

Industrial conflict ,Trade Unions and violence in the platinum mining belt



Crispen Chinguno: SWOP Institute

**University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg**

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crispenchinguno@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

- Apartheid IR characterised by violence
- Mining industry extra economic cohesion
- Violence party of the organising order
 - How was strike violence explained?
 - Part of the broader struggle against apartheid
 - ❖ Workers connected struggles to the broader struggle against apartheid
 - Lack of institutionalisation of industrial conflict for black workers

THE CONTEXT POST 1994

- Institutional democracy- collective bargaining ,CCMA ,NEDLAC, hegemonic trade unions affiliated to COSATU
- Decrease in strike violence
- Upsurge in precarious living and working conditions
- Migrant labour system persisting but in a different form
- Hostels being disbanded replaced by informal settlements
- Union shift from 'class compromise to capture'

PLATINUM BELT AND STRIKE VIOLENCE

- Violence preceded emergence of independent democratic union in platinum belt-NUM
- Violence took many forms
- Impala strikes 1982 ,1986, 1991-2
- 1991-2 over 30 killed

STRIKE VIOLENCE POST 1994

- Violence declined- NUM asserted hegemony
- However violence did not disappear
 - Intra-union violence 2009 VP attack
 - Violence against scabs
 - Assassination-union factions power struggles within
- Over the years union co-opted into the system

PLATINUM SECTOR POST 1994

- 1990s-2000s unprecedented boom
- Surpassed gold -now the biggest mining sector
- Employs:194 979 compared to gold 145 561-Its future of mining
- Less developed IR regime-de-centralised collective bargaining
- Most subcontracted over 1/3
- NUM hegemony across sector – recognition agreements

2012 PLATINUM STRIKE WAVE

- Rebellion against the system:
NUM ,management
- Underlying grievances/ dissatisfaction
- Rebellion against exploitative cheap labour regime
- Workers organized independent of union
–NUM and action spread across belt
- Consensus across belt NUM failed
- Workers struggle hijacked by AMCU
- Manifested into union rivalry
- Collapse of NUM hegemony

WHAT CHARACTERIZED VIOLENCE?

- Police violence: 'shoot to kill'
 - Marikana massacre
 - Impala strike
 - Aquarius
- Murder and assault of scabs etc
- Assassinations : intra and inter union etc
- Arson and other damage to property

DYNAMICS AND MEANINGS

- Continuities and discontinuities
- Violence continuing but has a different meaning-new patterns emerging
- Violence connected to fragmentation and worker organisation:
 - Relationship between institutionalisation and fragmentation
 - Relationship between violence and union cohesiveness
- Violence a means to re-establish collective solidarity to overcome fragmentation

THE MEANING

- Emergence of new union faction and rivalry for positions within
- Union provides access to power and resources
- Assassinations: a repertoire in union struggles
- A means to eliminate the enemy
- Change of power to a different faction-
NUM –AMCU

CONCLUSION

- Dual character of the violence:
 - Genuine worker grievances/dissatisfaction
 - The use of the masses to reconfigure relations by a 'union elite'
- A major shift in mobilization of discontent outside the ANC alliance and reflection on how the state response
- State capacity to mediate compromised-state not neutral
- Violence will continue until subjugation of one of the factions



