenienced them with regard to transport arrangements - the firm's suggested solution was to house the workers in a hostel at R20 per month, and refused to provide them with transport.

All 25 workers were paid off.

Mpumalanga Bus Company (Hammerdale, Natal): Scant information indicates that bus drivers at a bus company operating a service between Mpumalanga township and Cato Ridge and Pinetown went on strike over the dismissal of a fellow worker (Daily News, 22.08.80).

Rand Daily Mail (Johannesburg): A 'go-slow' by editorial staff on this newspaper was reported in the Natal Mercury (06.08.80).

This action was taken in protest at breakdowns in the electronic editing equipment, and took the form of one-hour stoppages after every breakdown.

News service to the Natal Mercury and the Cape Times (both morning papers) was also affected.

Public Prosecutors (Johannesburg magisterial district): A mass resignation by 30 prosecutors (all white) was reported in late August - said to have been in protest at low salaries and the high and rising cost of living in Johannesburg.

This seems to be in line with the dissatisfaction among professionals at the erosion of the value of their salaries, pointed to in WIP 13, pages 32-34 (for example, among teachers, nurses, journalists).

The resignation and previous shortages of prosecutors has meant that certain cases have had to be postponed, that staff have been transferred, and that some courts have had to be temporarily closed (for example, in Soweto and Orlando). (See, for example, 'Sunday Express, 24.08.80; RDM, 25.08.80).

Collendale Cannery (East London): Still community and workplace 'unrest' continues in the Eastern Cape. Schools and factories

are two of the most important arenas for the struggle at present.

On Wednesday, August 27, the entire workforce at Collondale Cannery was fired. This assault by management followed a brief stoppage in demand of the reinstatement of 'retrenched' fellow workers.

Six (later changed to five) members of the workforce at the Cannery had been 'retrenched' 'because work ... was slack'. However, one of the six was the chairperson of a workers' committee elected as a result of organising activity by the African Food and Canning Workers' Union (AFCWU), an unregistered union that had asked for company recognition.

Management demanded to deal only through the liaison committee when workers asked for an explanation for the 'retrenchments'. Workers were ordered to leave company premises.

When workers gathered at the factory the next day (28.08.80) they were met by three officials from the Department of Manpower Utilisation who said that they were there to resolve the strike. This was rejected by the workers who demanded to negotiate directly with management.

Security police ordered workers to disperse. Management issued a deadline for return of Friday, August 29, to the workers.

The AFCWU met with management on Friday, but the latter were adamant that negotiations could only follow a return to work, that these would take place through the liaison committee, and that the 'retrenched' workers would not be reinstated.

Workers were fired and told that they could reapply on Monday, September 8, for jobs. However, workers did not accept their pay, said

the AFCWU.

A week later (September 5) workers from Collondale, and also from Ray-Lite Batteries and National Converter Industries (see WIP 14), decided to return to work only when their representative unions had been recognised and workers' committees accepted. The unions involved in these demands from 2 000 workers are the AFCWU and the SAAWU.

However, management from the three plants said that replacements had been taken on from the unemployed in the Eastern Cape.

On Monday, September 8, some workers returned. Rodger Tilney, managing director of Collondale said that as many as 100 had returned, while another 150 were employed from workseekers who had not been at the firm before. The AFCWU denied this and said in a statement on 16.09.80 that 90% of workers were still out, that normal production had not resumed, and that the company was approaching individual workers to return while also attempting to recruit labour tenants with the assistance of farmers.

The sacked workers have called on other cannery workers to refuse to handle unprocessed pineapples from Collondale, and for the community to boycott Collondale products.

Five members of the SAAWU (including the acting secretary, Thozamile Gqeta) are facing charges under the Riotous Assemblies Act, while BP Norushe is in detention.

We would like some of our readers in the Eastern Cape to send us articles and information on factory and community struggles.

Johannesburg Municipal Workers: This strike was also covered in WIP 14.

Four executive members of the Black

Municipal Workers' Union (BPMU) were detained after the strike. Joseph Mavi, charged under the 'Sabotage Act' (minimum sentence 5 years, maximum sentence death) has been released on R500 bail. The case has been postponed to September 29. Mavi has been dismissed by the Johannesburg Municipality and is out of work. While he was in detention his wife, Ruth, received a donation of R100 from the Putco bus drivers in an expression of solidarity.

Philip Mlamini (general secretary of the BPMU), charged under the same Act, has been released on bail of R1 000. His case will also resume on September 29.

Gatzy Mazwi, charged under the same Act, has been released on bail of R500, while Hope Mamobolo was released from custody on August 29 with no charges laid.

Of the 1 000 workers bused back to the bantustans, both Gazankulu and Venda 'governments' confirm that they have had no contact with them. The men have not reported to magistrate's courts within the areas, as required to do by law.

Meanwhile dumped workers have started arriving back in Johannesburg, complaining of starvation and the extreme scarcity of jobs in the bantustans, particularly in the Transkei. By September 3, 300 people were known to be back. The returning workers are being helped to survive through a fund administered by the BPMU. The Roman Catholic Church greatly boosted the fund by contributing R5 000. Strikers keen to return to work with the Municipality are encountering considerable obstacles and resistance. Only a few workers have been reinstated. The WRAB has asked Venda and Gazankulu to

provide alternative workers.

Meanwhile the BMWU's rival, the Union of Johannesburg Municipal Workers, has come out in favour of the striking workers, and called for the reinstatement of all of them. Mavi has not been impressed. He has made a scathing attack on what he sees as 'cashing in on the plight of the workers' and asks, 'where were they when people asked for wage increases?' (Star, 09.09.80). Probably being registered.

The BMWU is receiving new members daily.

Turner Brothers (Eastern Cape): All 27 workers stopped work after the dismissal of the chairperson of their workers' committee.

No further information available to the editors.

Table Bay Cold Storage (Cape Town):

We reprint, below, a letter in connection with the meat strike (from RDM, 27.08.80):

I WOULD like to comment on the article (RDM July 21) by industrial relations adviser, Mr Andrew Levy, in which he urges employers to adopt a more conciliatory and realistic attitude towards strikes and, indeed, to the trade union question in general.

In the Financial Mail (Aug 11) he is further quoted as saying that "the (Johannesburg City) Council has its head in the sand".

We concur with his assessment of the council's handling of the recent municipal workers' strike. However, actions speak louder than words, and it is unacceptable that Mr Levy should place himself in the vanguard of enlightened management. It is important to note that Mr Levy is NOT a dispassionate observer of the recent spate of strikes.

In fact he was the industrial relations adviser to the employers in the recent Cape Town meat strike and acted as their principal spokesman at a number of meetings. In this case the line adopted by the employers deviated considerably from the enlightened prescriptions which their adviser Mr Levy so frequently espouses.

In his "Mail" article Mr Levy states that "with all the talk of change, and the new deal, many employers continue to handle strike action with antiquated methods, regarding strikes as a sign of disloyalty, ingratitude, the work of agitators, and responding by firing their employees, and refusing to confront the issues giving rise to the action." We agree.

But precisely this "head in the sand" attitude characterised the handling of the recent meat strike.

The issues involved in the strike are well known. Approximately 80 workers at Table Bay Cold Storage, after weeks of requesting that management recognise their democratically-elected committee, went on strike. The management's response to this was a catalogue of all the "antiquated methods" cited by Mr Levy in his article: resisting "negotiation and discussion and investigation"; accusations of "agitators"; wholesale "firing of their employees"; hiding behind "state books" and the "red herring of unregistered unions". In short: "refusing to confront the issues giving rise to the action".

As Mr Levy says, unsuccessful strike handling will inevitably "widen the issue in dispute". And the issue was dramatically widened when two weeks later the rest of the meat industry came out in support of the striking Table Bay workers.

In the intervening two weeks the workers in all the meat factories had attempted to discuss the issue at Table Bay Cold Storage with their employers. Their efforts proved fruitless. Indeed the employers actually prepared themselves for an industry-wide strike.

When the 800 meat workers walked out they informed management that they were walking out for one day in solidarity with the Table Bay workers. On their return they were locked out by the employers (assisted by squads of riot policemen). The issue "widened".

The workers received the support of Cape Town's entire African and coloured community, a large section of the enlightened white public and their representatives and, without exception, the English-language Press.

The moderate nature of the demands, the workers' commitment, and the extent of public sympathy failed, however, to impress the employers.

The immediate legacies of their obduracy are 800 starving meat workers and their families, and an entire industry which must have suffered a severe financial setback in the short term and is now employing a less productive work force than might otherwise be the case.

The long-term legacy is more profound. It is the existence, in Cape Town, of 800 starved, determined and embittered workers (and the thousands who supported them), whose anger and understandable bitterness will be directed not at the "agitators" (for there were none) but at the employers who so consciously refused to heed their voice.

And this is important. For as long as there are "meat employers" and "Johannesburg City Councils" they will, in the eyes of the workers, be the benchmark for all employers. These employers who adopt a more conciliatory approach, those who take heed of Mr Levy's words, will not receive a second thought, as long as the actions of prominent employ-

ers — like the meat employers — hold these fine words.

Is it possible that the State actually prevented the meat employers from following the conciliatory path suggested by Mr Levy? If that is so it is important that it be made known. It is however unlikely that the State would have been able to prevent an amicable settlement of the Table Bay issue, around which all subsequent action hinged. It is clearly for Mr Levy to explain the startling deviations between his words and his deeds.

Perhaps the explanation is to be found in Alistair Sparks' words: "Many employers are able to tolerate about the need for black union rights and discuss it in their board rooms, yet when they actually come face to face with black aspirations and demands they seem to panic and become irrational. They revert to traditional South African responses and begin threatening to call in the police, or to fire the lot and pack them off to the 'homelands'".

Please forgive the lateness of our response. Until very recently I and four of my colleagues were detained in prison in Cape Town, an important institution in the industrial relations system adopted by the meat employers. — DAVID LEWIS, Organiser, Western Province Workers' Union, Athlone, Cape.

© This letter was referred to Mr Levy, who declined to comment. — EDITOR.



Interview: a miner

"The mine is a grave from which a man will not return".

The substantial part of this article is devoted to the single experience of a black migrant worker, Mtati, from the Transkei who took his first job on a gold mine at the age of 18. Mtati clearly describes the hardship which is involved in a days work on the gold mines. Working on the mines has always been an unpopular job among black workers. This is largely due to the low wages, long working hours, the extremely dangerous working conditions and the bad living conditions.

Workers today as well as in the past have fought against such conditions of exploitation. This resistance has involved mass desertion, refusal to be recruited, as well as trade union and strike action. Even though working on the mines is clearly unpopular, many workers have at one time or another worked on mines. This is because in the past there have usually been mining jobs available, while other better jobs have been 'scarce'.

Initially the migrant labour system assisted mining capital to force people into working on the gold mines. The structures of control initially developed by the mining industry were later changed and extended into a wider system of control — a central feature of which is a sophisticated labour allocation network. Through this network, labour from the bantustans is channelled into the most undesirable job sectors. The more favourable higher paying jobs (eg clerical and factory work) have been largely reserved for those workers who have urban rights.

Due to resistance from South African workers against working on the mines, the bulk of mine labour was at one stage recruited from outside of South Africa. Mining employment was generally seen as one of the last resorts before starvation. However the conditions in countries surrounding South Africa were such