Report PERS 388 1985

Strikes in South Africa 1960 - 1984

S. Shane
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Nasionale Instituut vir Personeelnavorsing - NIPN
National Institute for Personnel Research - NIPR

RGN·HSRC

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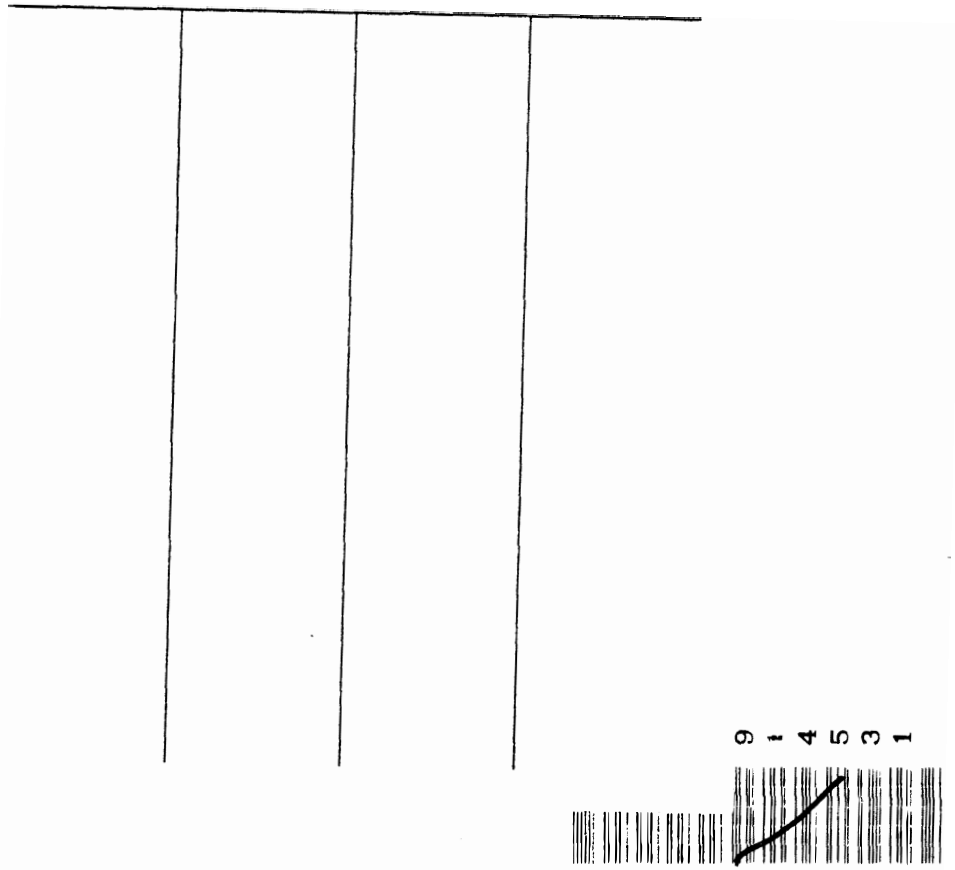
1960 - 1984



Report PERS 388

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This report extends the data published in PERS 352: "Strikes in South Africa 1960 - 1982"

S. Shane
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Pretoria
Human Sciences Research Council
1985

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The co-operation of members of the Department of Manpower is gratefully acknowledged. Without their assistance this report would not have been possible.

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ANALYSIS OF THE STRIKE DATA

OPSOMMING

Hierdie verslag verskaf gegewens oor stakingsaktiwiteite in Suid-Afrika vir die tydperk 1960 - 1984 en is 'n vervolg van PERS 352. Die gegewens is gebaseer op inligting verskaf deur organisasies aan die Departement van Mannekrag op Vorm L.R.33. Die syfergegewens is gestandardiseer tot en met 1983 met verwysing na die Ekonomies-Aktiewe Populasie en Getalle Geëmplojeerd. 'n Stel rekenaargrafieke, wat sommige van die data met betrekking tot stakings uitbeeld, tesame met kommentaar, word voorsien. Aanbevelings vir verdere navorsingsmoontlikhede word gegee.

SUMMARY

This report presents data on South African strike activity for the period 1960 - 1984 and is a sequel to PERS 352. It is based on information reported by companies to the Department of Manpower on Form L.R.33. Data for this study are standardised up to 1983 by reference to the Economically Active Population and Numbers Employed. A series of computer-based graphs representing some of the data on strike activity, with comments on them, is provided. Recommendations on further research possibilities are presented.

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa there is a need for optimal utilization of all its resources. Improving the effectiveness of human resources forms part of the NIPR's research objective. Strikes are of interest because their impact on the production process is due to the actions and reactions of human resources. In order to investigate the phenomenon of strikes in South Africa, the NIPR, by special permission of the Department of Manpower, obtained information from Form L.R.33* . This has resulted in the study of various aspects of strike activity in South Africa dating from 1960 onwards. The information contributes to an historical perspective of one aspect of industrial relations in South Africa. It also serves as a source from which possible trends, tendencies and group fluctuations can be determined and to the possible establishment of a data bank relating to strikes. This report extends the data published in PERS 352, 'Strikes in South Africa 1960 - 1982'. The period 1974 to 1983 was characterised, in terms of industrial relations, by the recognition of the need for change. The 1974 Natal strikes preceded the Wiehahn Commission, the report of which resulted in new legislation. This legislation stimulated a reordering of the ways in which employers and employees came to terms with their conflicts of interest. The pattern of strikes in 1984 is sufficiently different to indicate a transition to a new era. The value of strike statistics lies in there being external representations of processes internal to the organization experiencing the strike. Reports such as this enables the reader to place into context what is happening within the organization with which he or she is concerned. The extended period of the data is useful when considering the recent history and development of South Africa.

* This is the form on which employees are required to report strikes.

THE REPORT

This report consists of two parts (A and B).

Part A consists of a description of the data on file. Part B consists of a series of computer-based graphical analyses (containing information from 1960 - 1984), with some comments.

The analyses presented are by no means intended to be exhaustive. They must rather be interpreted as a reference source reflecting the possibilities for further research and analysis presented by the availability of strike data.

PART A

1. SOURCE OF STRIKE DATA

There is a legal obligation for employers in South Africa to report "discontinuance of work" caused by, or as a result of, disputes. Such incidents are noted on prescribed Form L.R.33, and are then submitted to the Department of Manpower. Divisional Inspectors of Manpower are also required to forward reports of labour unrest experienced by employers in their region to the Head Office of the Department of Manpower in Pretoria. Should the Divisional Inspectors hear of strikes which have not been officially reported, the Inspectors would then initiate a report in consultation with the employer concerned. Such reports are maintained on file at the Department of Manpower, and are used as the source of data by the NIPR. It is considered that the Department of Manpower reports represent a reliable and complete source of available strike data. The data for 1984 includes all records for that year held on file up to the 28th February 1985.

1.1 Basis of the NIPR Report

Eleven classifications of data were chosen to form the basis of the NIPR report. These allow a meaningful aggregation of the strike data.

Additional data were, however, required to produce analyses of a standardised nature to allow for international and longitudinal comparison. The source of such additional data, namely the Consumer Price Index, Numbers Employed, and the Economically Active Population, will be discussed in some detail.

1.2 Classification of Data

1.2.1 Date of Strike

This was recorded by month and year.

1.2.2 Industry

Eight categories were used:

1) Mining.
2) Materials manufacture.
3) Construction.
4) Industrial equipment manufacture and supply.
5) Consumer goods manufacture.
6) Distribution.
7) Service industries.
8) Municipalities.

1.2.3 **Area**

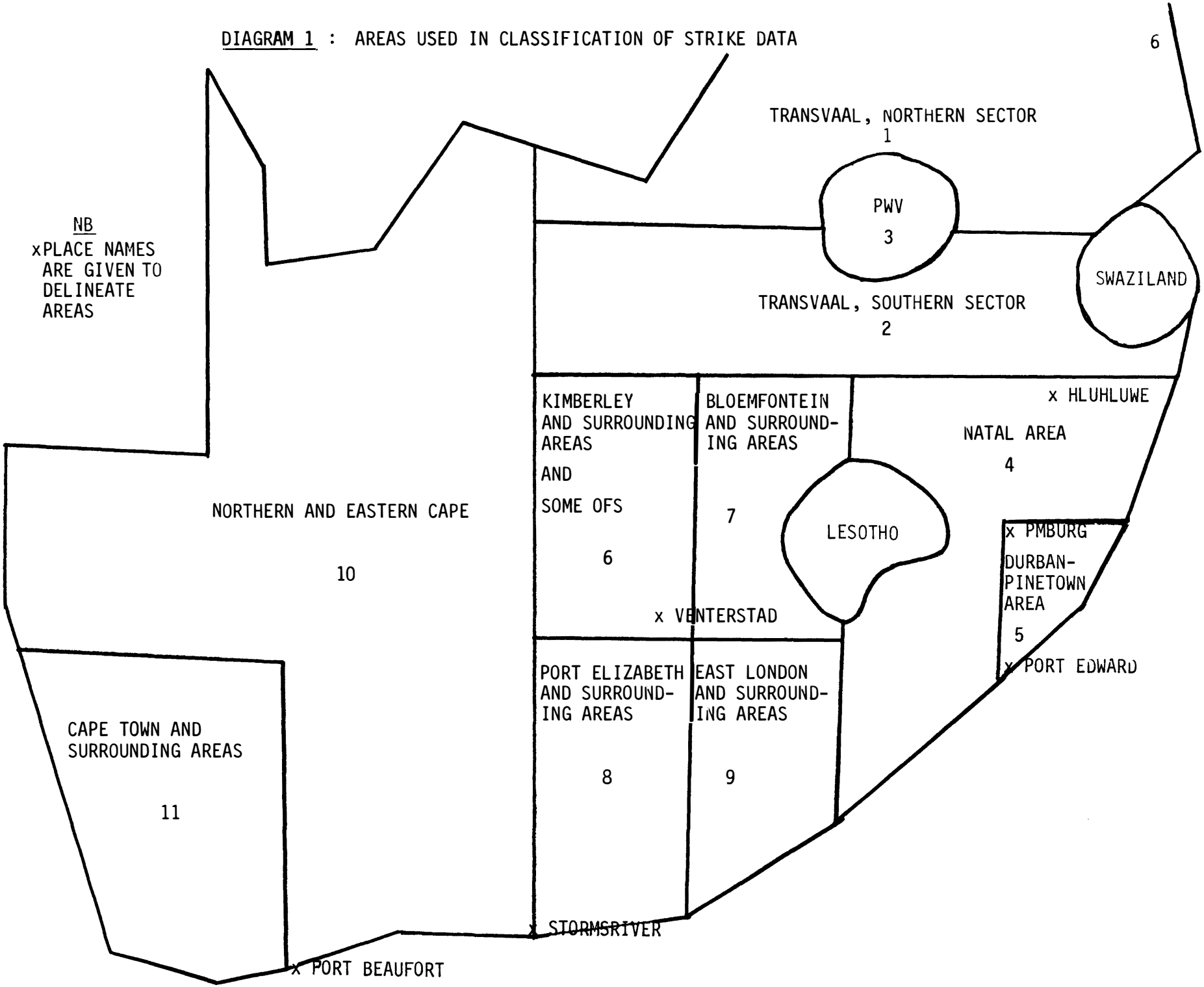
Eleven areas were chosen, as indicated in Diagram 1.

1) Northern Transvaal.
2) Southern Transvaal.
3) Pretoria/Witwatersrand/Vereeniging.
4) Natal.
5) Durban/Pinetown.
6) Kimberley and surroundings and some OFS.
7) Bloemfontein and surroundings.
8) Port Elizabeth and surroundings.
9) East London and surroundings.
10) Northern and Eastern Cape.
11) Cape Town and surroundings.

1.2.4 **Strike or Stoppage**

There is a legal difference between a strike and a work stoppage. When there is a cessation of work in support of worker demands, it is said to be 'strike'; a work stoppage occurs when no specific demands are made by labour or their representatives. The term 'strike' is used to include both strikes and work stoppages in this report.

DIAGRAM 1 : AREAS USED IN CLASSIFICATION OF STRIKE DATA



1.2.5 Cause of Strike

Breakdowns are given for the eight most important causes, which are:

* Wages.
* Payments (excluding demands related to specific wage levels).
* Working conditions.
* Dismissals.
* Communication.
* Retention of Pensions.
* Recognition.
* Sympathy.
* Other causes.
* Unknown.

1.2.6 Result of Strike

The categories indicate the achievement of objectives.

1) Yes.
2) Partially.
3) No.
4) No demands.
5) Unknown.

1.2.7 **Termination**

This refers to whether or not the strike resulted in termination of employment.

1) No.
2) Yes.
3) Unknown.

1.2.8 **Wage Loss (in Rands)**

The reports submitted to the Department of Manpower indicate the gross loss in wages incurred by strikers. There are, however, cases where the employees were paid their wages for the time spent striking, such amounts are not reflected in the figures used for this study. The wage loss incurred by strikers whose employment was terminated is reflected up to the time of job termination. (A measure of the costs of a strike to both the striker and employer requires analysis of each individual strike. This does not form part of the present study.)

1.2.9 **Number of Strikers - Male**

This is recorded according to the following population groups.

1) White.
2) Black.
3) Asian.
4) Coloured.

1.2.10 **Number of Strikers - Female**

This is recorded according to the following population groups.

1) White.
2) Black.
3) Asian.
4) Coloured.

1.2.11 **Man-hours Lost**

The man-hours lost due to strike activity are recorded by population groups.

1) White.
2) Black.
3) Asian.
4) Coloured.

1.3 **Additional Data**

In order to obtain meaningful statistics for longitudinal and international comparison, it is necessary to standardise the data relating to strikes. The Consumer Price Index is used to standardise the wage loss in real terms expressed in Rands.

Population figures are required to compute the rate at which a certain factor, e.g. number of strikes, occurs per thousand of the population. The populations selected were:

a) Economically Active Population.
b) Numbers Employed less domestic and agricultural workers.

Domestic and agricultural workers were excluded because they do not fall under existing industrial legislation dealing with strikes in South Africa and are generally omitted from international statistics.

1.3.1 **Consumer Price Index (CPI)***

The CPI was obtained from Central Statistical Services for the years 1960 - 1984 with 1980 as the base year.

* For the purpose of this study the "All Income Groups" CPI was chosen. It was accepted that this index could be related to low, middle, and high income groups, and would avoid making subjective judgements regarding income and production groupings. Monthly CPI figures were not used because of the longitudinal nature of the study which is based on annual figures.

The annual gross wages lost for the period of the present study can be converted to 1980 prices, by applying the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{WAGES LOST FOR YEAR N}}{\text{CPI FOR YEAR N AT 1980=100}} \times 100$$

It is important in view of the extended period of the data to have annual wages lost in real terms.

1.3.2 Population Figures

During the period covered by the study there have been territorial changes in South Africa, caused by the emergence of the independent and National States, e.g. Transkei. Population and labour statistics produced by the Republic's Central Statistical Services exclude information relating to National States when such States are granted independence. Failure to take this into account would erroneously inflate any standardised strike data. The manner in which this problem is dealt with is discussed in Section 1.3.2.2

The employment figures produced by Central Statistical Services are not adequate for this study. As a consequence, an alternative source of population and employment statistics was required. Such source was identified in figures supplied by Du Toit.* Du Toit's statistics are complete up to and including 1977. The methods used to extend those statistics up to 1983 in this report are discussed in 1.3.2.1, determination of the 'Economically Active Population (EAP)', and in 1.3.2.2, 'Numbers Employed'.

* 'Mannekragbenutting as Onderdeel van die Ekonomiese Ontwikkelingsprogram.'
Published in Manpower Utilization, P.J.D. du Toit (Ed.).

1.3.2.1 **Economically Active Population (EAP)**

The general definition of a country's Economically Active Population is "The total of employed persons and of unemployed persons". (ILO, 1980, p.3.) This figure is a measure of the size of the labour force of that country. Figures supplied by Du Toit were used for the period up to and including 1978. These figures were extended to subsequent years according to the following formulae (given for 1979, Whites).

(i) Factor PP,0,424 represents the proportion of the total population which is economically active. This varies according to population group, and when multiplied by the population size gives the size of the Economically Active Population for each population group. This was obtained for 1979-1983 by extrapolation of the figures given by Du Toit.

$$PPX4420000^{(1)} \times \frac{4485000^{(2)}}{4442000^{(3)}} = 1\ 892\ 000^{(4)}$$

(1) Du Toit's 1978 population figure.
(2) Central Statistical Service's 1979 mid-year estimate of population.
(3) Central Statistical Service's 1978 mid-year estimate of population.
(4) Given to nearest thousand.

The 1980 figure is obtained by replacing in (1), (2), (3) and (4) the 1978, 1979 figures by those for 1970 and 1980, and so on.

(iii) This computation was performed separately for each population group.

The Economically Active Population of the four population groups, when added together, represents the total Economically Active Population of the Republic of South Africa, including the independent National States.

1.3.2.2 **Numbers Employed (domestic and agricultural workers excluded)**

The Economically Active Population is useful for general comparative purposes. The Numbers Employed (domestic and agricultural workers excluded) is a more accurate measure of a population's industrial and commercial activity.

Du Toit's figures for Numbers Employed were used up to 1978, and extended for the years following. Numbers employed in various sectors of the economy, according to population groups were identified. The employment figures (as distinct from the population figures used in Section 1.3.2.1) for sectors other than domestic and agricultural, were added together. This gives an estimate of the Numbers Employed in, for instance, each population and sex group.

These figures were extended after 1978 as follows:

(a)

$$\text{DU TOIT'S 1978 EMPLOYMENT FIGURE} \times \frac{\text{CENTRAL STATISTICAL SERVICES 2nd QUARTER 1979 EMPLOYMENT FIGURE}}{\text{CENTRAL STATISTICAL SERVICES 2nd QUARTER 1979 EMPLOYMENT FIGURE}}$$

This computation was performed separately for each population group.

(b) The TOTAL NUMBERS EMPLOYED (domestic and agricultural workers excluded) is the sum of the numbers employed of the four population groups.

(c) In this report RSA means Republic of South Africa in terms of its internationally recognised boundaries.

1.3.3 Comment

As these extrapolations are derived progressively, as well as being heavily dependent on the estimates of the rate of change shown by the Central Statistical Service figures, it was decided to standardise the data only up to 1983.

PART B

ORIENTATION

Strikes are a much publicised and a strongly emotive aspect of Industrial Relations. They can be interpreted:

(a) as a reflection of a country's industrial relations in general;
(b) as the visible aspect of industrial relations;
(c) as an event occurring at a point in time;
(d) as part of a process, the culmination of which is the strike;
(e) as a breakdown in employer/employee relationships;
(f) as part of the negotiating process;
(g) as a reflection of trust in so far as the striking employee expects a continuation of employment after discussions/negotiations, or strike action;
(h) as a display of power at the level of the organization or society;
(i) as an alternative to other forms of protest, such as quitting, sabotage, material wastage, or restricting output.

Analysis of strike activities allows some quantification of a country's industrial relations. Differences however exist in the requirements for strike reporting in different countries. Creigh, Donaldson and Hawthorn (1982), discussing the statistical information provided by twenty non-communist, industrialised countries, indicate such differences. France, for instance, has no minimum

criteria for defining a strike. West Germany is the only one of those countries where it is obligatory to report strikes. For the United States the minimum criteria are six workers or more on strike one full day or shift. In South Africa there are also no minimum criteria; a strike involving three employees for ten minutes was, for instance, reported in 1982. For this reason the data maintained by the Department of Manpower represents a reliable and complete source of information on strikes. Figures derived from press reports generally underestimate the incidence of strikes.

These differences in basic information limit international comparisons of strike activity

A weakness observed in much of the available strike literature is the use of averages computed over a number of years. This can distort impressions since the average can vary greatly with the period over which it is computed.

The graphs used in this report show strike activity annually over 25 years within different sectors of the labour population and the economy.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the following graphs

1) ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION is abbreviated to 'EAP'.

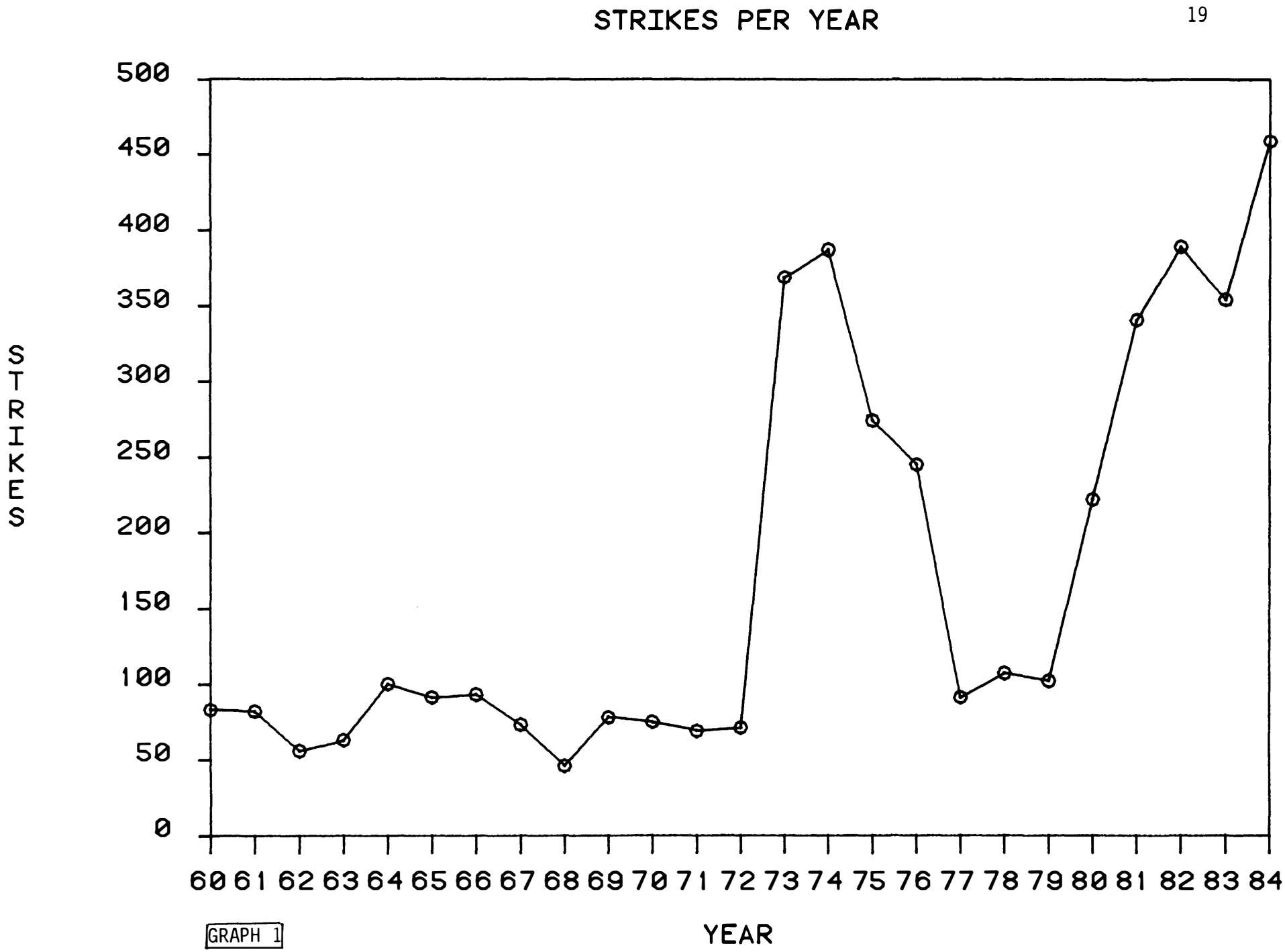
2) NUMBERS EMPLOYED (domestic and agricultural workers excluded) is represented by 'EMPLOYED'.

GRAPHS 1 - 6: NUMBER OF STRIKES AND STRIKERS IN THE RSA (1960 - 1982)

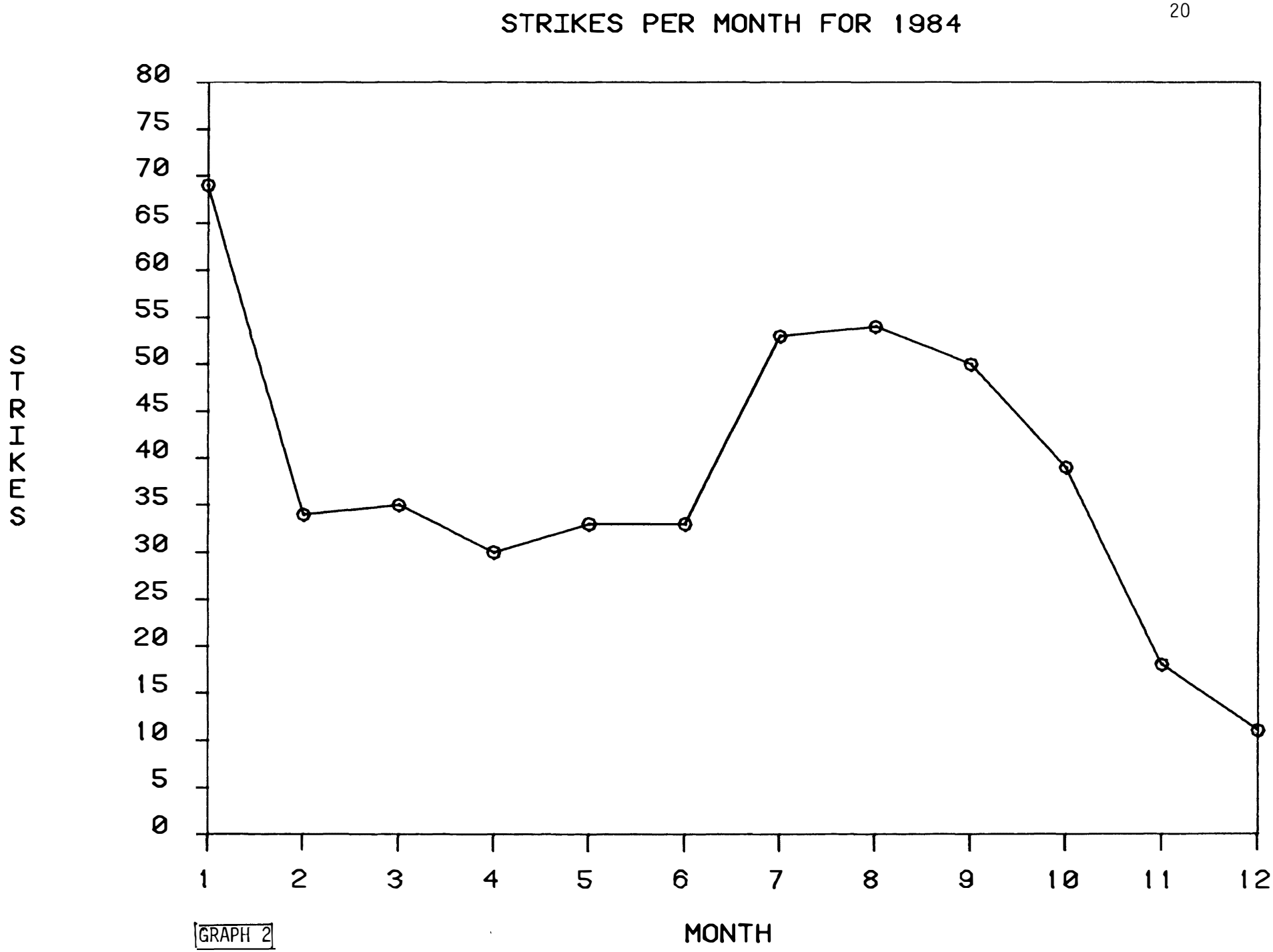
These graphs supply the following information:

Graph 1 - Strikes per year
Graph 2 - Strikes per month for 1984
Graph 3 - Total number of strikers
Graph 4 - Strikers in RSA per 1 000
Graph 5 - Total workdays lost per year
Graph 6 - Strikes in RSA per 100 000

Graph 1 indicates that apart from a small drop in 1983 there has been an upward trend in the number of strikes since 1980. The number of strikers (Graph 3) shows a similar trend, though the 1983 decrease and the 1984 increase was very much more noticeable. The total number of workdays lost in 1984 was very little more than the total for 1982. This may indicate that strikes were smaller, or that strikers were dismissed earlier in the strike than in other years. The former is more likely in view of the wider distribution of strike activity shown in Graphs 33 - 35. Graph 2 indicates that wide variability in strike activity can occur from month to month.


STRIKES PER YEAR
STRIKES
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

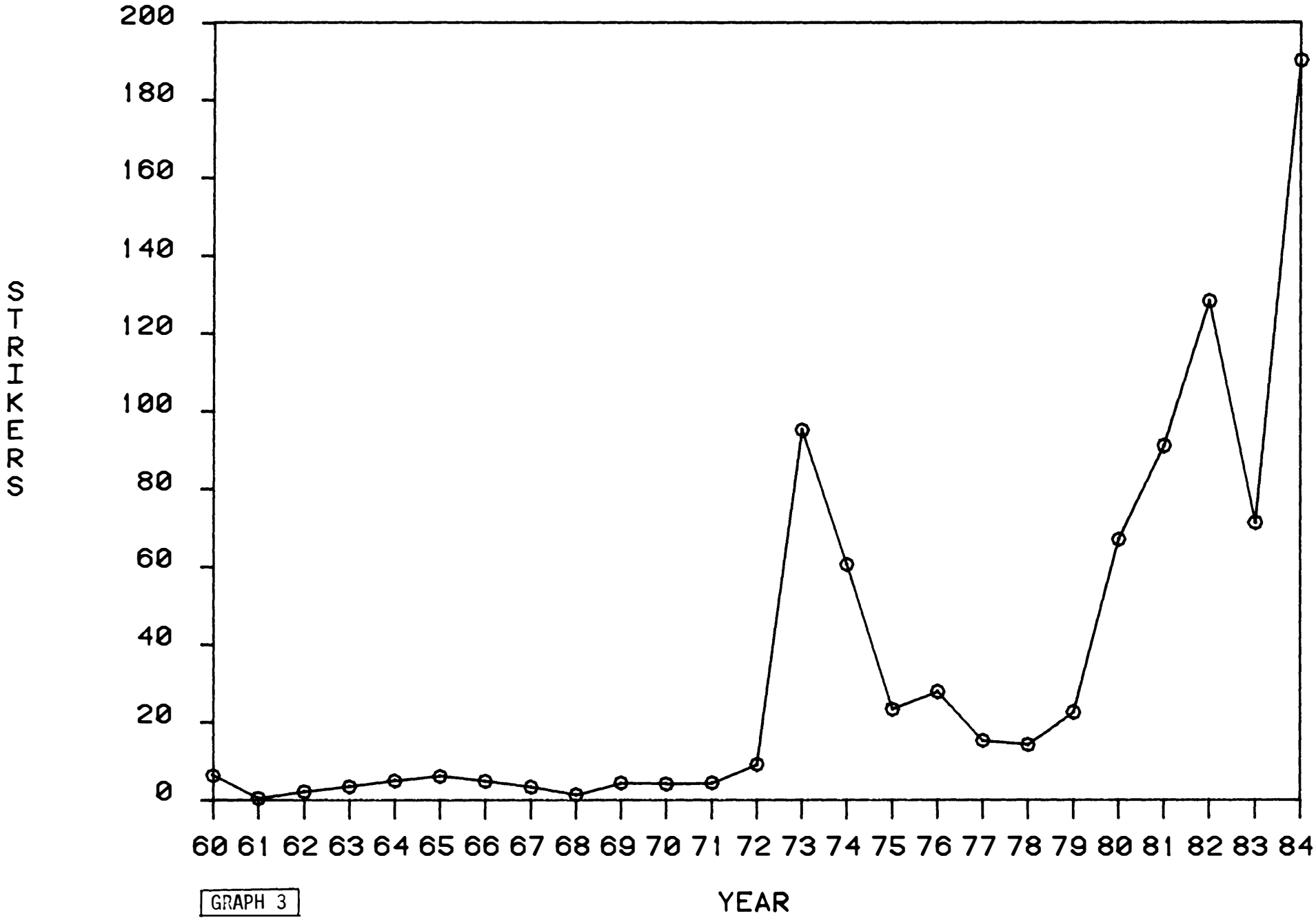
GRAPH 1


STRIKES PER MONTH FOR 1984
STRIKES
80
75
70
65
60
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
MONTH

GRAPH 2

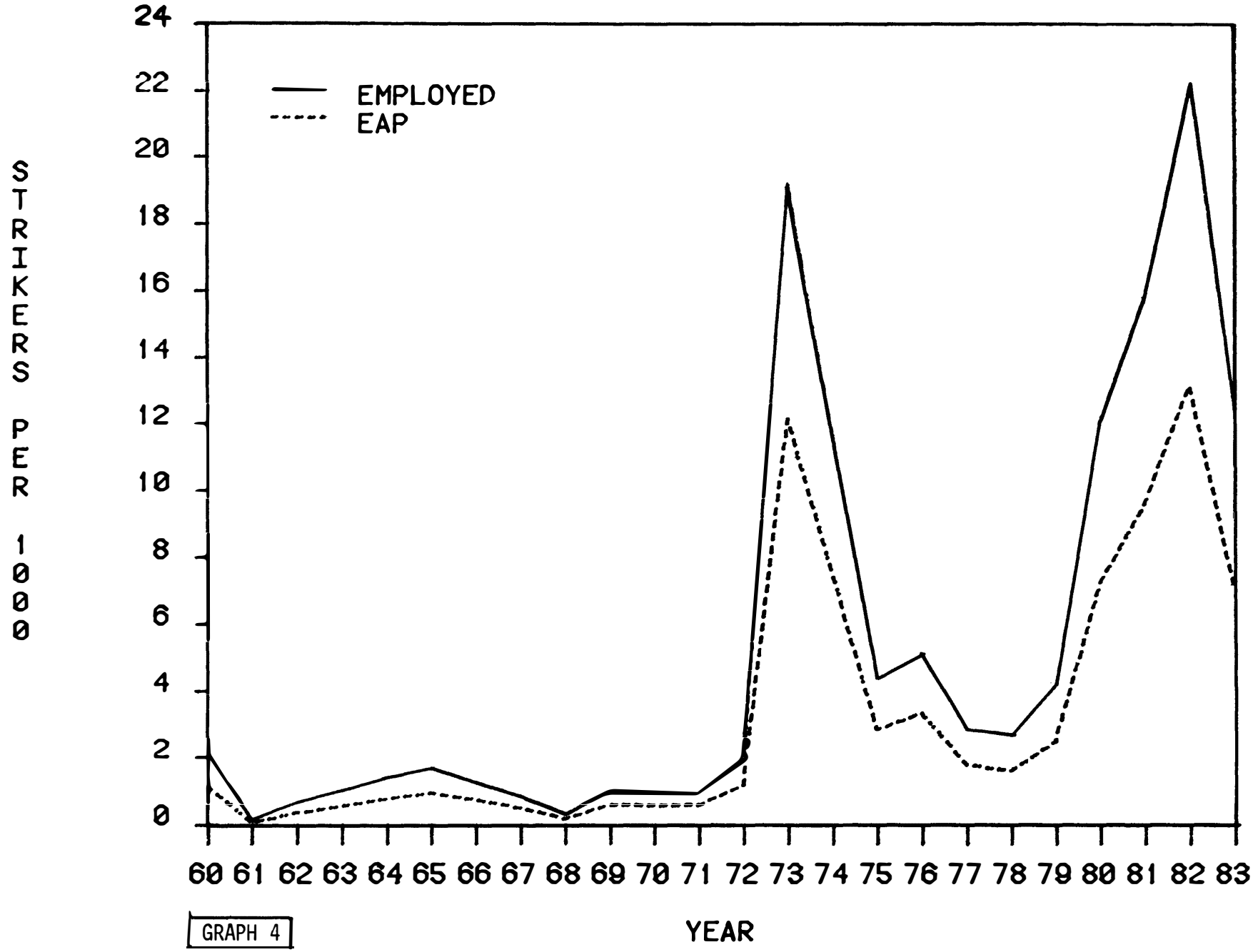
THOUSANDS

TOTAL NUMBER OF STRIKERS



GRAPH 3

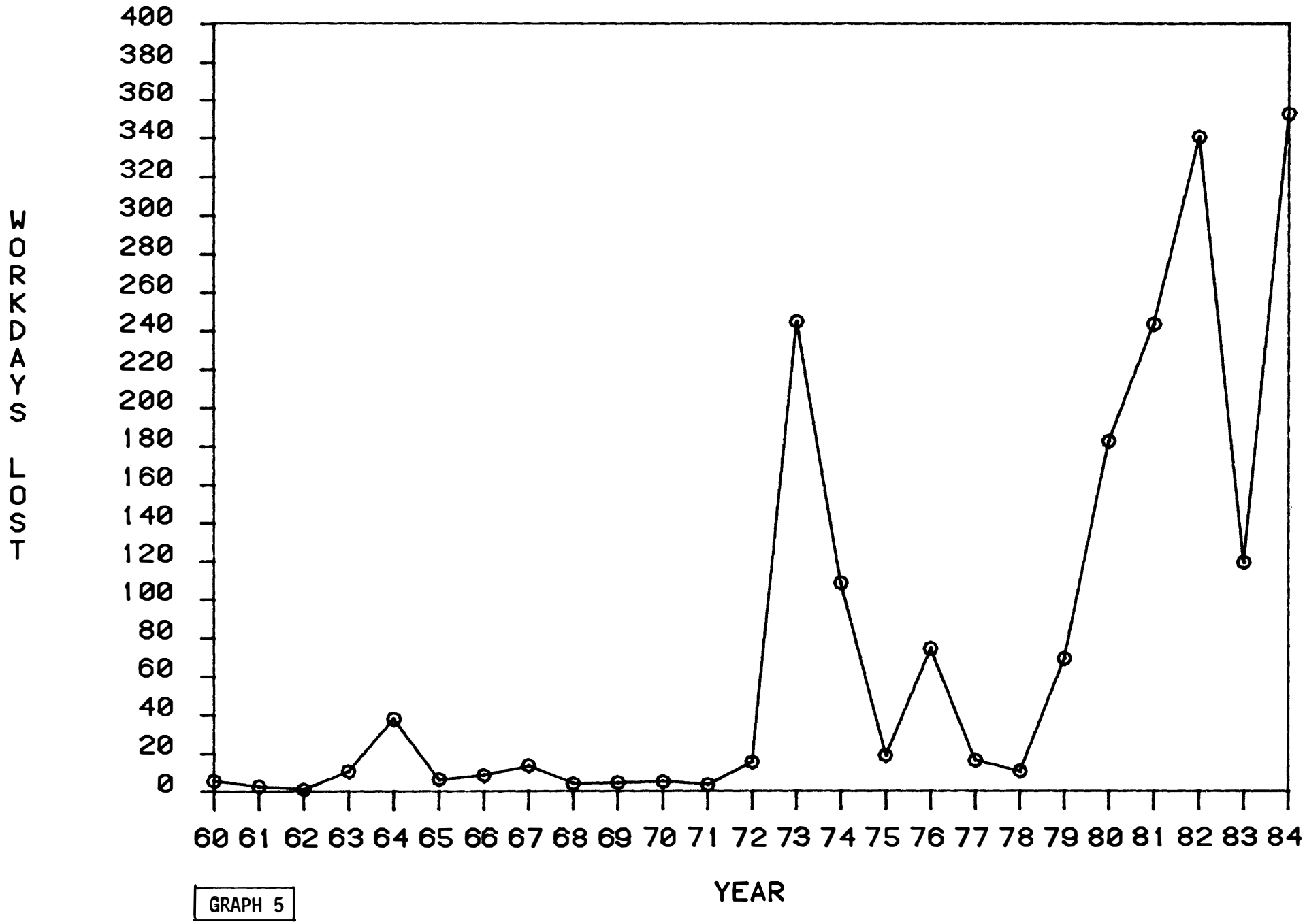
STRIKERS IN RSA PER 1000



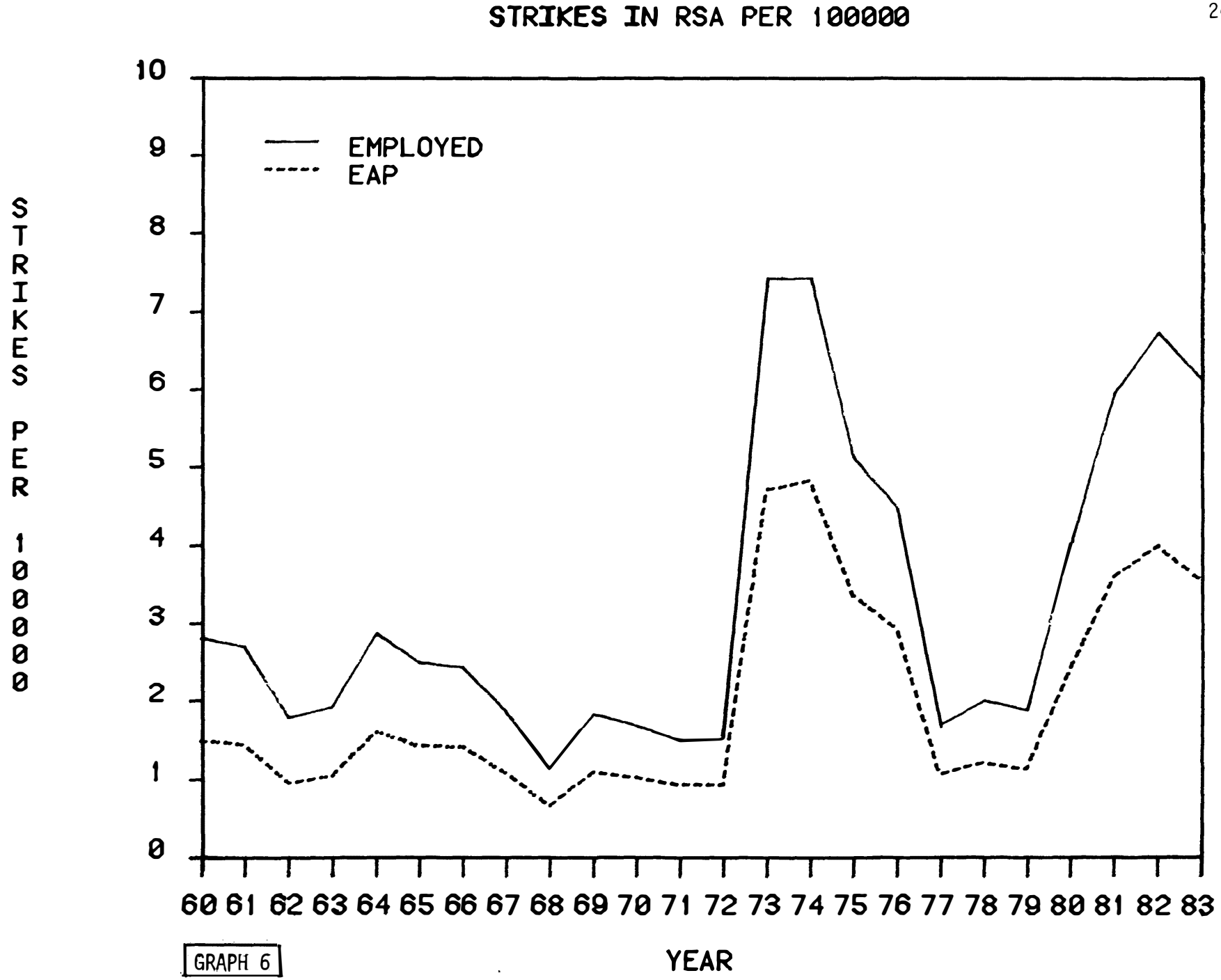
GRAPH 4

THOUSANDS

TOTAL WORKDAYS LOST PER YEAR



GRAPH 5

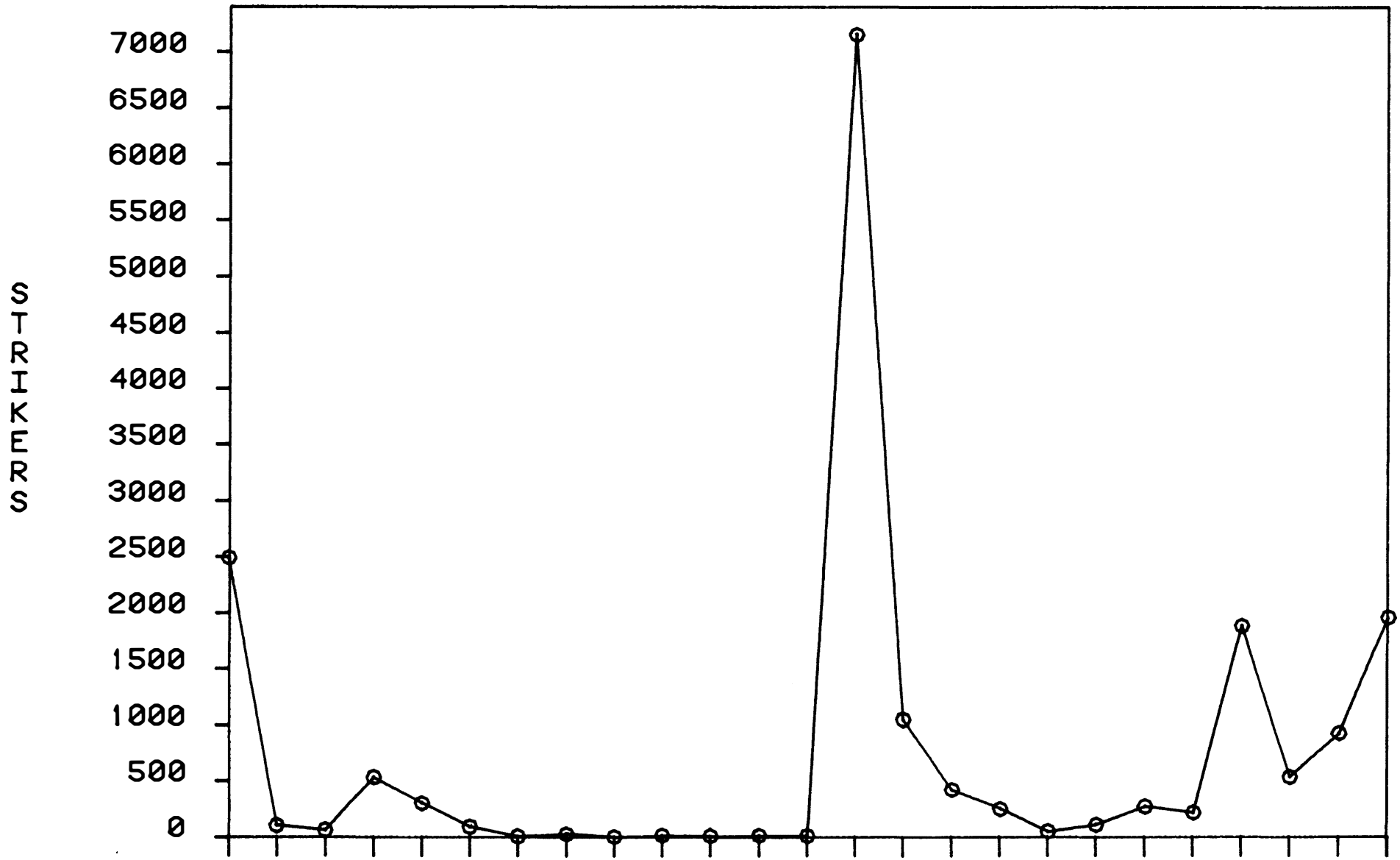

STRIKES IN RSA PER 100000
EMPLOYED
EAP
STRIKES PER 100000
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
YEAR

GRAPH 6

GRAPHS 7 - 14 : COMPARISON - STRIKERS PER POPULATION GROUP

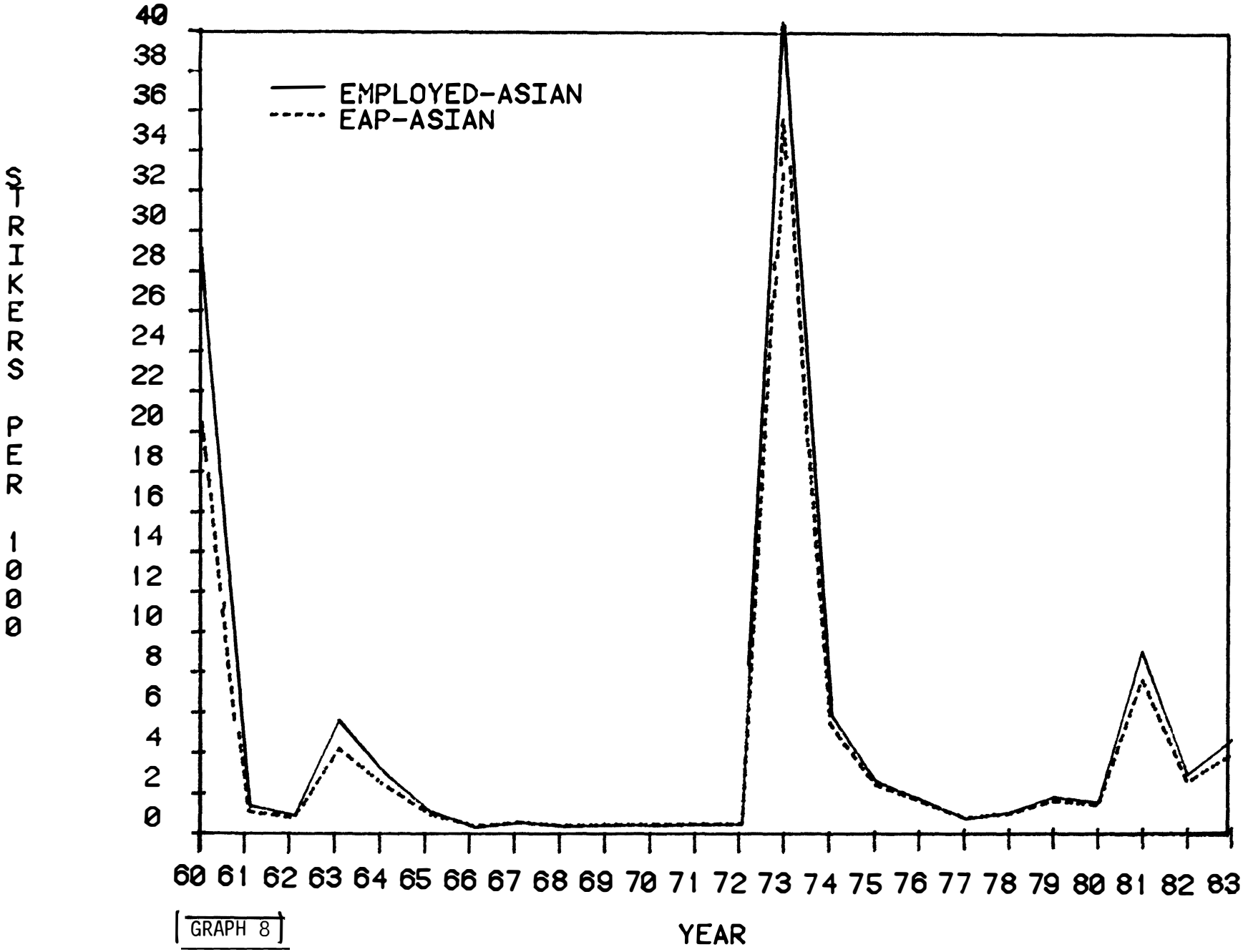
There are marked differences in strike behaviour between the four population groups over the period, reflecting the differential effects of industrial legislation and organisation. The involvement of Asian and Black workers in the 1973 strikes in Natal stands out clearly. The very great increase in the numbers of Blacks involved in strikes following the legislation changes since 1979 is also apparent. Though dropping considerably in 1983 Black strike activity was still higher than that in 1980. Strike data in 1973, 1974 and from 1979 onwards is dominated by strike behaviour of Black workers. Noteworthy also is the large increase in strikes among Coloured workers over the period 1979 - 1982, though dropping in 1983 to the very low levels of the years before 1979. Strike activity among Asians increased in both 1983 and 1984, when it was the highest since 1973. The presence of Whites in some strikes is an interesting development in 1983 and 1984 and should be considered separately from strikes in which only White workers take part.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ASIAN STRIKERS

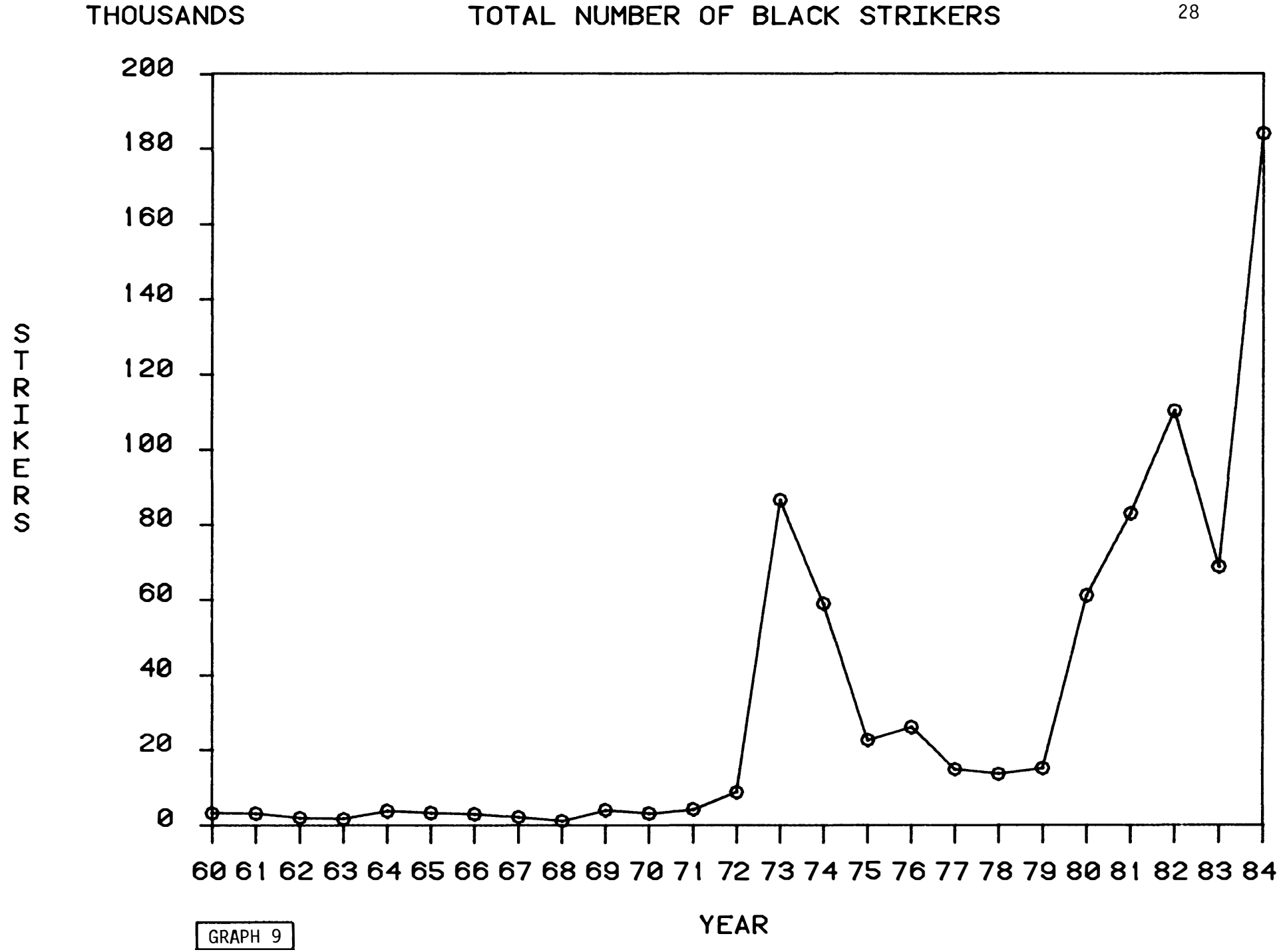


GRAPH 7

ASIAN STRIKERS PER 1000 ASIANS

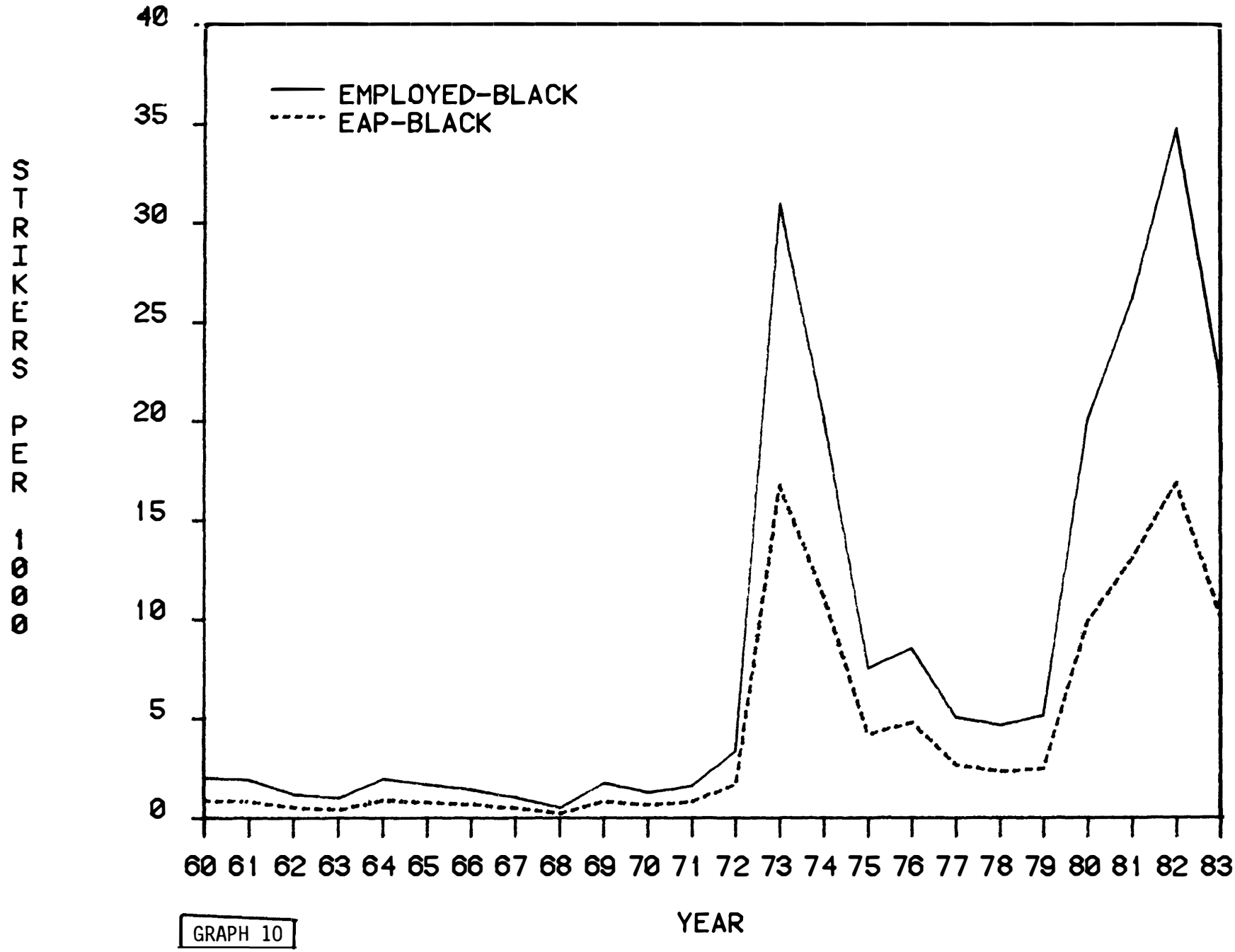


GRAPH 8

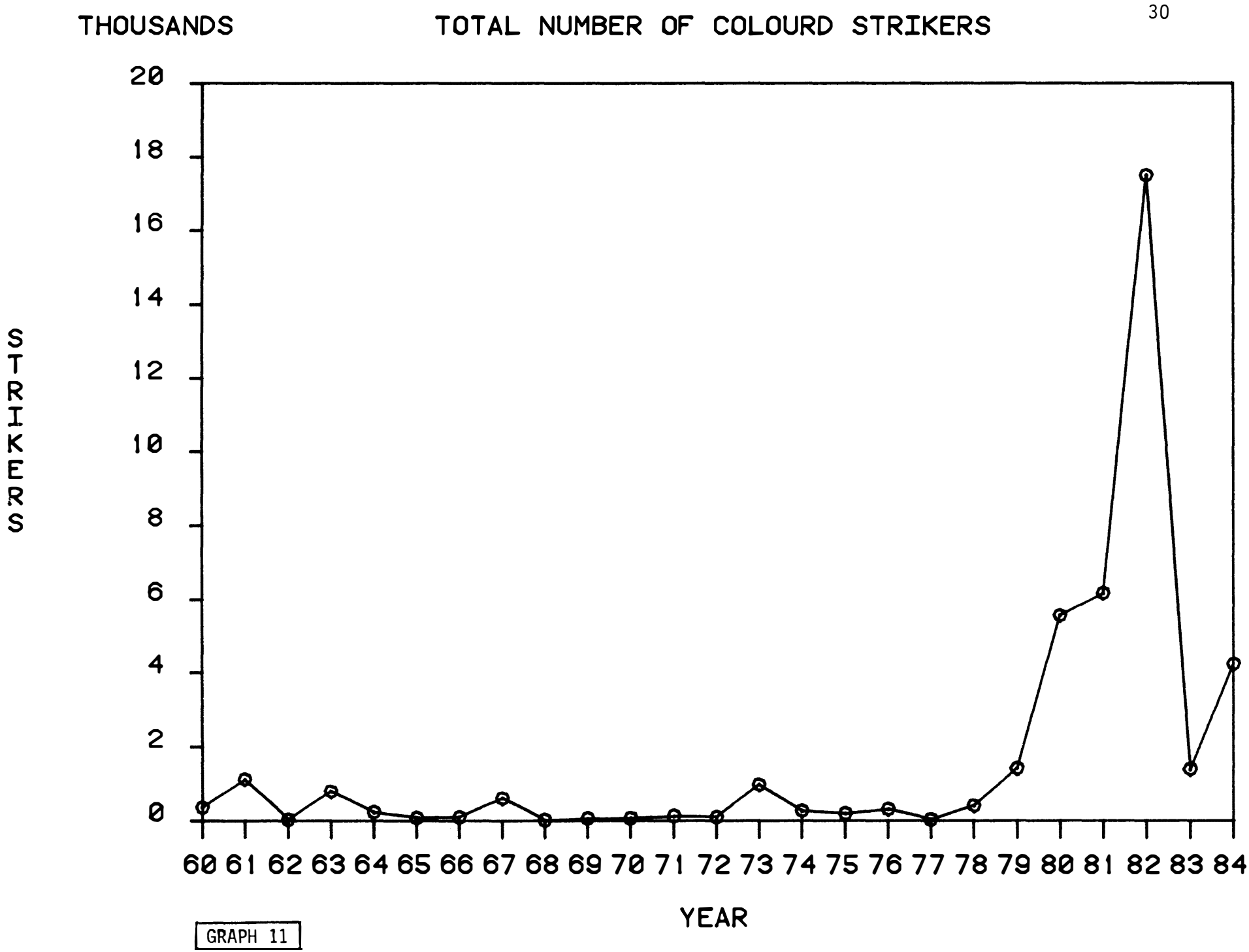

THOUSANDS
TOTAL NUMBER OF BLACK STRIKERS
STRIKERS
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 9

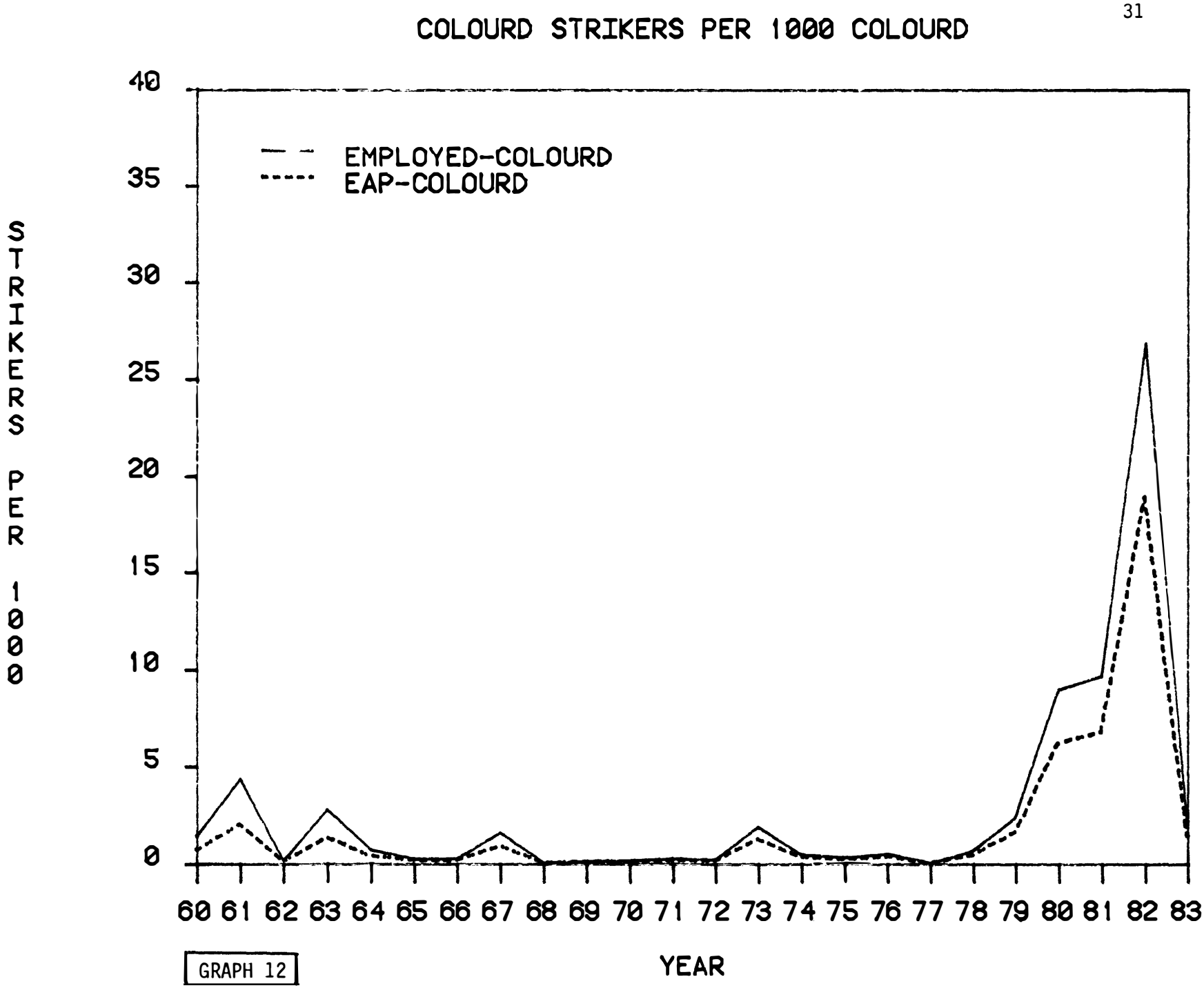
BLACK STRIKERS PER 1000 BLACKS



GRAPH 10

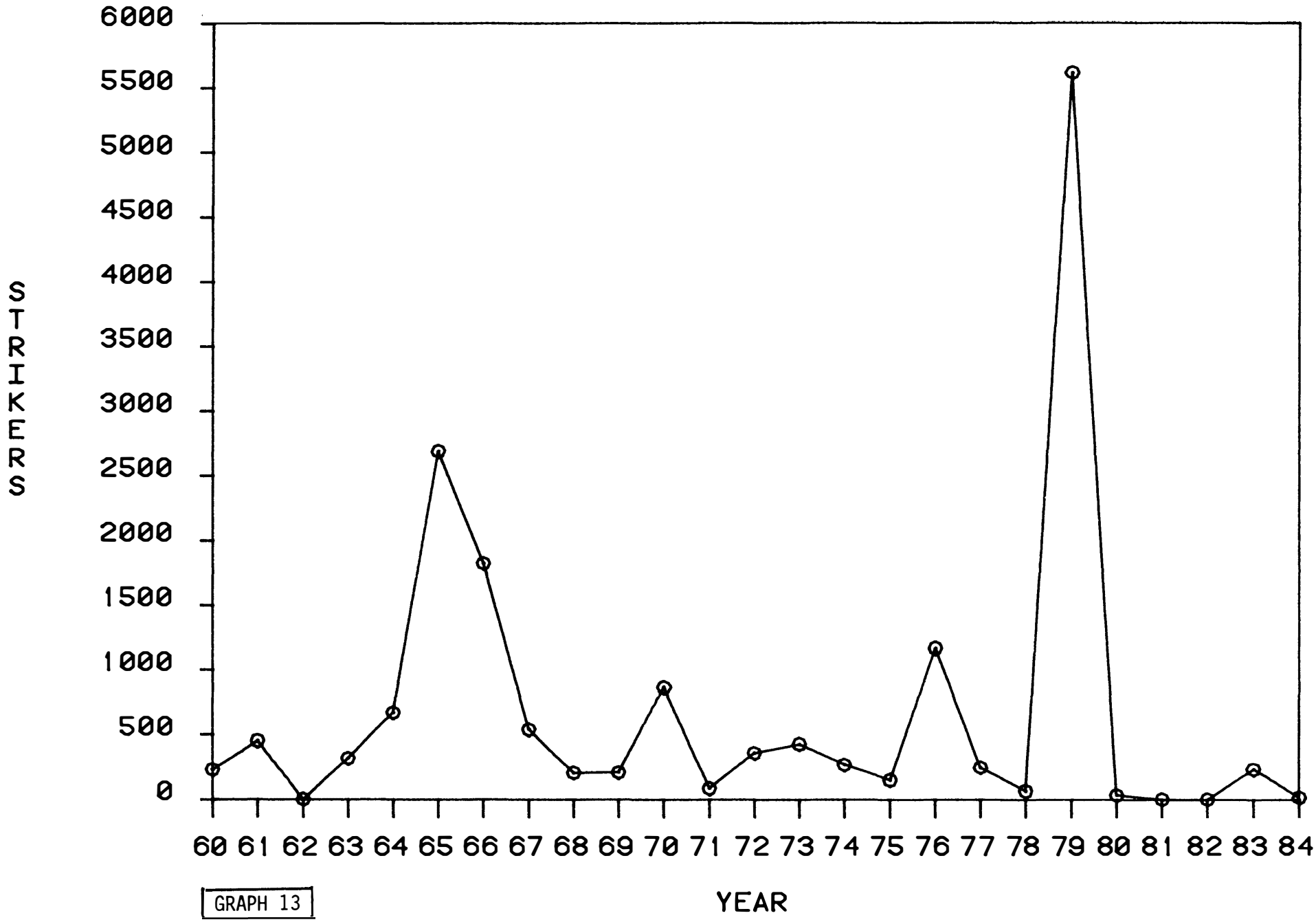

THOUSANDS
TOTAL NUMBER OF COLOURD STRIKERS
STRIKERS
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 11


COLOURD STRIKERS PER 1000 COLOURD
EMPLOYED-COLOURD
EAP-COLOURD
STRIKERS PER 1000
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
YEAR

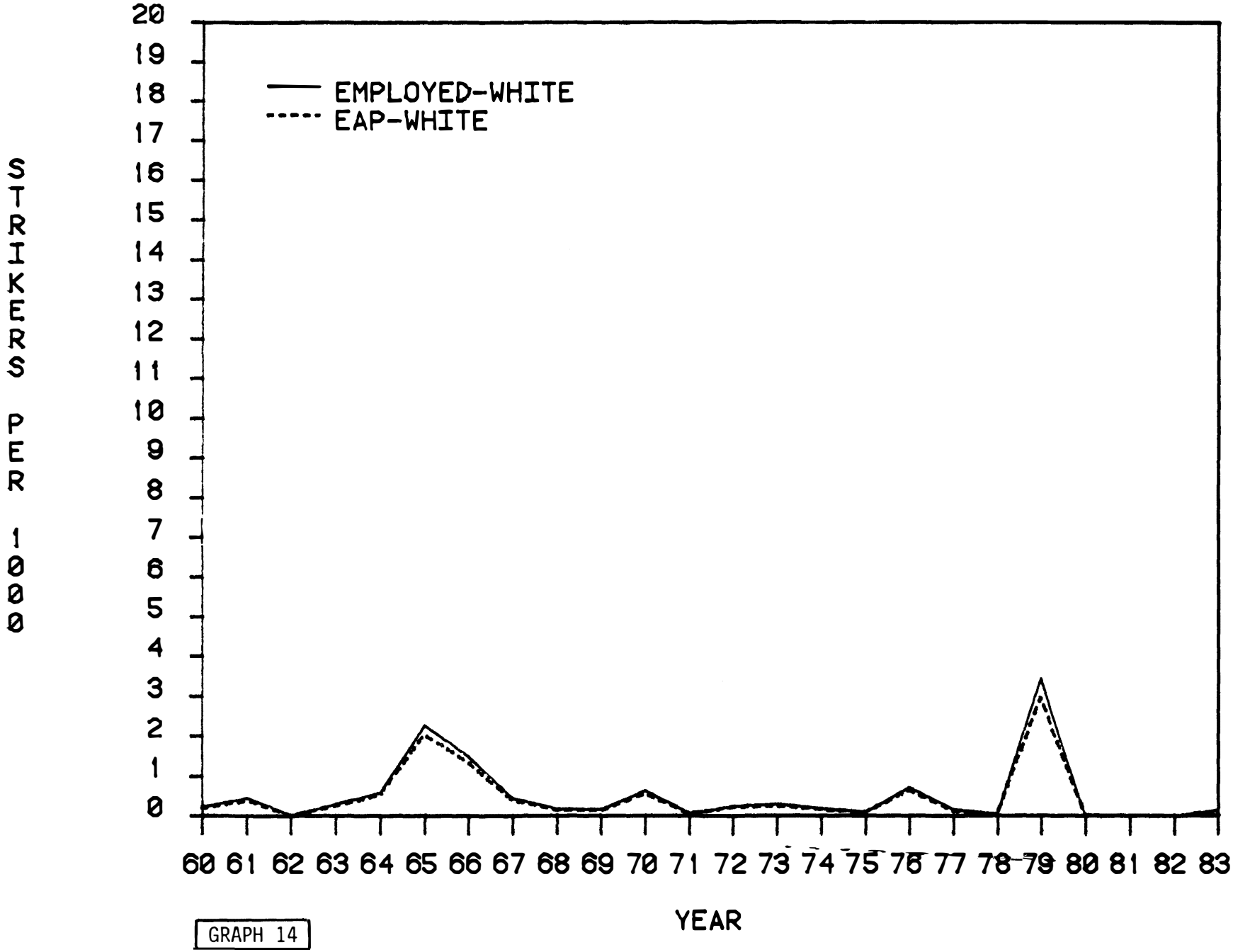
GRAPH 12

TOTAL NUMBER OF WHITE STRIKERS



GRAPH 13

WHITE STRIKERS PER 1000 WHITES



GRAPH 14

GRAPHS 15 and 16 : MALE/FEMALE STRIKERS

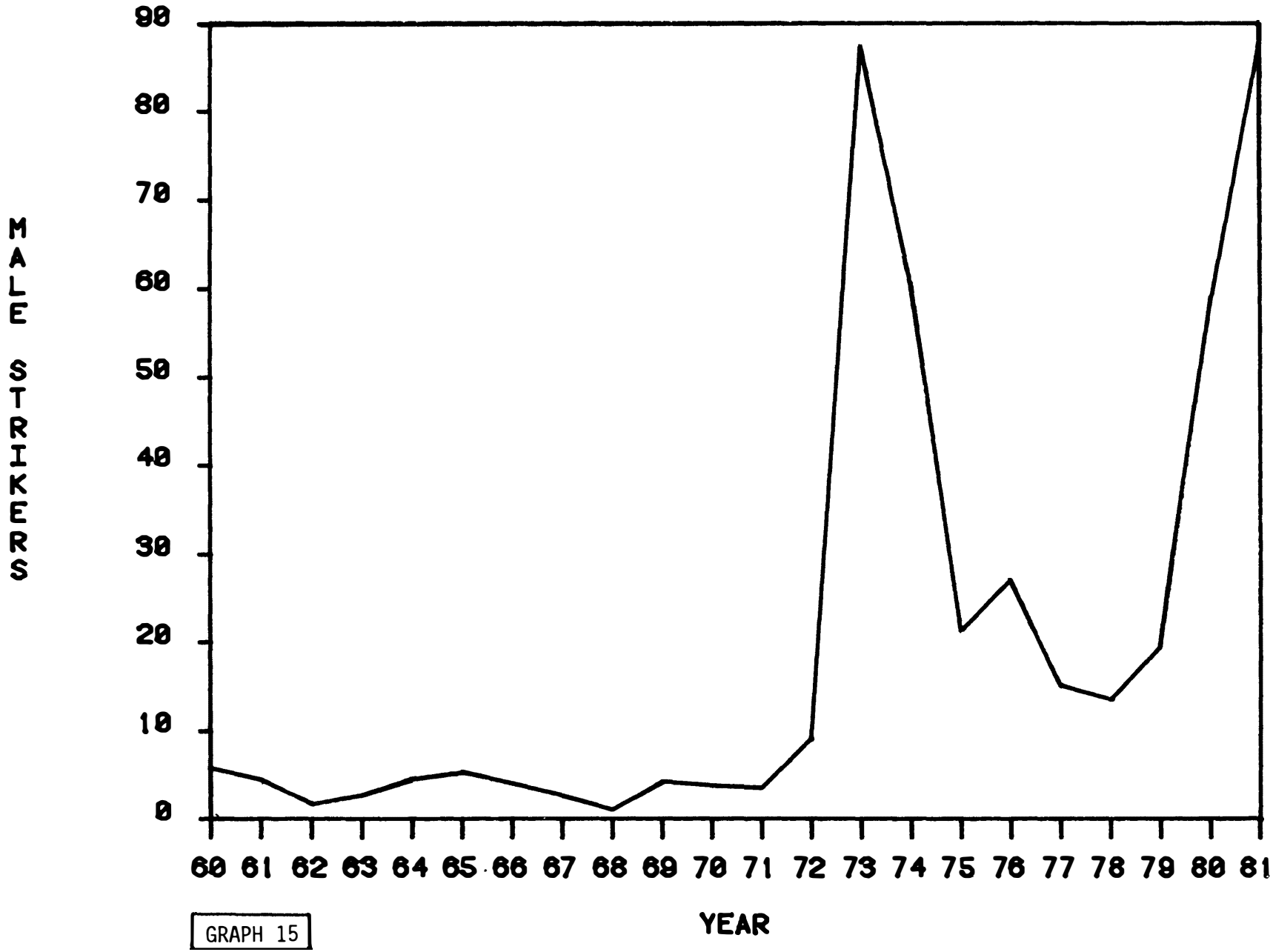
It must be noted that these graphs do not extend beyond 1981. The reason for this is that strike reports since then no longer differentiate between male and female strikers.

A point of interest relates to the peaks of female strike activity for 1971, 1975 and 1980 (Graph 9). It seems that these peaks consistently occur earlier than for male strikers (Graph 8).

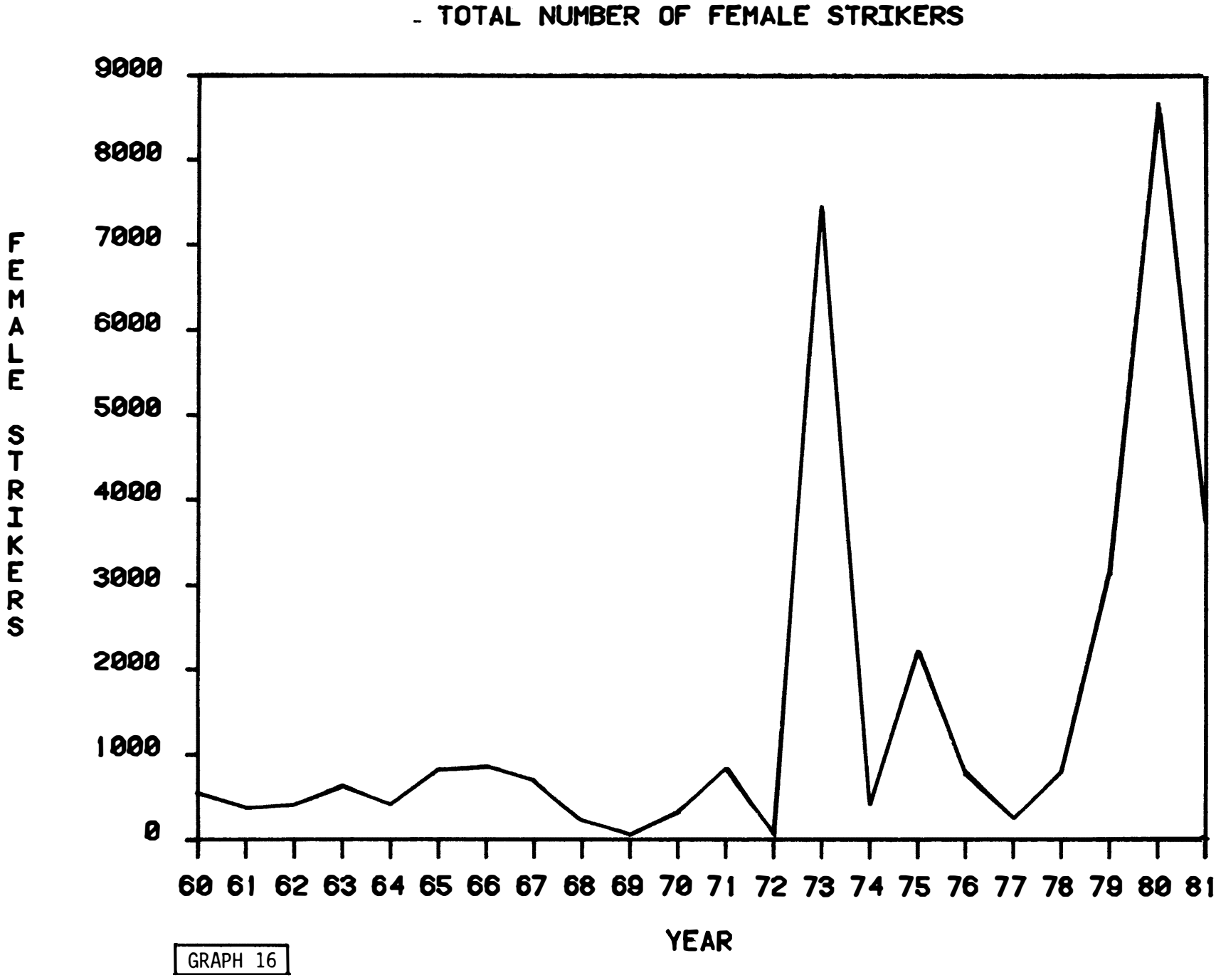
In general, male strikers outnumbered females by about 10:1.

THOUSANDS

TOTAL NUMBER OF MALE STRIKERS



GRAPH 15


- TOTAL NUMBER OF FEMALE STRIKERS
FEMALE STRIKERS
9000
8000
7000
6000
5000
4000
3000
2000
1000
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81
YEAR

GRAPH 16

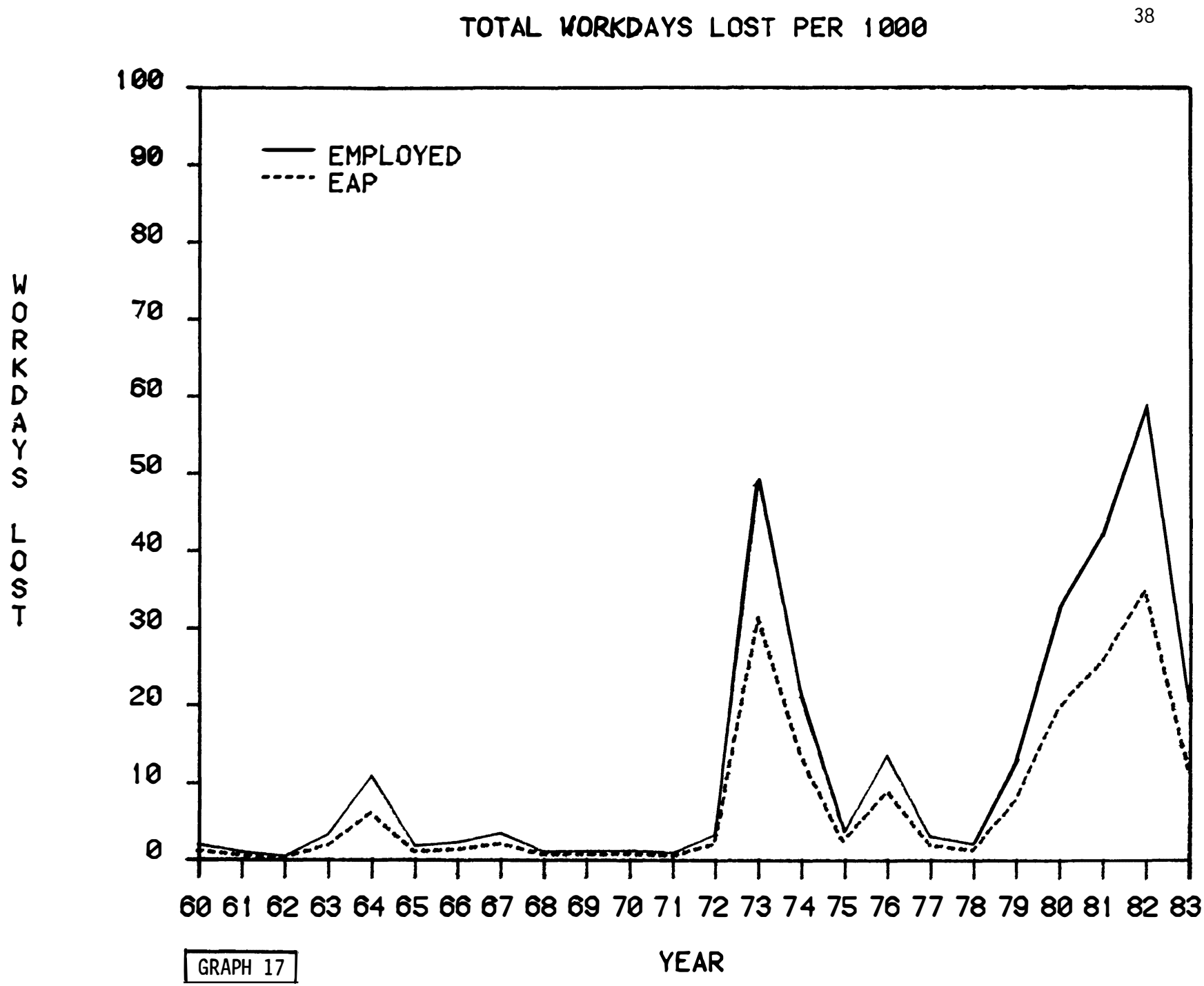
GRAPHS 17 - 25 : WORKDAYS LOST

In terms of productivity and describing strike activity, workdays lost as a consequence of strikes are of particular interest. The impact of the days lost in striking on the economy should also be considered in terms of employers' ability to accelerate production by means of overtime, and the fact that many strikes are of short duration and may result in minimal production loss.

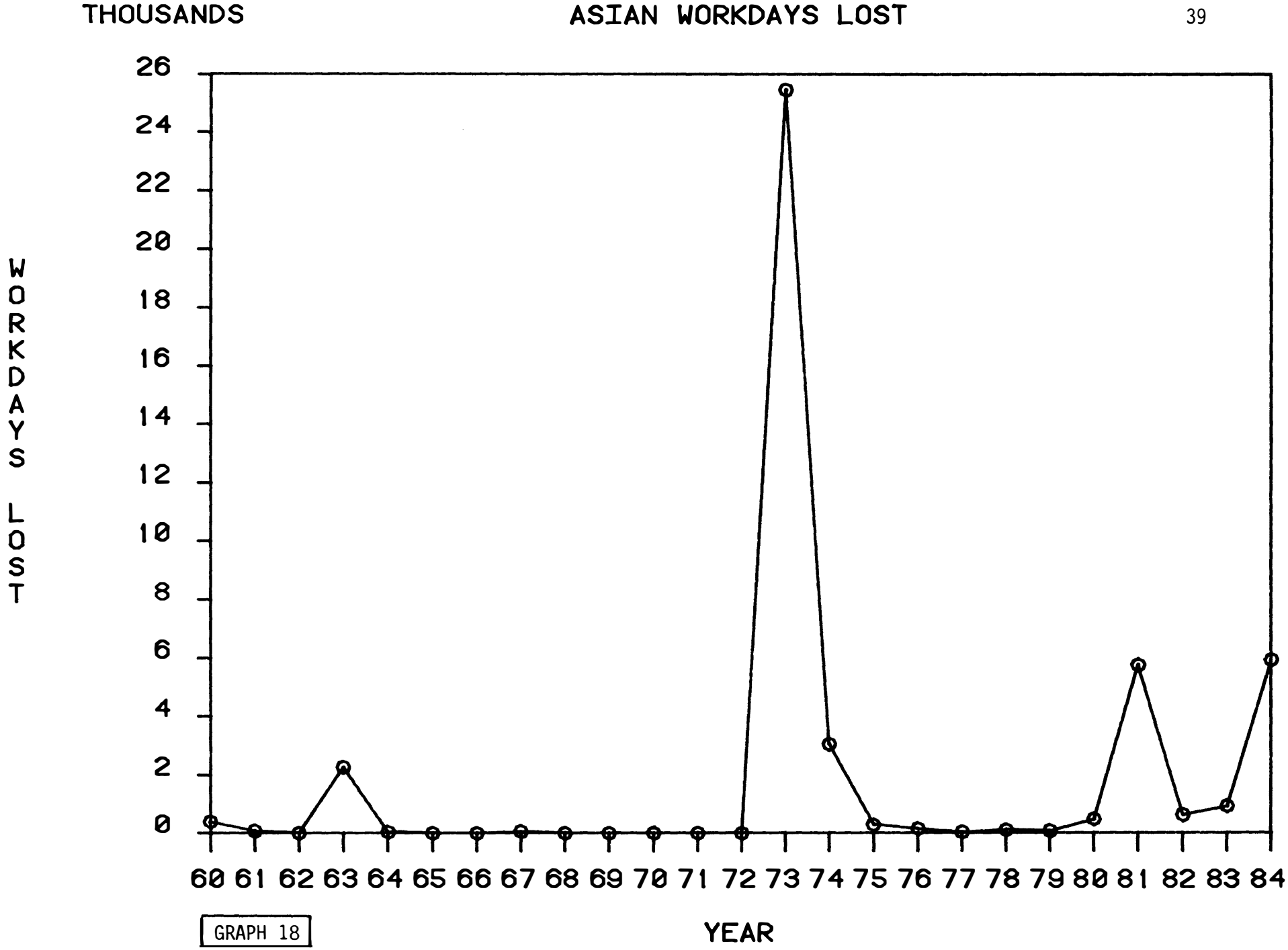
Graphs 12 to 16 show important differences between the different population groups in terms of workdays lost.

The number of workdays lost by Whites (Graph 16) is high in relation to the number of White strikers, indicating relatively longer strikes. Collective bargaining in which Whites are involved is usually centralised and institutionalised, thereby acting as a restraining influence on the propensity to strike. Strikes only occur after the means for resolving conflict have been used. White workers are also generally more committed to the system of statutory collective bargaining and usually take strike action only as a last resort and have greater resources for sustaining a prolonged strike. The limited White strike activity in 1982 and 1984 was more similar to present experience than the strikes of 1964, 1976 and 1979.

Strikes by Blacks tend to be of short duration (Graph 14). They usually occur before the means of resolving conflicts of interest have been exhausted. Blacks have smaller resources for maintaining a lengthy strike and also a greater risk of losing their jobs. Workdays lost by Asians in 1983 and 1984 increased. This resulted in there being more workdays lost by Asian than Coloured employees in both these years. Nonetheless 96% of the total workdays lost was due to strike activity by Black workers.

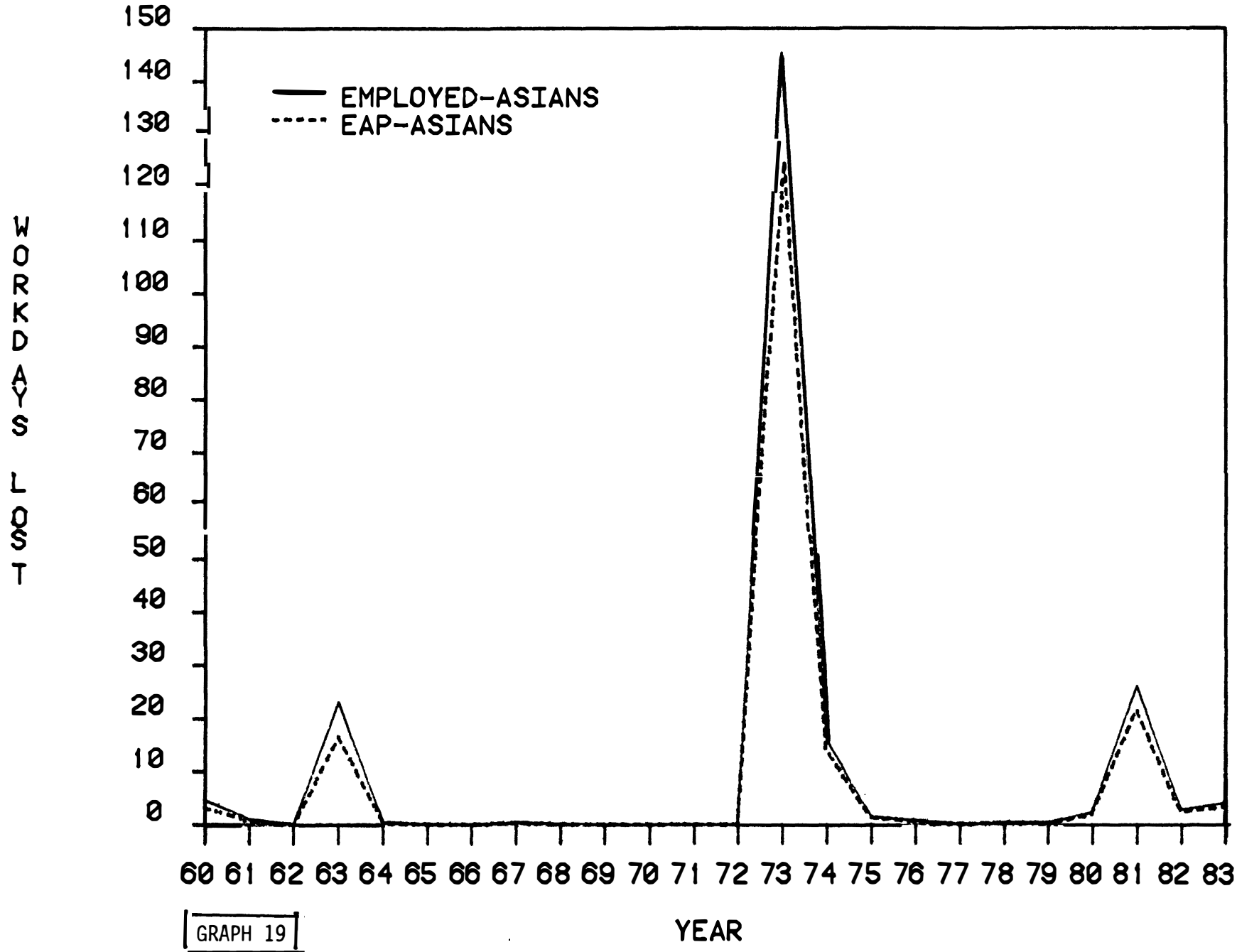

TOTAL WORKDAYS LOST PER 1000
EMPLOYED
EAP
WORKDAYS LOST
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83
YEAR

GRAPH 17

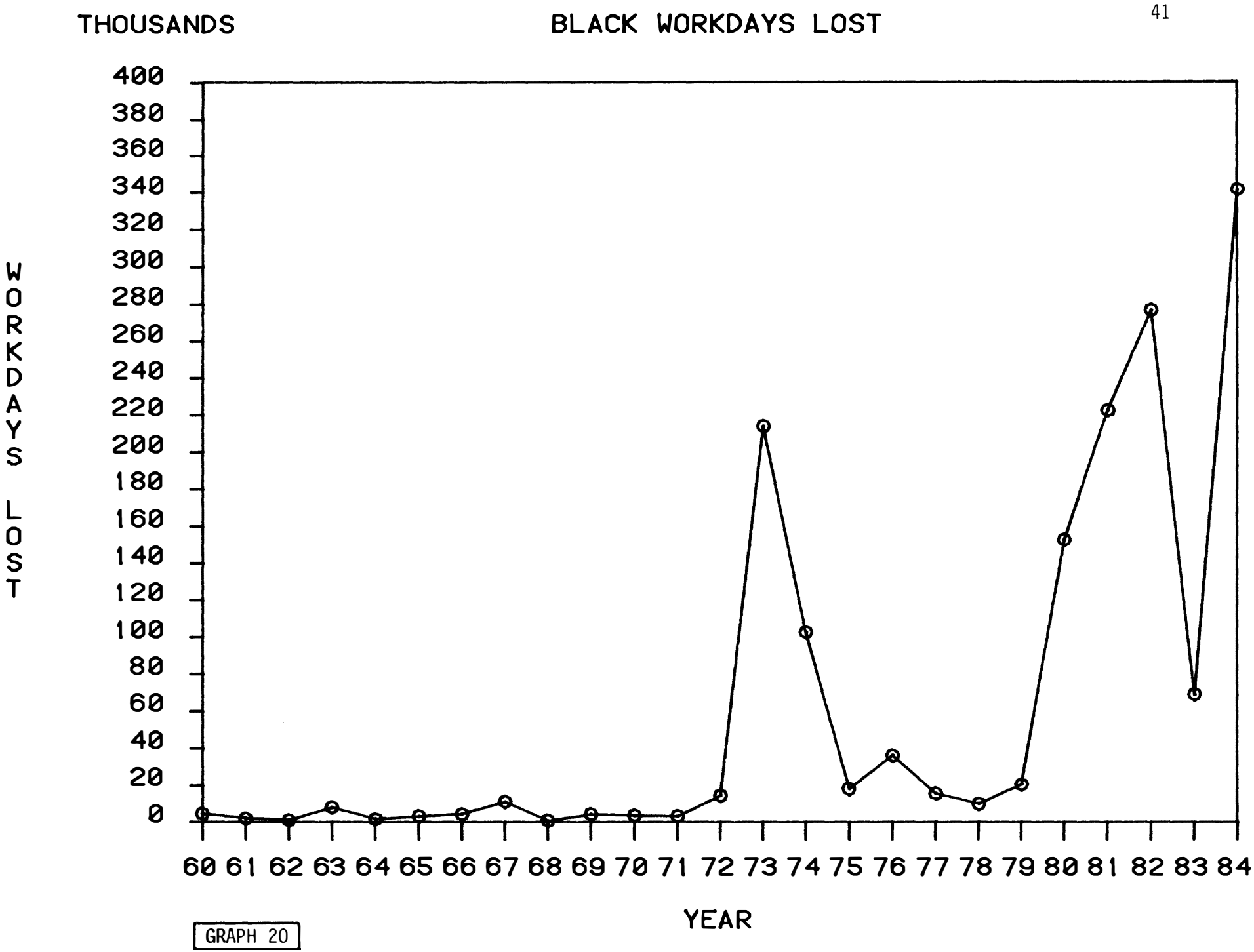

THOUSANDS
ASIAN WORKDAYS LOST
WORKDAYS LOST
26
24
22
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 18

ASIAN WORKDAYS LOST PER 1000 ASIANS

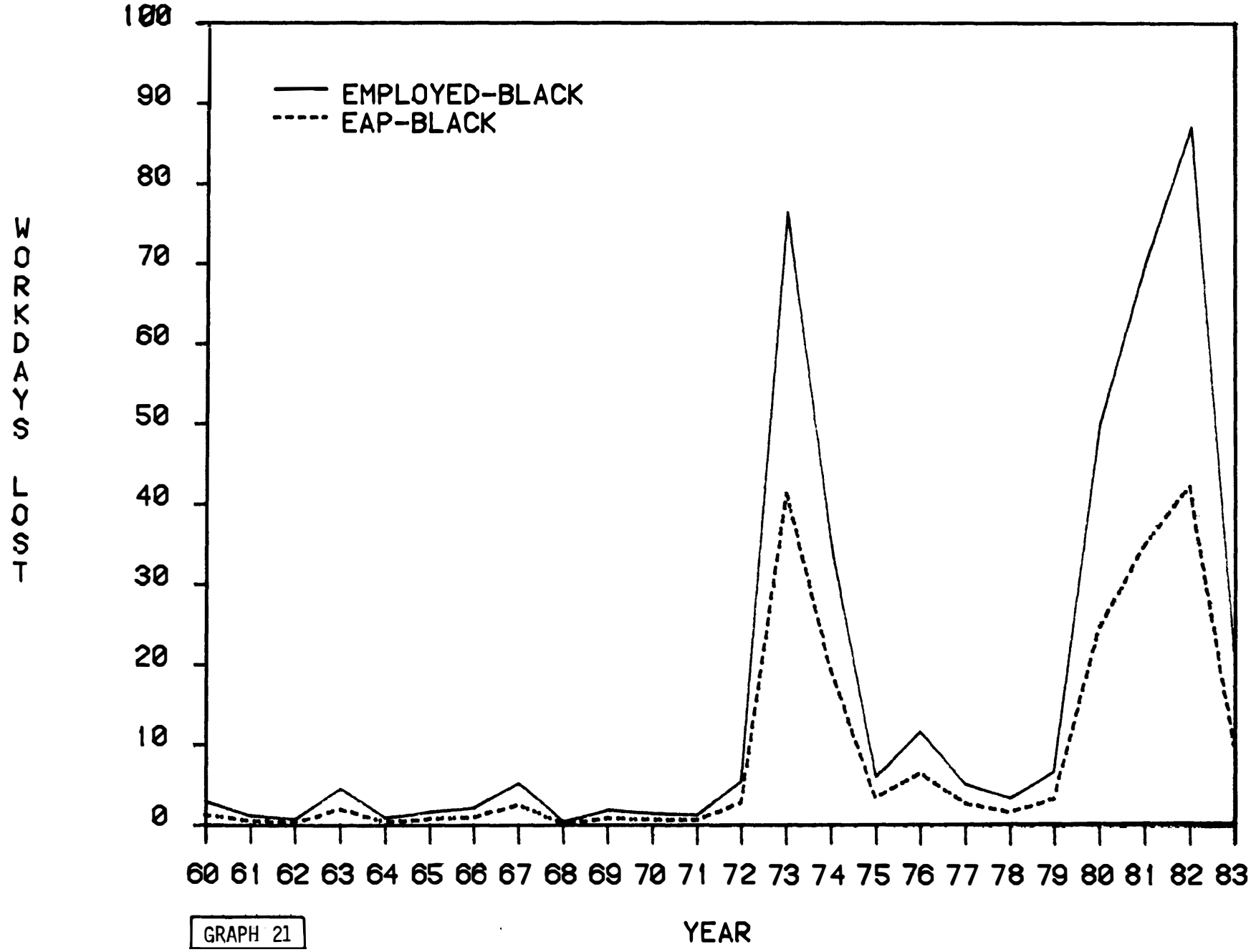


GRAPH 19


THOUSANDS
BLACK WORKDAYS LOST
WORKDAYS LOST
400
380
360
340
320
300
280
260
240
220
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 20

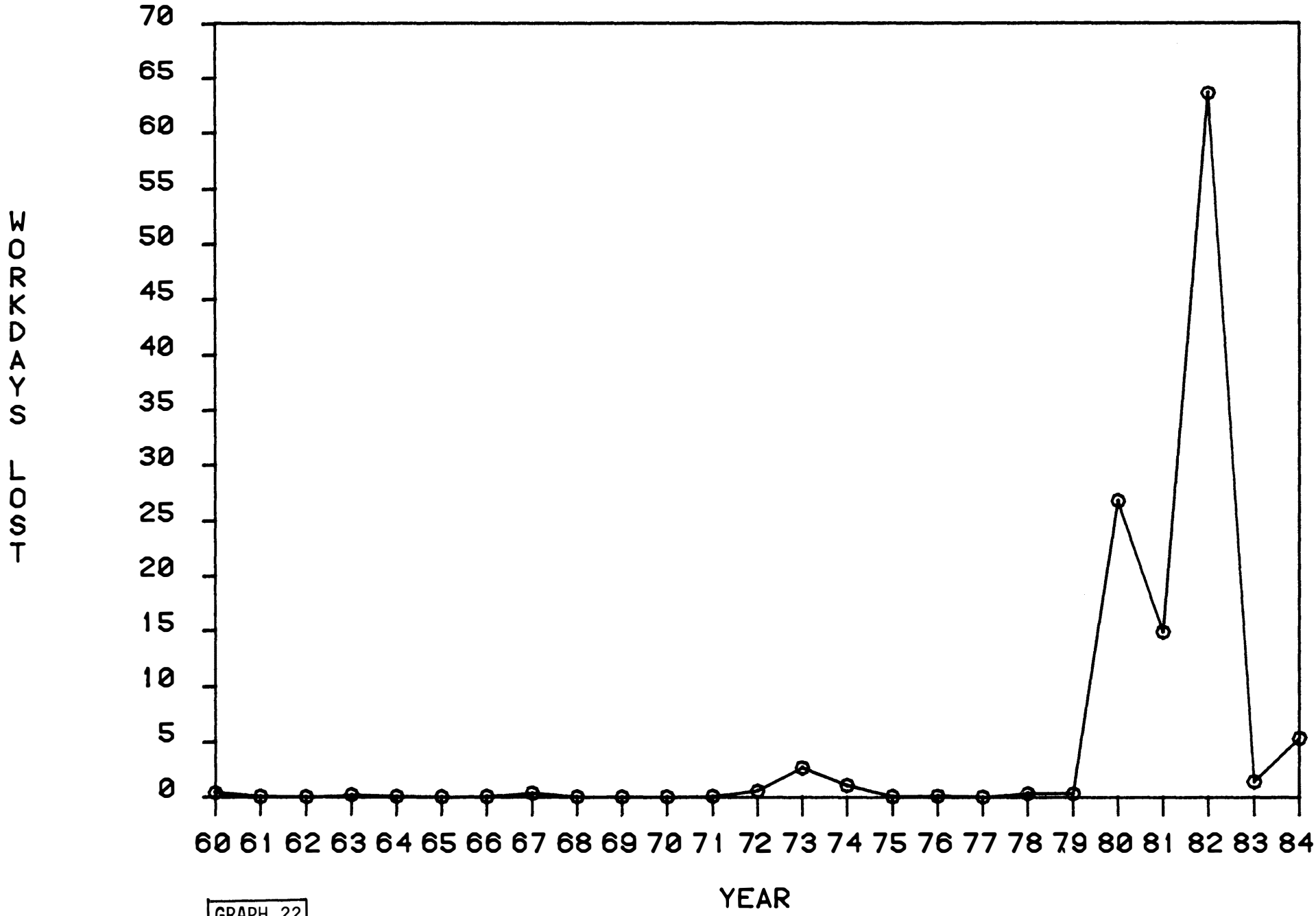
BLACK WORKDAYS LOST PER 1000 BLACKS



GRAPH 21

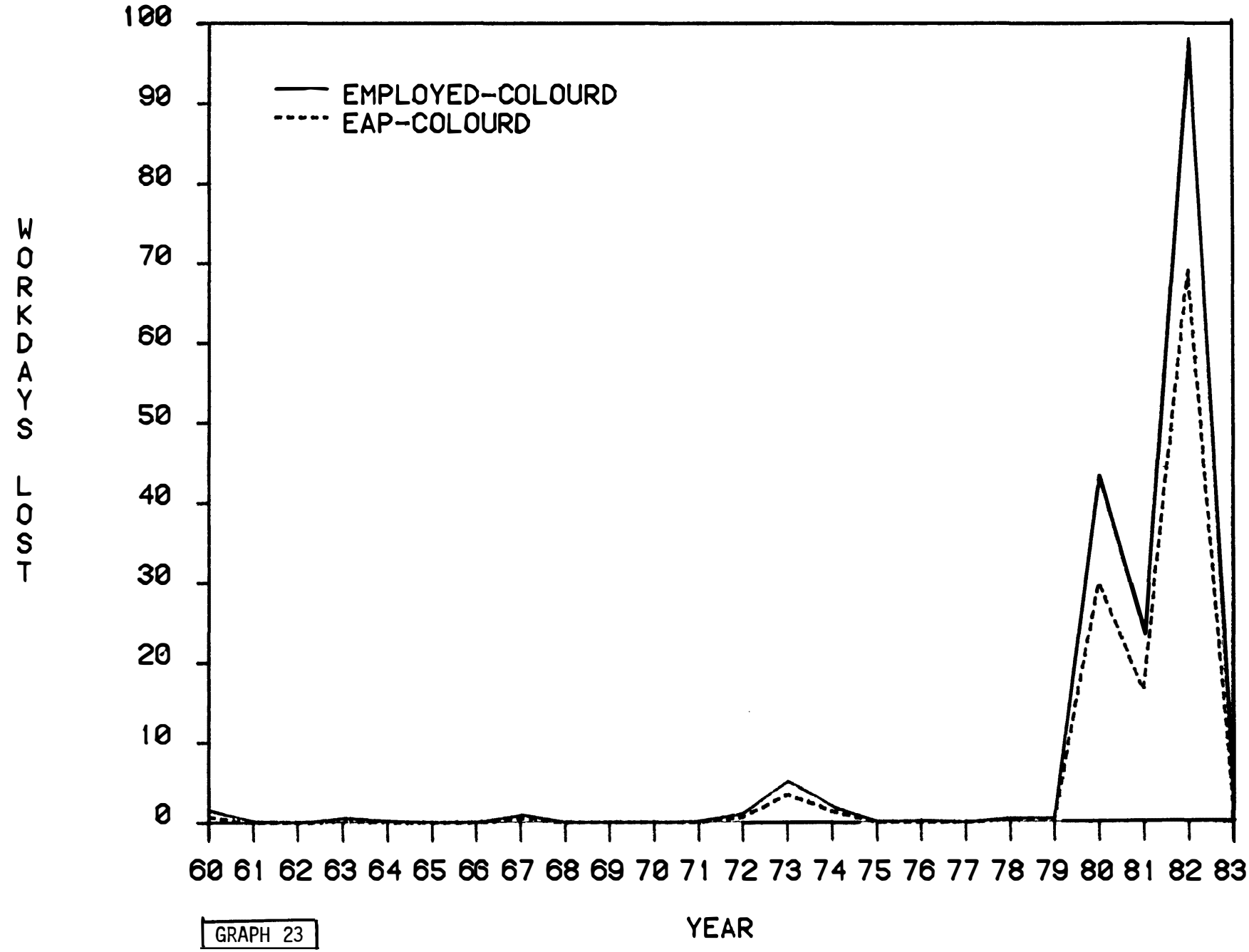
THOUSANDS

COLOURD WORKDAYS LOST

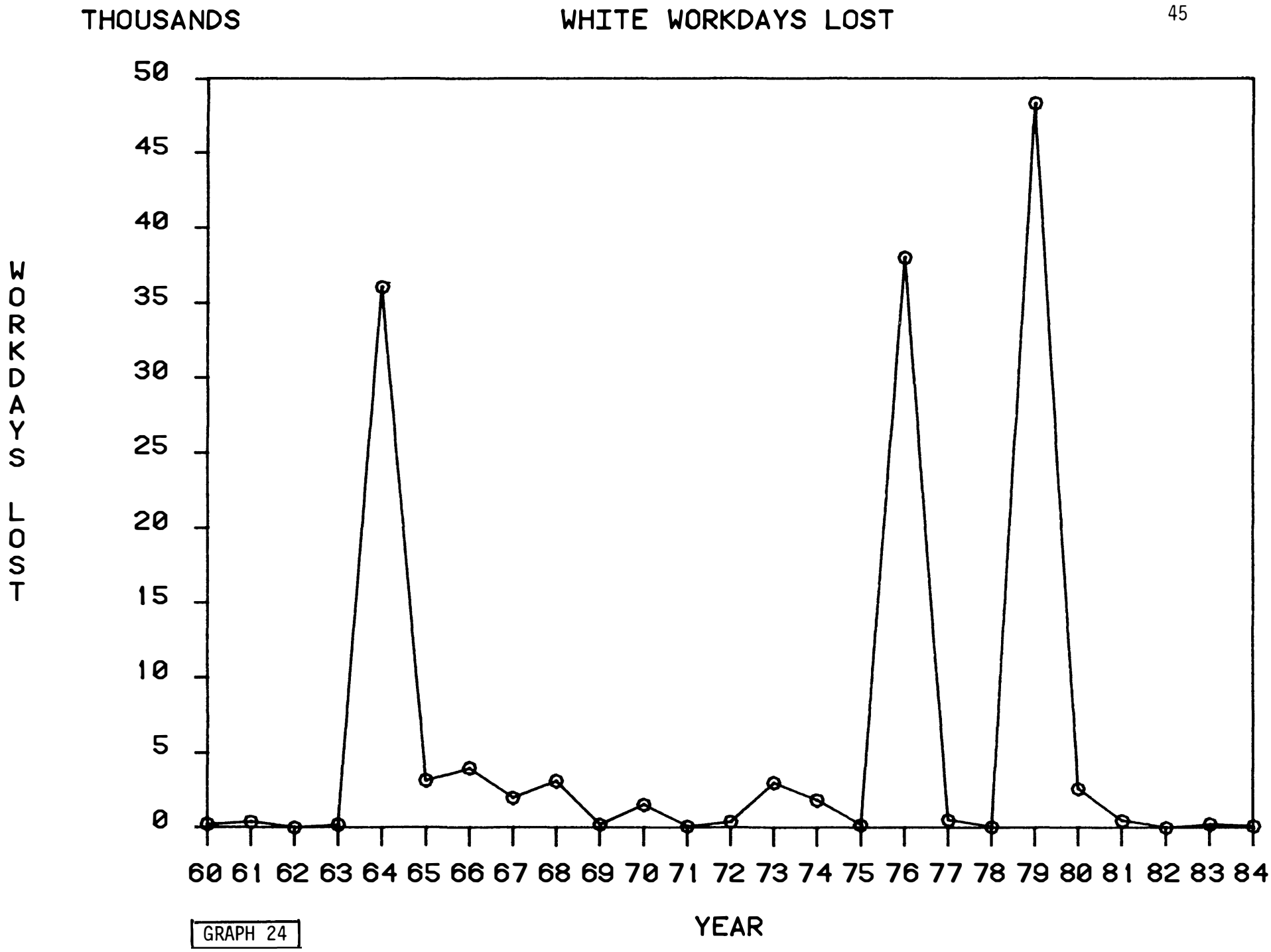


GRAPH 22

COLOURD WORKDAYS LOST PER 1000 COLOURDS

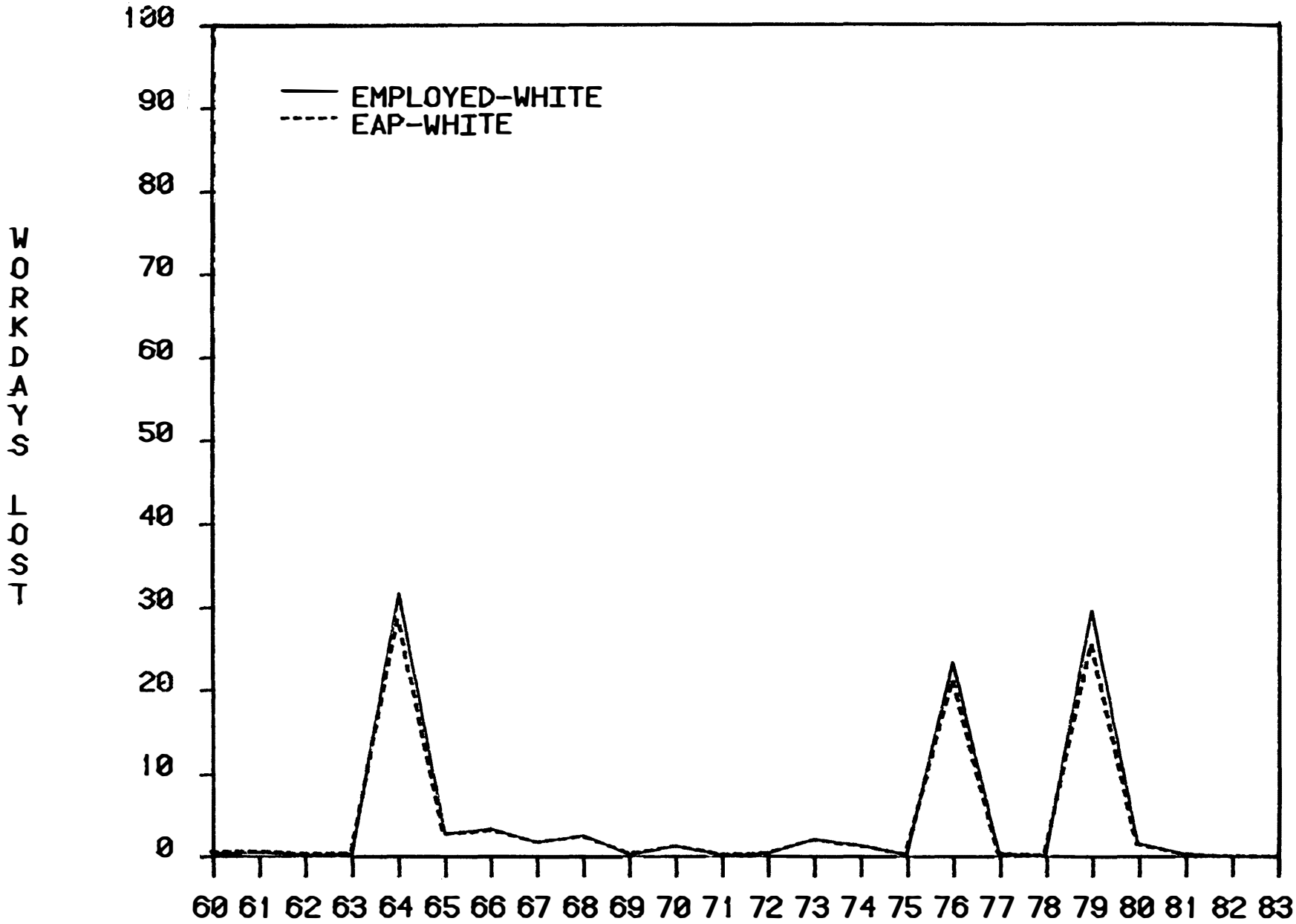


GRAPH 23


THOUSANDS
WHITE WORKDAYS LOST
WORKDAYS LOST
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 24

WHITE WORKDAYS LOST PER 1000 WHITES

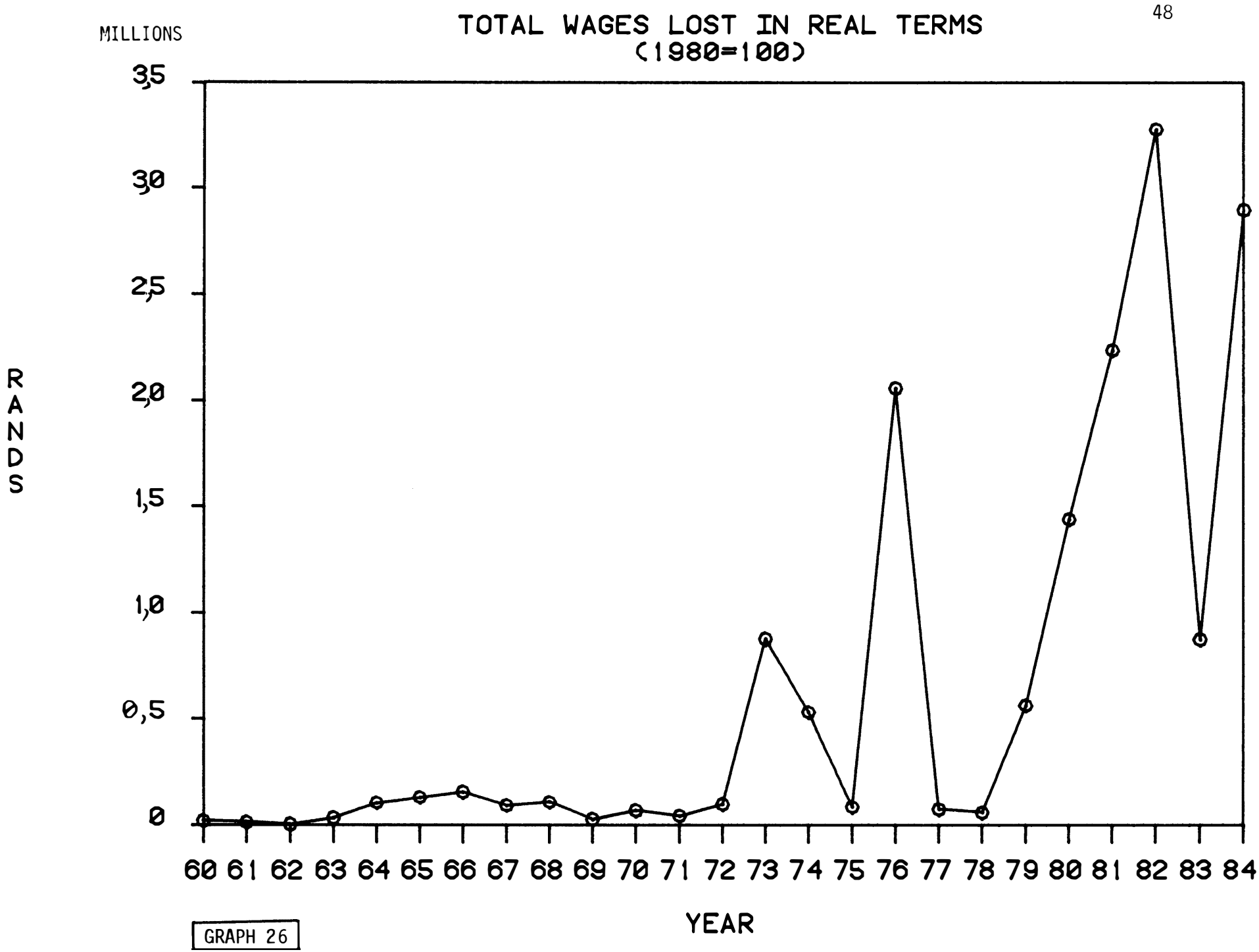


GRAPH 25

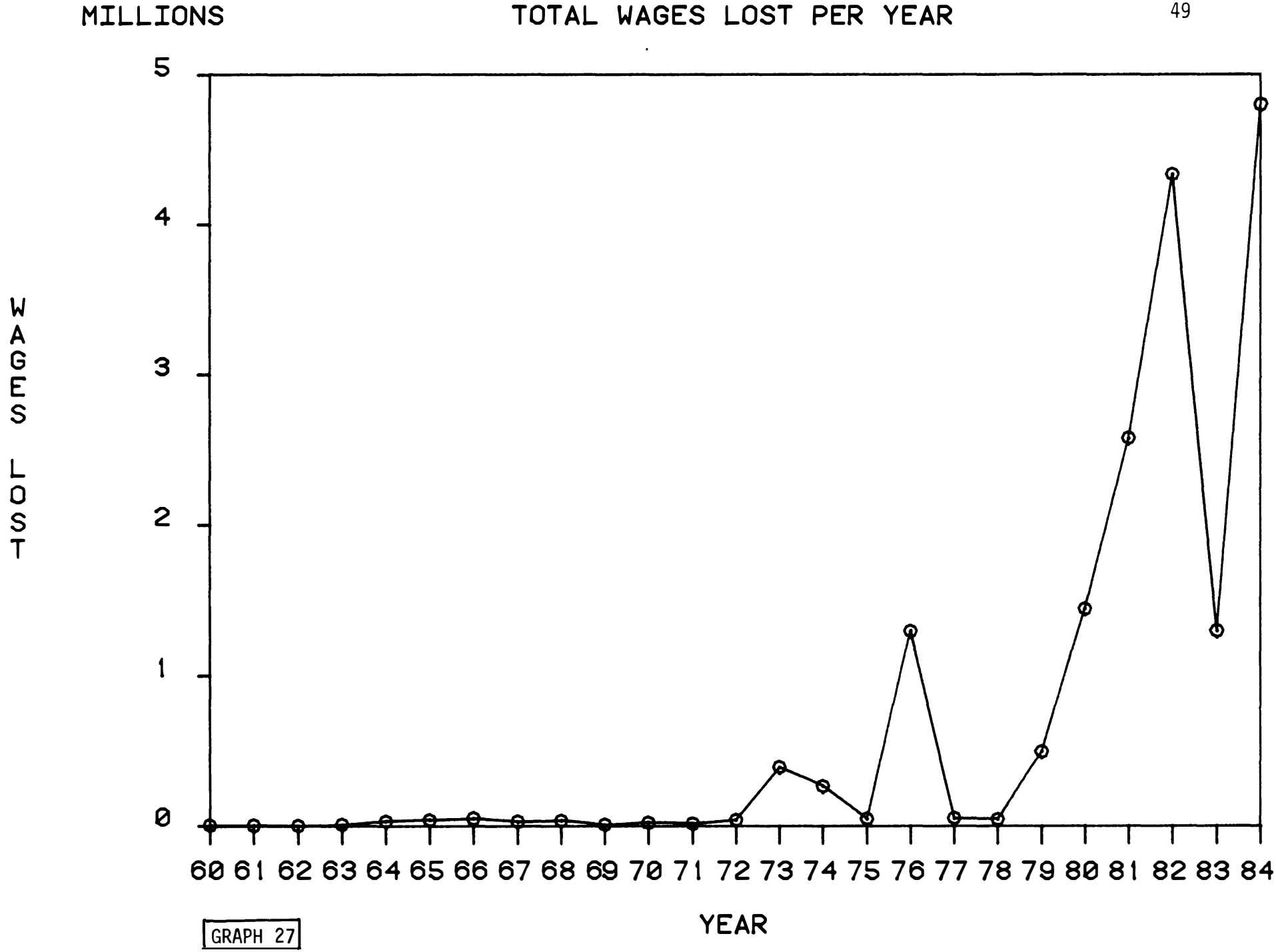
GRAPH 26 : TOTAL WAGES LOST IN REAL TERMS (1980 = 100)
GRAPH 27 : TOTAL WAGES LOST PER YEAR
GRAPH 28 : TOTAL WAGES LOST PER 1 000 IN RANDS (1982 = 100)

Analysis of the preceding graphs indicates an increasing contribution of Black, Coloured, and Asian groups to strike activity in the Republic of South Africa.

Prior to 1979, wages lost through strikes were closely related to the number of workdays lost by White workers (Graph 16). This is no longer the case, particularly as is reflected in the strike activity of Black and Coloured workers (Graphs 14, 15). The considerable drop in the rate at which wages were lost in 1983 is due to a number of factors. Some of these are: payment by employers for the time spent striking; shorter strikes; lower skilled, hence lower paid strikers.

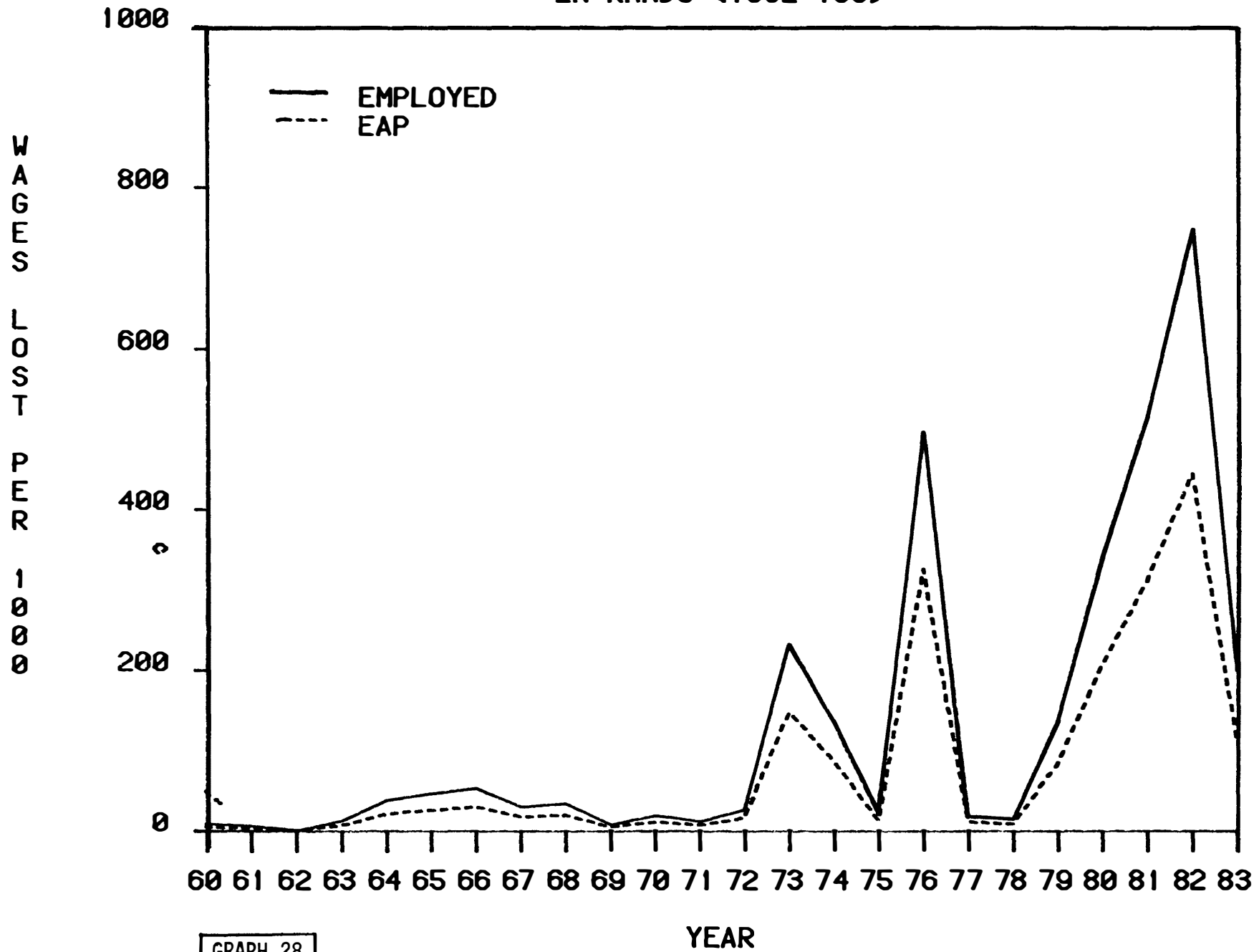

TOTAL WAGES LOST IN REAL TERMS
(1980=100)
MILLIONS
RANDS
3,5
3,0
2,5
2,0
1,5
1,0
0,5
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 26


MILLIONS
TOTAL WAGES LOST PER YEAR
WAGES LOST
5
4
3
2
1
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 27

TOTAL WAGES LOST PER 1000 IN RANDS (1982=100)



GRAPH 28

GRAPHS 29 - 32 : STRIKES AND WORKDAYS LOST RELATED TO CAUSE

Strike causation is a vexed issue. In terms of this report, where more than one cause was stated, the most important was selected and coded. This decision was reached on the basis of all the information contained on the form. Where no other information was available the first stated reason was coded. There are strikes in which an incident provokes a strike because of other underlying causes; it may be that managers are unaware of these causes even after a strike has been settled. Data in this report are based on Form L.R.33, that is essentially management perceptions. Detailed study of the reports in one year (1983) has shown that the reports provide diverse and useful information. This validity is further emphasized when the three major causes of strikes in 1984 are considered.

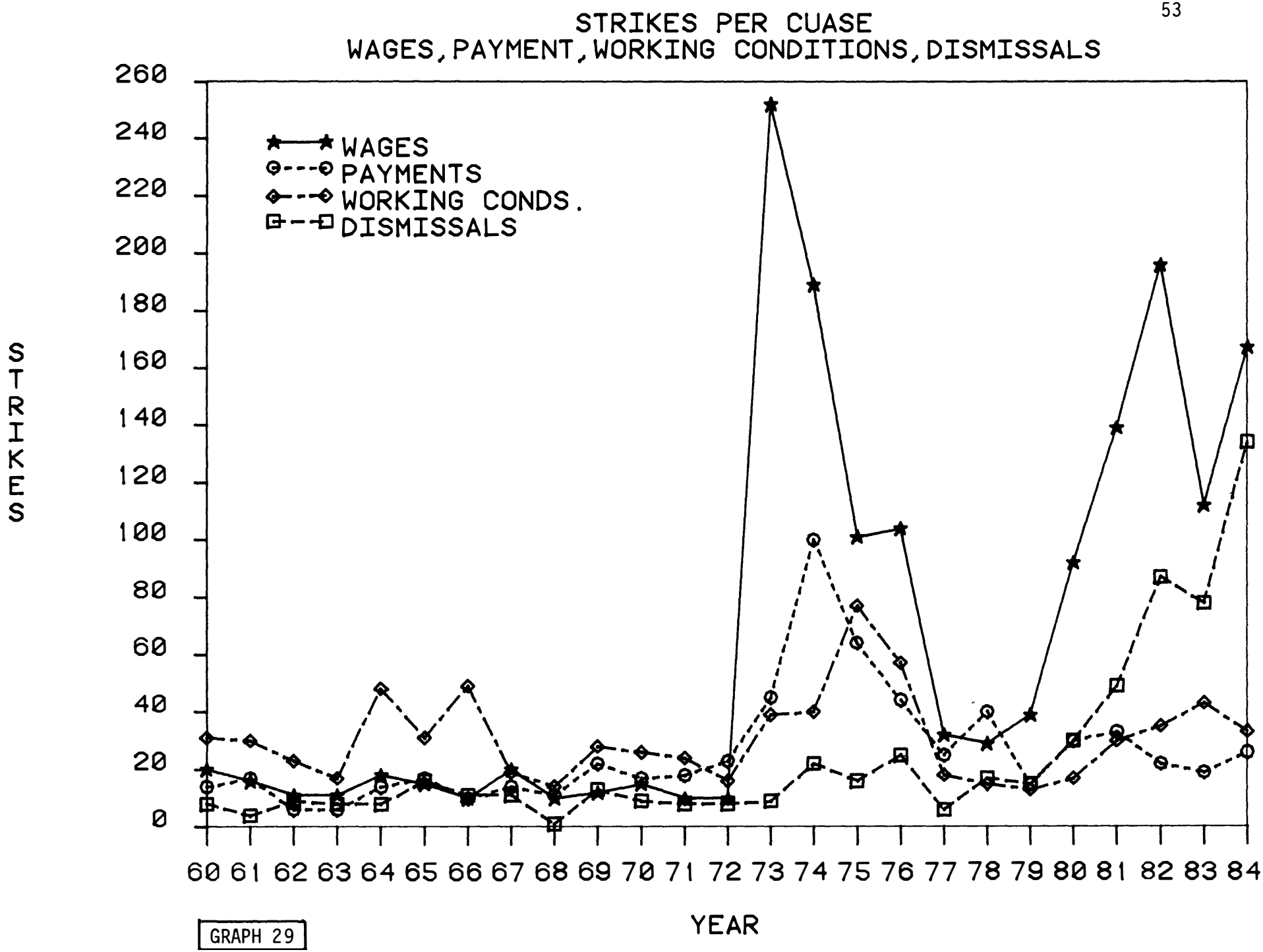
	% Strikes	% Strikers	Strikers per strike	% Workdays lost
Wages	36	46	533	51
Dismissals	29	24	335	16
Recognition	8	17	887	23

TABLE 1: 1984 Strike activity associated with three major causes

Recognition by management is fundamental to the functioning of the trade union, and this is brought out in the above table, in which 8% of strikes resulted in nearly a quarter of all days lost due to striking. This is contrasted with the reverse relationship where employees took strike action as a result of dismissal of colleagues.

In 1973 and after 1979 the strike behaviour of Black workers dominates the strike data. The recession in 1982 gave rise to an increasing number of strikes over dismissals. Other issues which have been prominent were trade union 'recognition', 'retention of pensions' and 'sympathy'. In periods of high strike activity it is apparent that 'wages' as a cause of strikes predominates and in reports where more than one cause for the strike was stated, 'wages' was usually included. 'Dismissals', including retrenchment, was the second major cause of strikes since 1982.

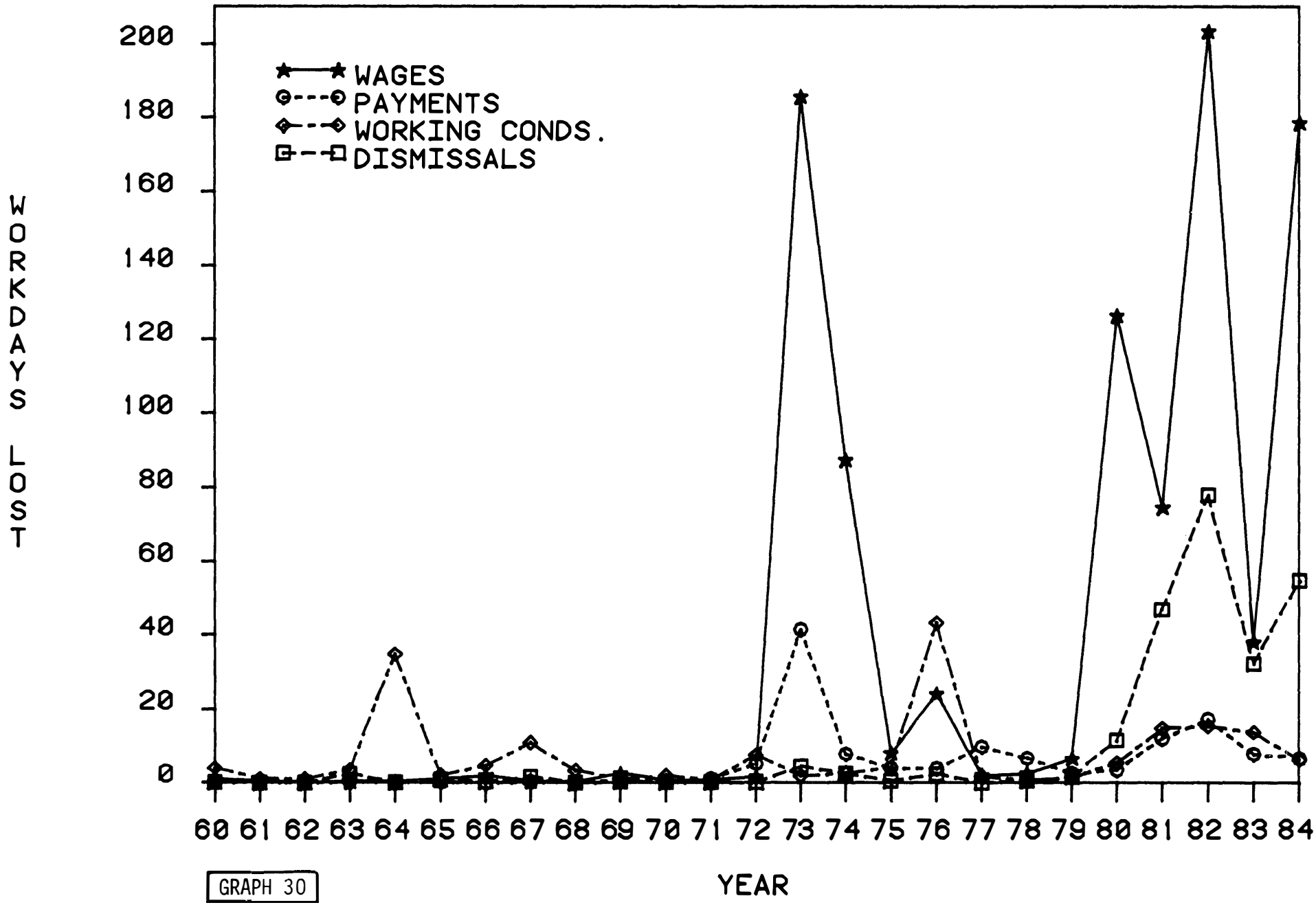
The number of workdays lost (Graphs 30, 32) was computed by dividing by 8 the number of man-hours lost. Whilst 'wages' was by far the most frequent cause of workdays lost since 1973 (Graph 30), it has comprised a relatively greater proportion of the total in years of high strike activity.


STRIKES PER CUASE
WAGES, PAYMENT, WORKING CONDITIONS, DISMISSALS
WAGES
PAYMENTS
WORKING CONDS.
DISMISSALS
STRIKES
260
240
220
200
180
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 29

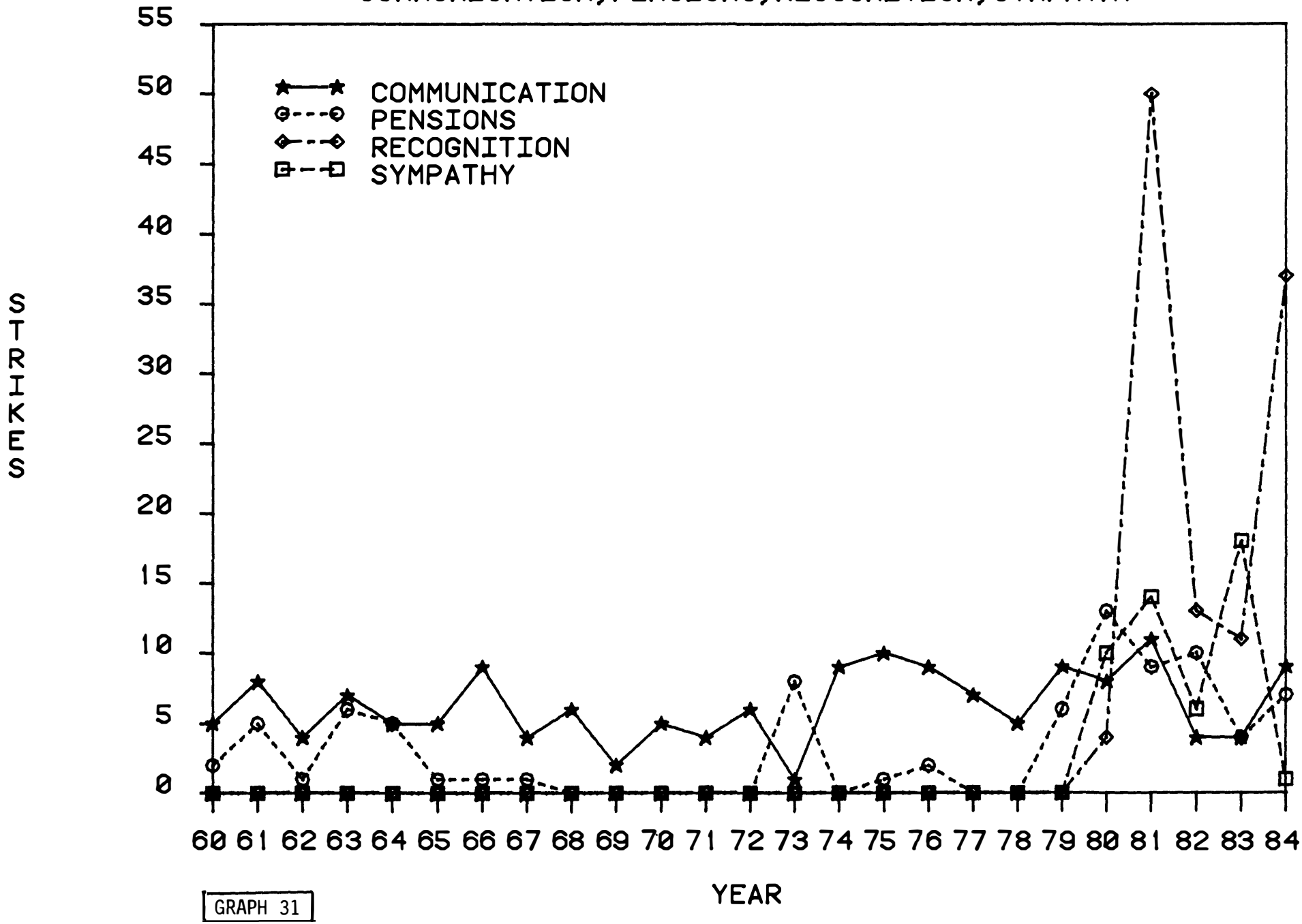
THOUSANDS

WORKDAYS LOST PER CAUSE
WAGES, PAYMENTS, WORKING CONDITIONS, DISMISSALS



GRAPH 30

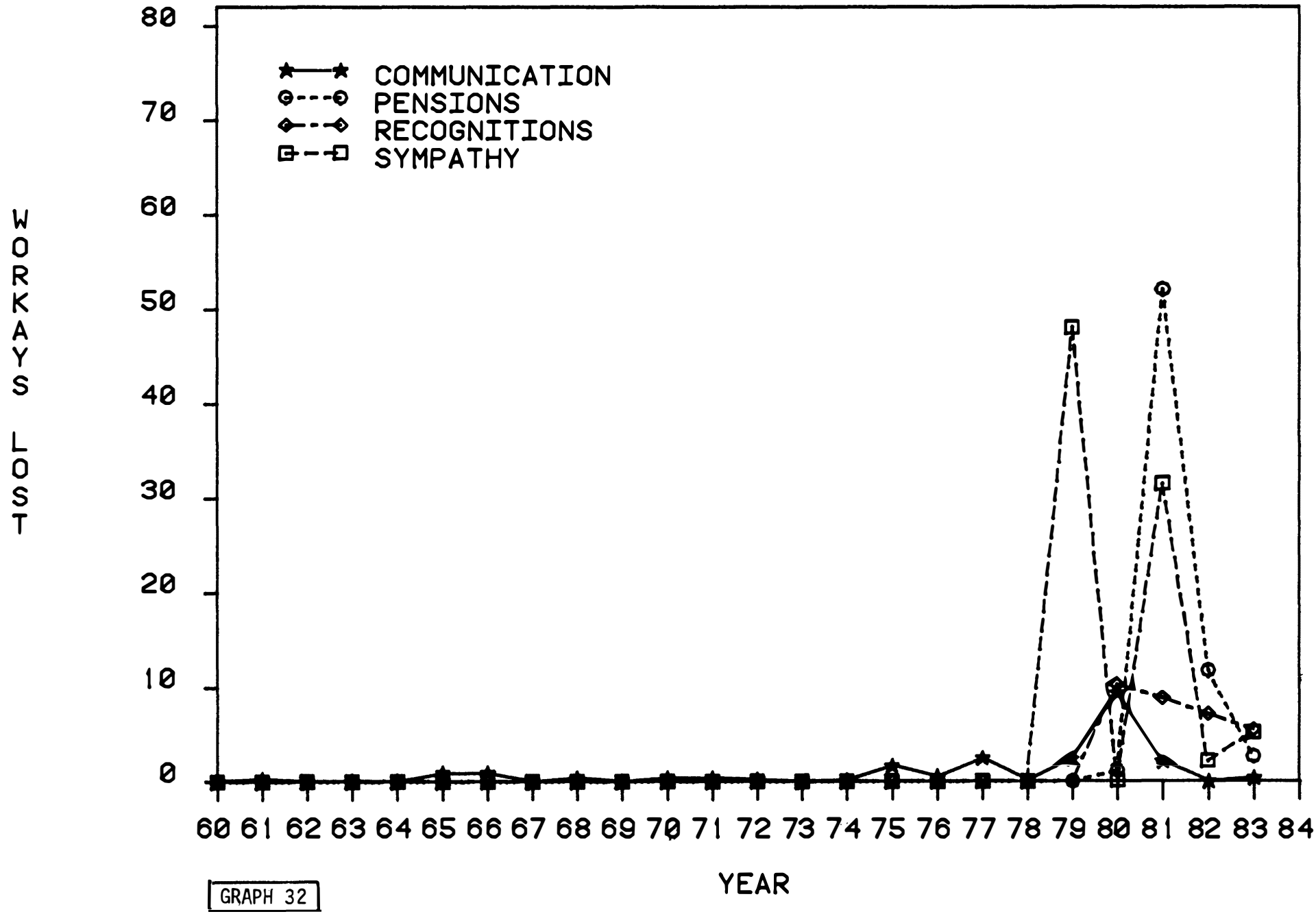
STRIKES PER CAUSE
COMMUNICATION, PENSIONS, RECOGNITION, SYMPATHY



GRAPH 31

THOUSANDS

WORKDAYS LOST PER CAUSE
COMMUNICATION, PENSIONS, RECOGNITION, SYMPATHY



GRAPH 32

GRAPHS 33 - 36 : STRIKE ACTIVITY PER AREA

Graph 33 - Strikes in four areas: N.Transvaal, S.Transvaal, Natal, N. & E.Cape
Graph 34 - Strikes in four areas: Kimberley, Bloemfontein, East London, Cape Town
Graph 35 - Strikes in three areas: PWV, Durban/Pinetown, Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage
Graph 36 - Strikers per area: PWV, Durban/Pinetown, Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage

Strike activity within different industrial areas is presented in Graphs 33 - 36.

Graph 33 Until 1984 there had been relatively few strikes in these four largely rural areas. The largest number occurred in Natal. Both Natal and Southern Transvaal experienced considerable increases in the number of strikes in both 1983 and 1984, whilst the increase during 1984 in the other two areas is largely the result of developments in the mining industry. The peaks in strike activity in the Northern Transvaal area do not usually coincide with those in PWV area (Graph 26). This difference between the two Transvaal areas is probably a reflection of the differing nature of economic activity in the Transvaal outside the PWV area.

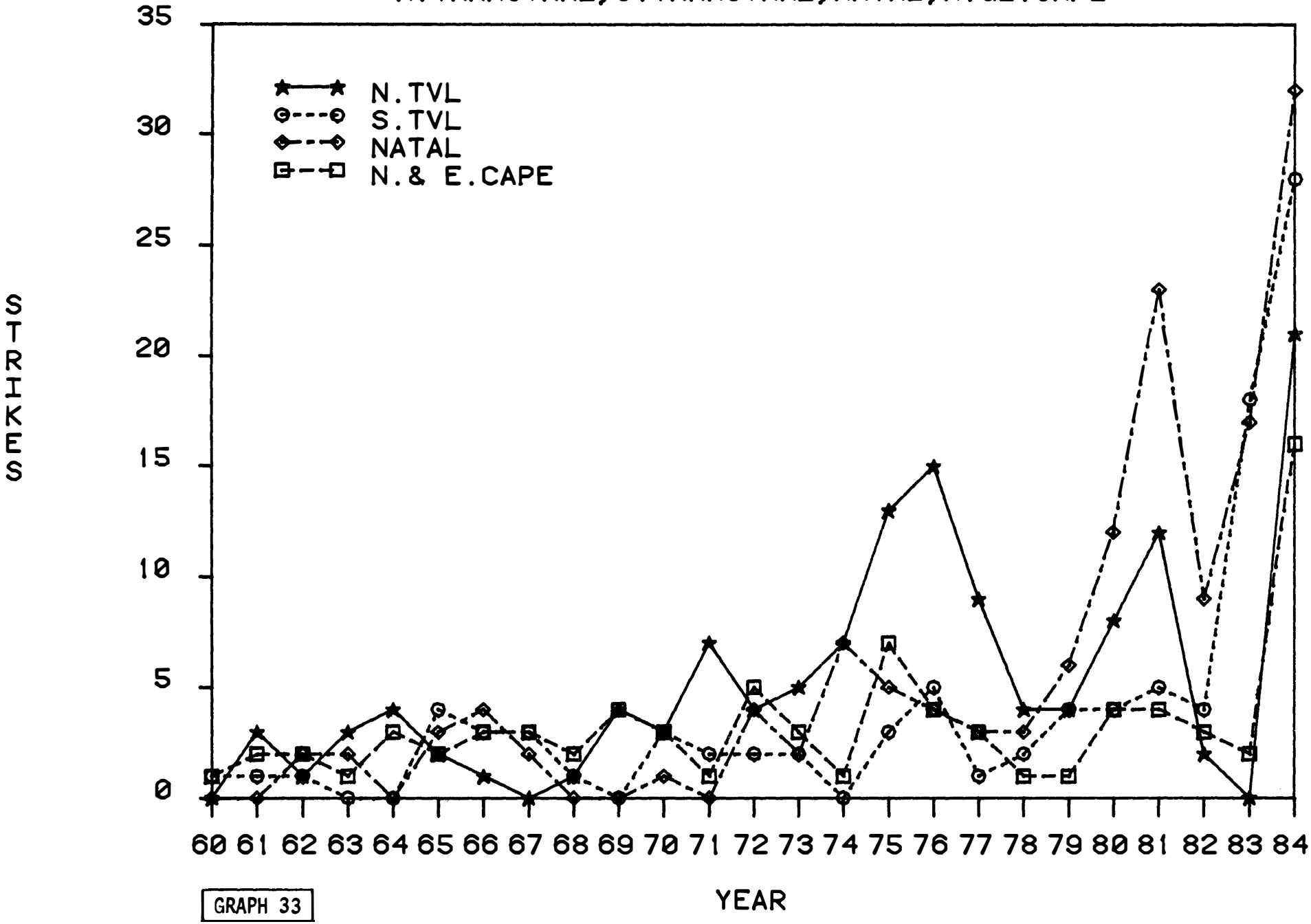
Graph 34 This shows that the number of strikes in the smaller urban areas was low, but tended to follow the pattern of the major urban areas, except that the decline in 1982 was greater. This is particularly true of East London, where strikes have been at a higher level since 1973 than previously. There was an increase in the number of strikes in the Cape Town area. However, these strikes involved fewer days lost per strike than in other areas, except for Northern and Eastern Cape and Kimberley.

Graph 35 This indicates clearly that strikes have been experienced in the PWV area in the years since 1960. The highest incidence of strikes in the PWV area was in 1982. The incidence of strikes in the Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage area from 1960 to 1979 was relatively low; increased considerably between 1980 to 1982, and has declined since then. The strikes in the motor industry in this area in 1982 involved a larger number of strikers as is shown in Graph 36.

In looking at the four graphs, the number of strikes experienced in the three major industrial areas represented 88% of all strikes occurring during 1982, declining to 78% in 1983 and 65% in 1984. This may be an indication that strike activity is becoming more diffuse across the different areas. This tendency is supported by the fact the number of strikes increased in all but two areas in 1984, after a general reduction in 1983.

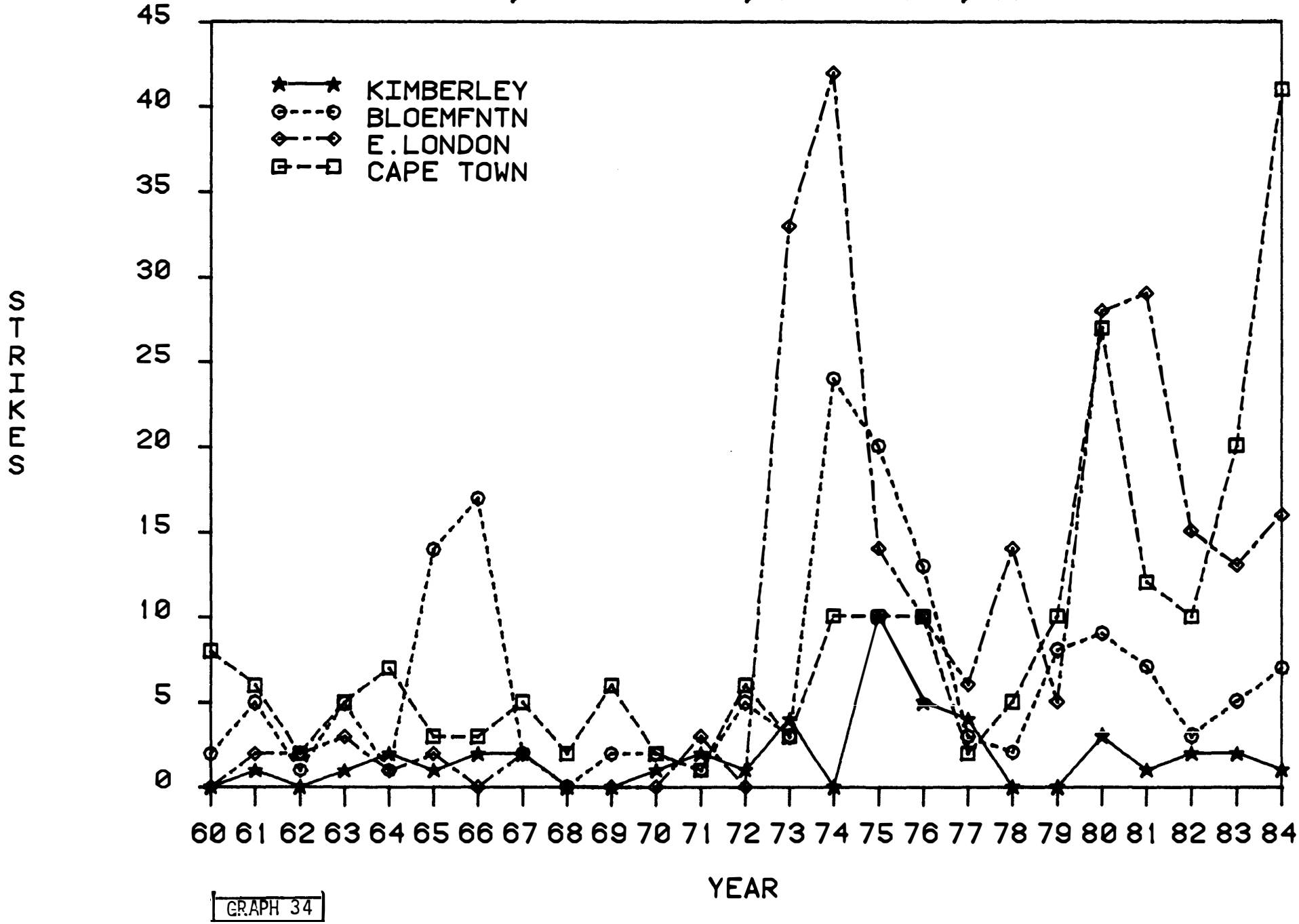
Although there was only a small increase in the number of strikes in the PWV area in 1984, almost twice as many strikers were involved.

STRIKES IN FOUR AREAS
N.TRANSVAAL, S.TRANSVAAL, NATAL, N.&E.CAPE



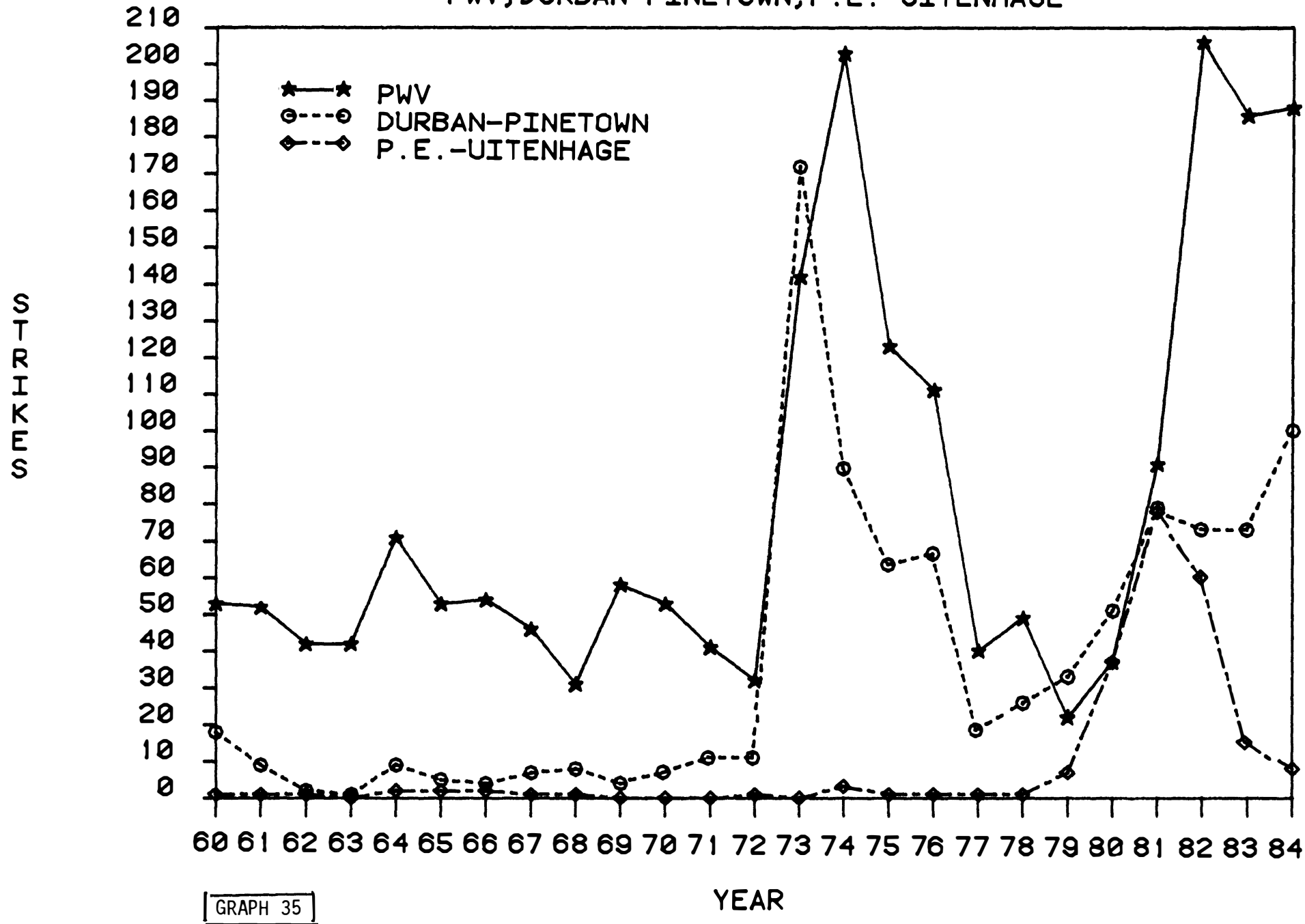
GRAPH 33

STRIKES IN FOUR AREAS
KIMBERLEY, BLOEMFONTEIN, EAST-LONDON, CAPE TOWN



GRAPH 34

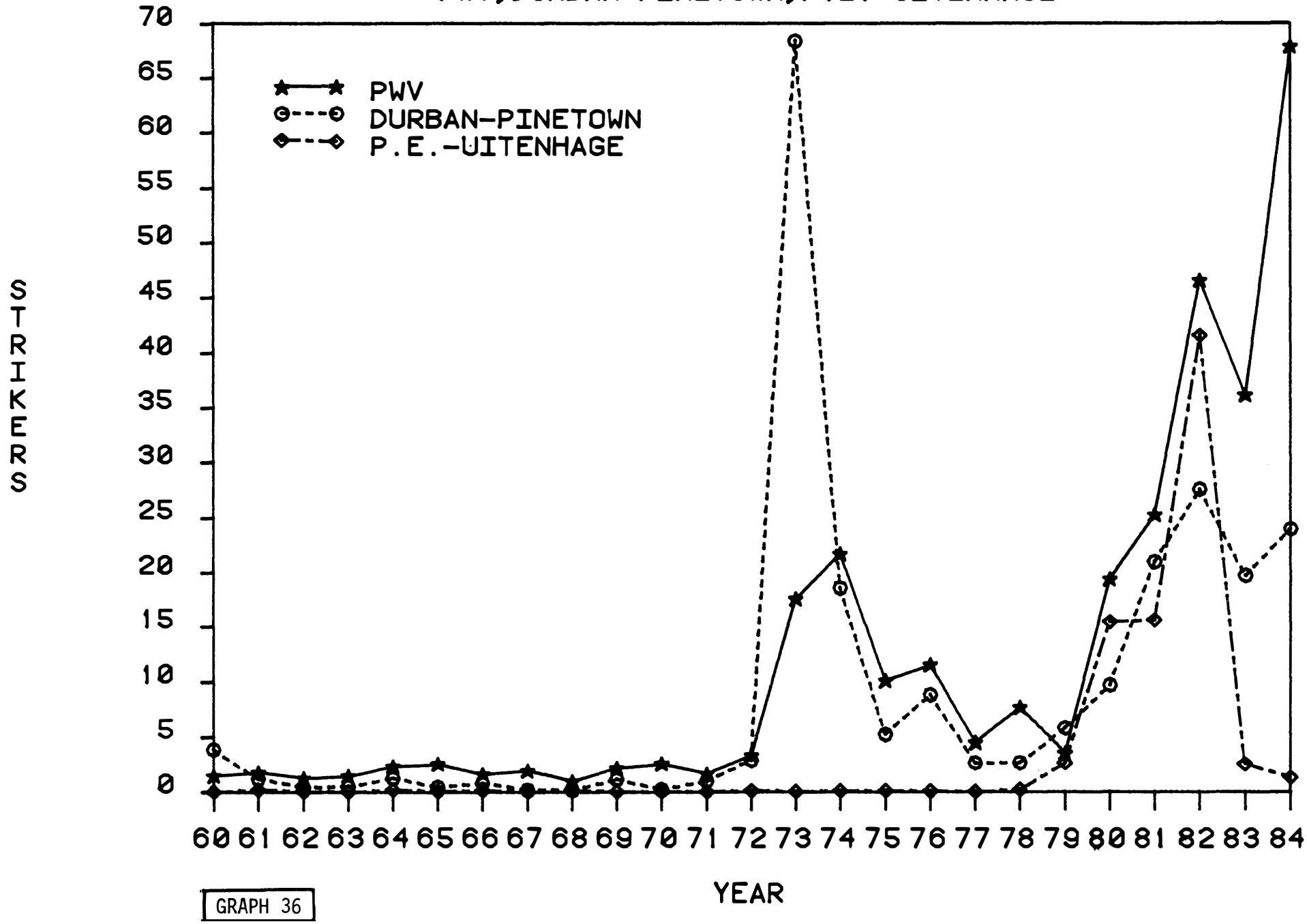
STRIKES IN THREE AREAS
PWV, DURBAN-PINETOWN, P.E.-UITENHAGE



GRAPH 35

THOUSANDS

STRIKERS PER AREA
PWV, DURBAN-PINETOWN, P.E.-UITENHAGE



GRAPH 36

GRAPHS 37 - 39 : OVERVIEW OF STRIKE ACTIVITY IN 1983

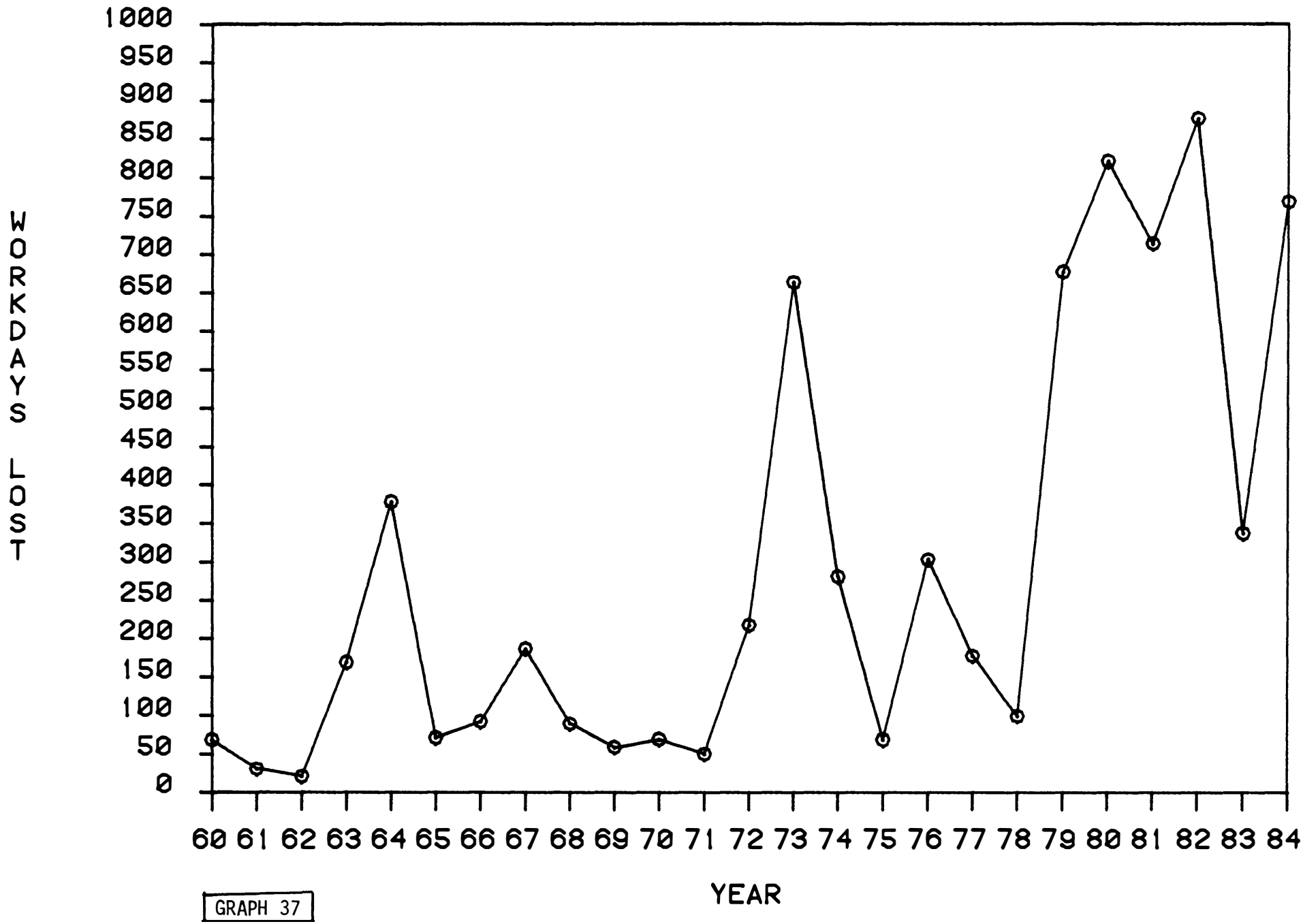
The number of strikers involved in each strike in the main industrial areas was reduced to about 200, which is about the level in 1979 and about one third less than in 1982 (Graph 29). The number of workdays lost in each strike was about 350, just more than one third of the 1982 level (Graph 27). The cause of the strike was most probably wages or dismissals. Each striker lost about 1,5 days' work (compared with 0,9 in 1960 and 2,5 in 1982) (Graph 38).

OVERVIEW OF STRIKE ACTIVITY IN 1984

The Transvaal 'stayaway' of November 1984 does not enter into strike statistics because it was not related to workplace industrial relations. Estimates have put the numbers involved at between 300 000 and 800 000 for up to two days, indicating a loss of between 300 000 and 1 600 000 workdays lost, compared to the 352 957 workdays lost according to this report.

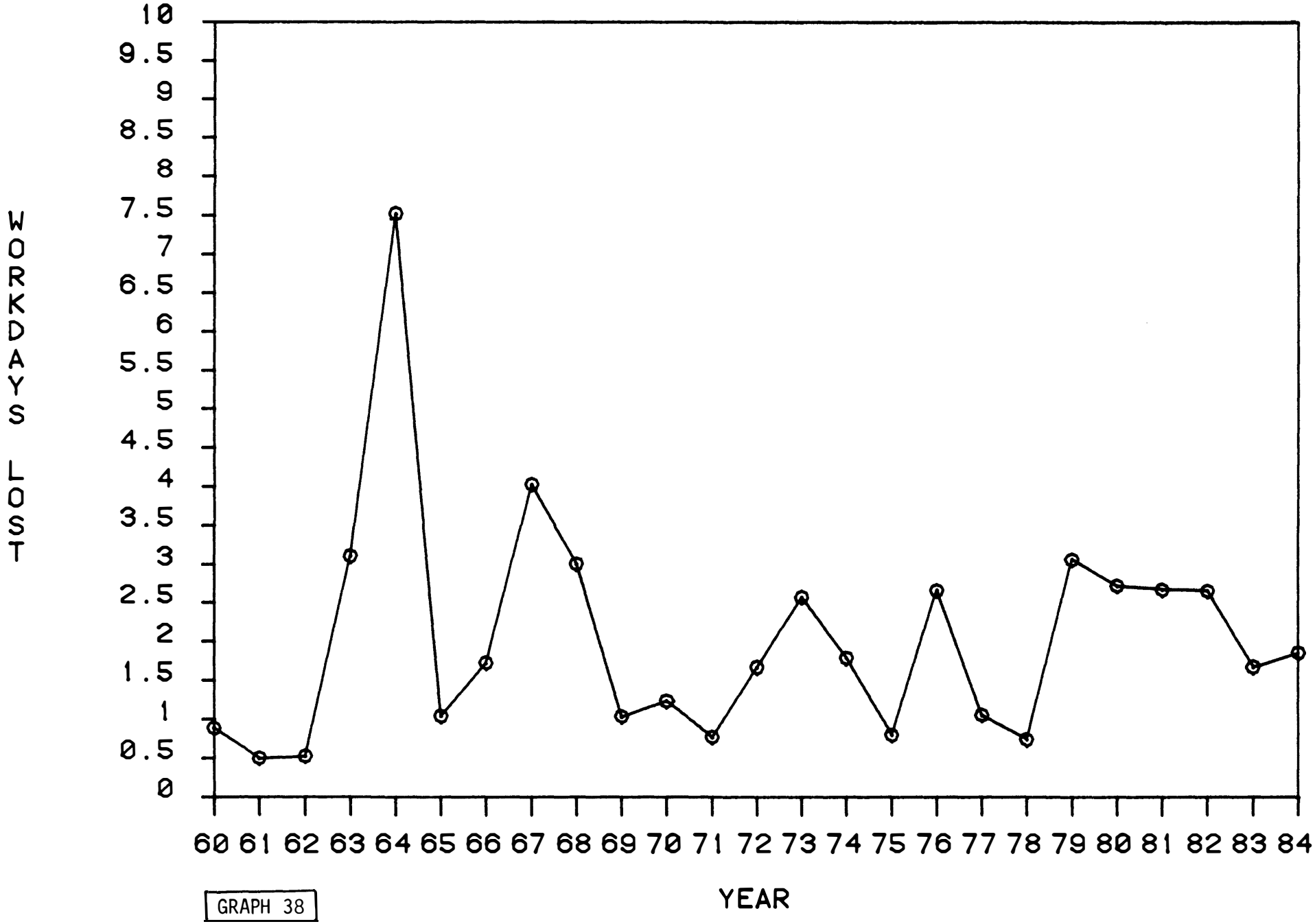
The number of strikers involved in each strike in the main industrial areas increased to about 315, close to the level of the previous highest year, 1982. There was a large increase in the number of workdays lost per strike, probably due to strikes in the mining industry. The time each striker spent striking and over wages or trade union recognition was about 1,85 workdays. The strike itself was likely to have been about wages or dismissal of colleagues.

WORKDAYS LOST PER STRIKE



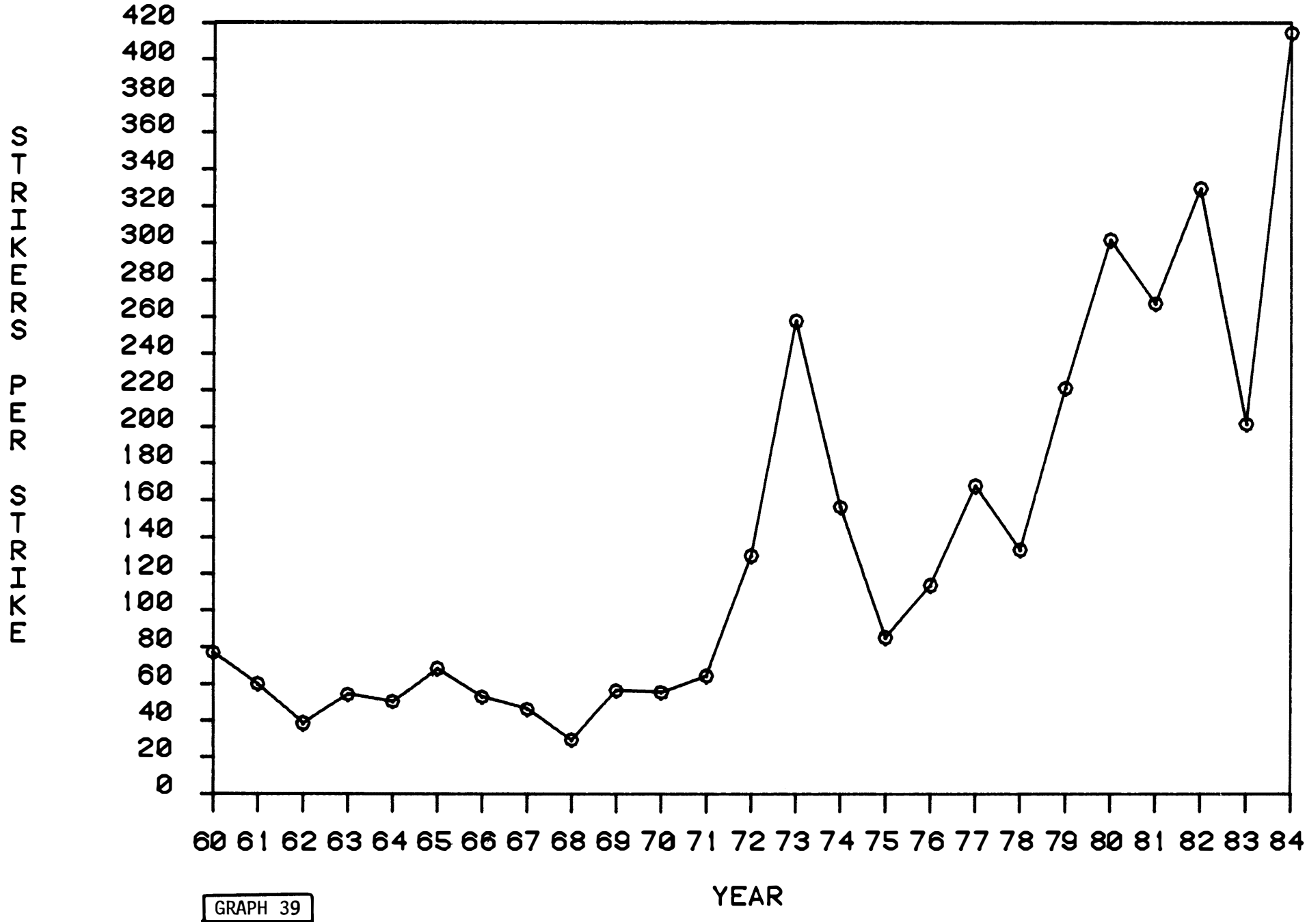
GRAPH 37

WORKDAYS LOST PER STRIKER



GRAPH 38

NUMBER OF STRIKERS PER STRIKE



GRAPH 39

GRAPHS 40, 41 : STRIKES BY INDUSTRY

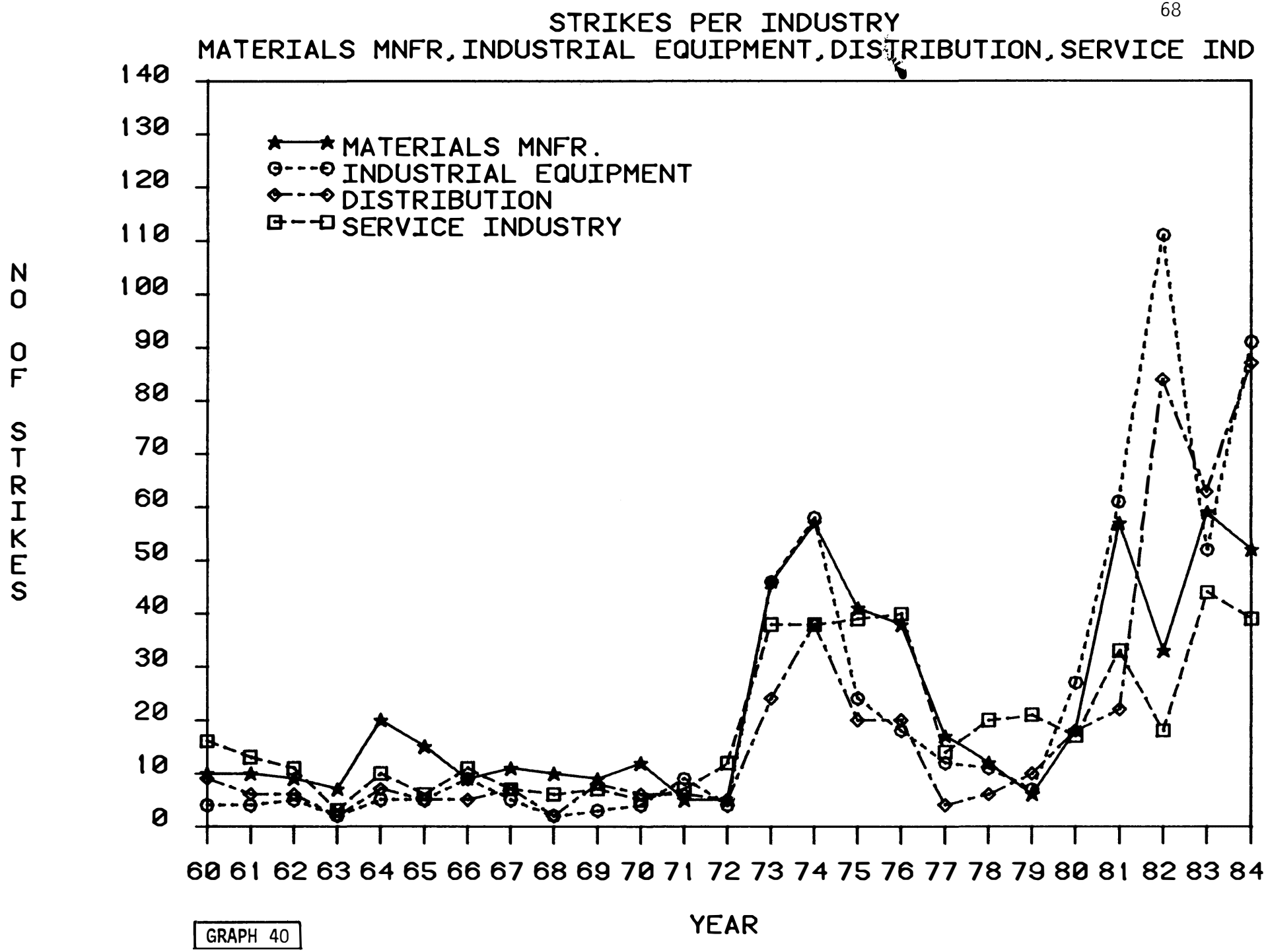
Graphs 40 and 41 reflect strikes in eight industrial groups.

Three industries, 'Consumer Goods', 'Industrial Equipment', and 'Distribution' experienced 80% reported strikes in 1982 compared to 67% in 1984. Except in 1969 and 1972, the number of strikes was found to be greatest in the Consumer Goods groups - which includes motor vehicle manufacturers. At times of high strike activity there is greater diversity in the numbers of strikes reported in each industrial group. This is in keeping with the view that strikes are specific events within organizations and not events randomly affecting the economy. This is displayed, for 1984, more clearly in the following table:

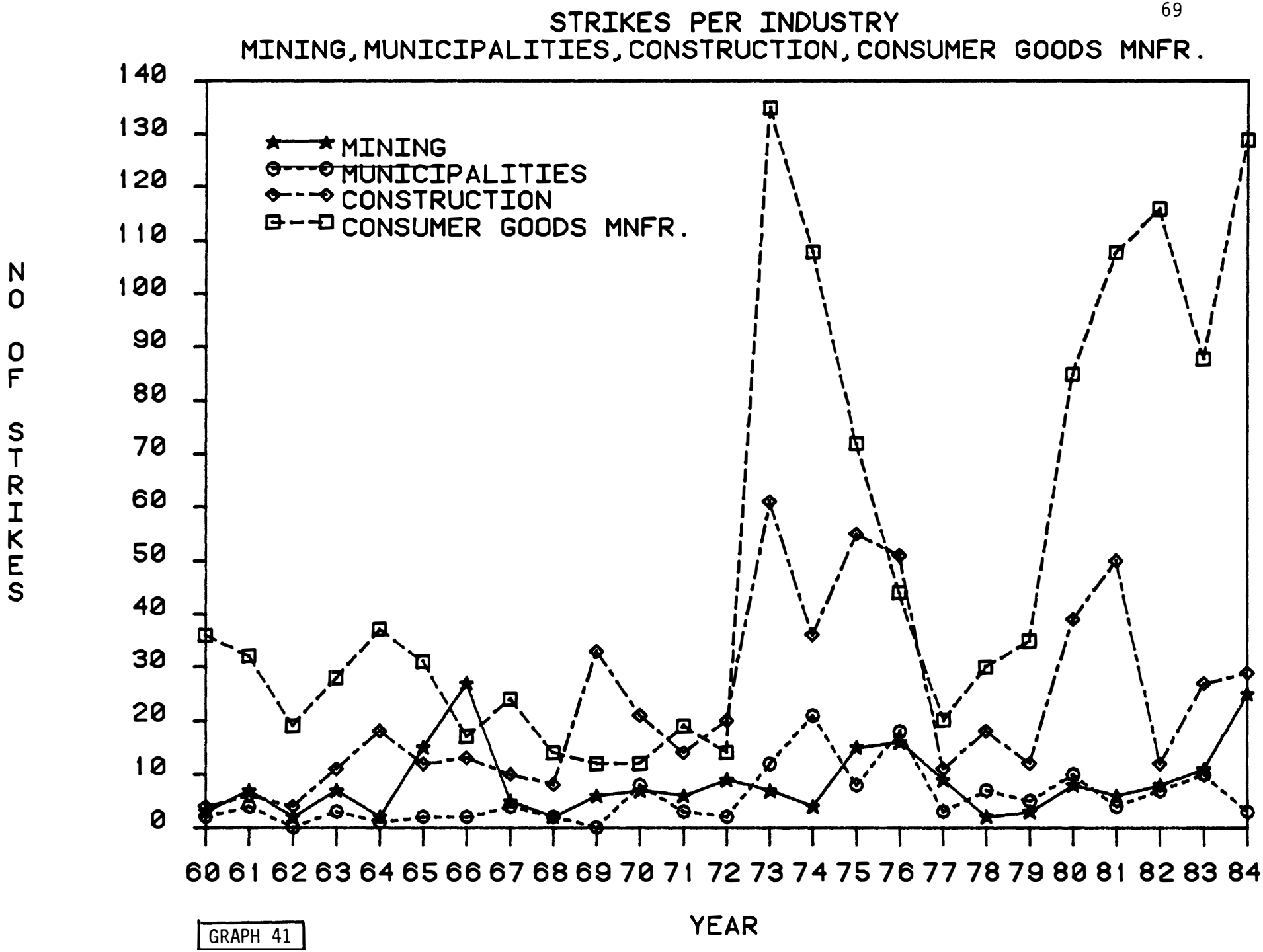
	% Strikes	% Workdays lost	Strikers per strike	% Strikers
Consumer goods manufacture	28	26	347	24
Industrial equipment	20	20	392	19
Distribution	19	8	133	6
Materials manufacture	11	10	442	12
Service industries	9	1	67	1
Construction	6	4	170	3
Mining	6	31	2 640	35

TABLE 2: 1984 Strike activity in eight industrial groups

Table 2 shows that the mining industry contributed a few large strikes which dominated the strike activity of 1984. Howeveŕ, the impact of a particular strike should also be seen in terms of its effects internal and external to the organization. A strike by a few key people is very different from that involving many unskilled, easily replaceable, employees.


STRIKES PER INDUSTRY
MATERIALS MNFR, INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT, DISTRIBUTION, SERVICE IND
MATERIALS MNFR.
INDUSTRIAL EQUIPMENT
DISTRIBUTION
SERVICE INDUSTRY
NO OF STRIKES
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
140
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 40


STRIKES PER INDUSTRY
MINING, MUNICIPALITIES, CONSTRUCTION, CONSUMER GOODS MNFR.
MINING
MUNICIPALITIES
CONSTRUCTION
CONSUMER GOODS MNFR.
NO OF STRIKES
140
130
120
110
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84
YEAR

GRAPH 41

GRAPH 42 : RATE OF INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index has been computed from the average annual Consumer Price Index published by Central Statistical Services. The formula used is :

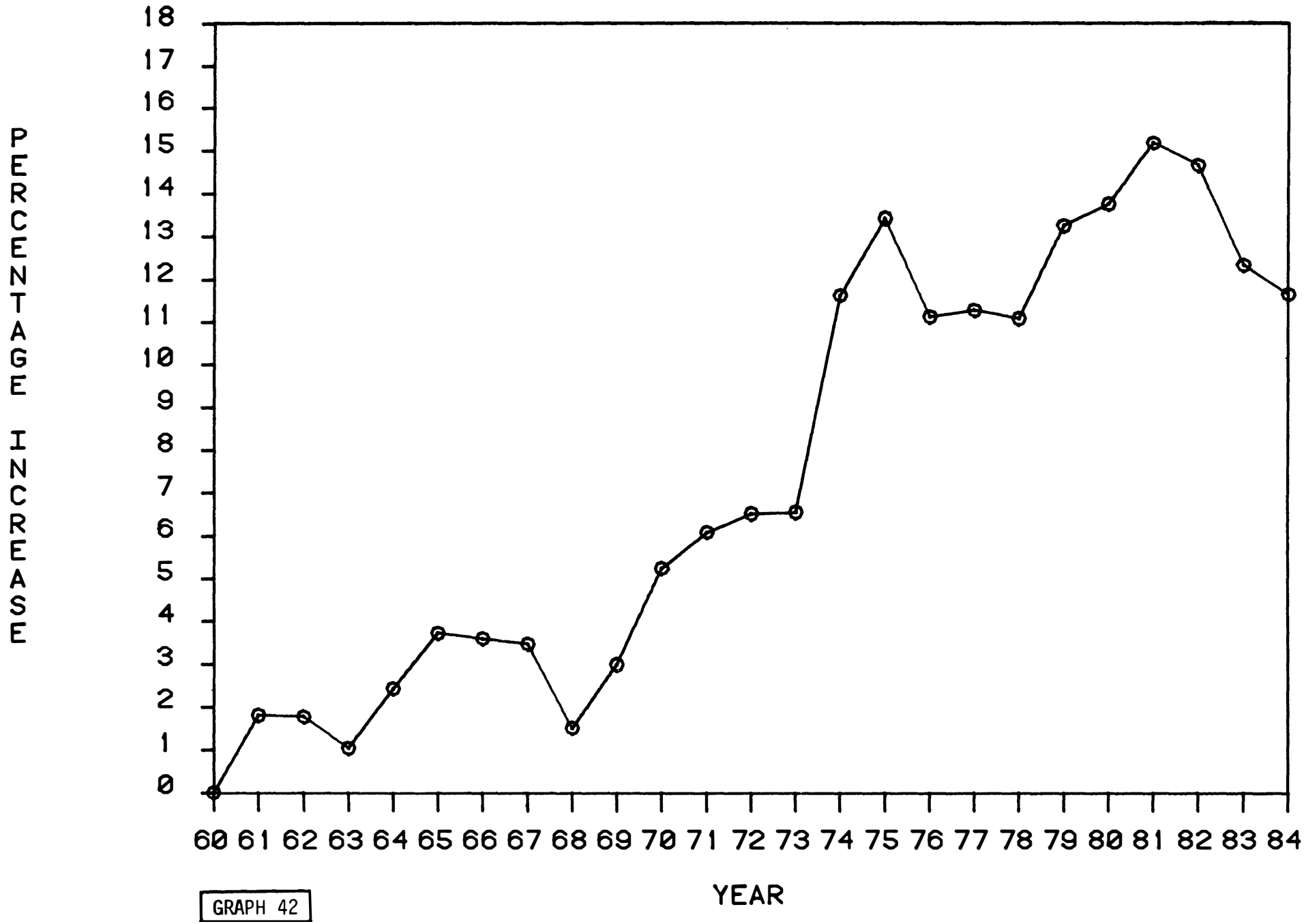
$$\frac{\text{CPI Year 2 - CPI Year 1}}{\text{CPI Year 1}}$$

Those years in which there is an acceleration in the rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index are associated with an increase in strike activity. This can be seen in:

Graph 1 strikes per year
Graph 17 standardised workdays lost
Graph 35 strikes in three areas.

It would appear that employees become used to a certain level of erosion of spending power; it is when inflation accelerates that it becomes a factor associated with strikes. If it is accepted that strike activity is a reflection of industrial relations, then an implication for the organization is that the rate of change in inflation must be considered. This is despite the fact that inflation is external to the organization, and so not under its direct control.

RATE OF INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

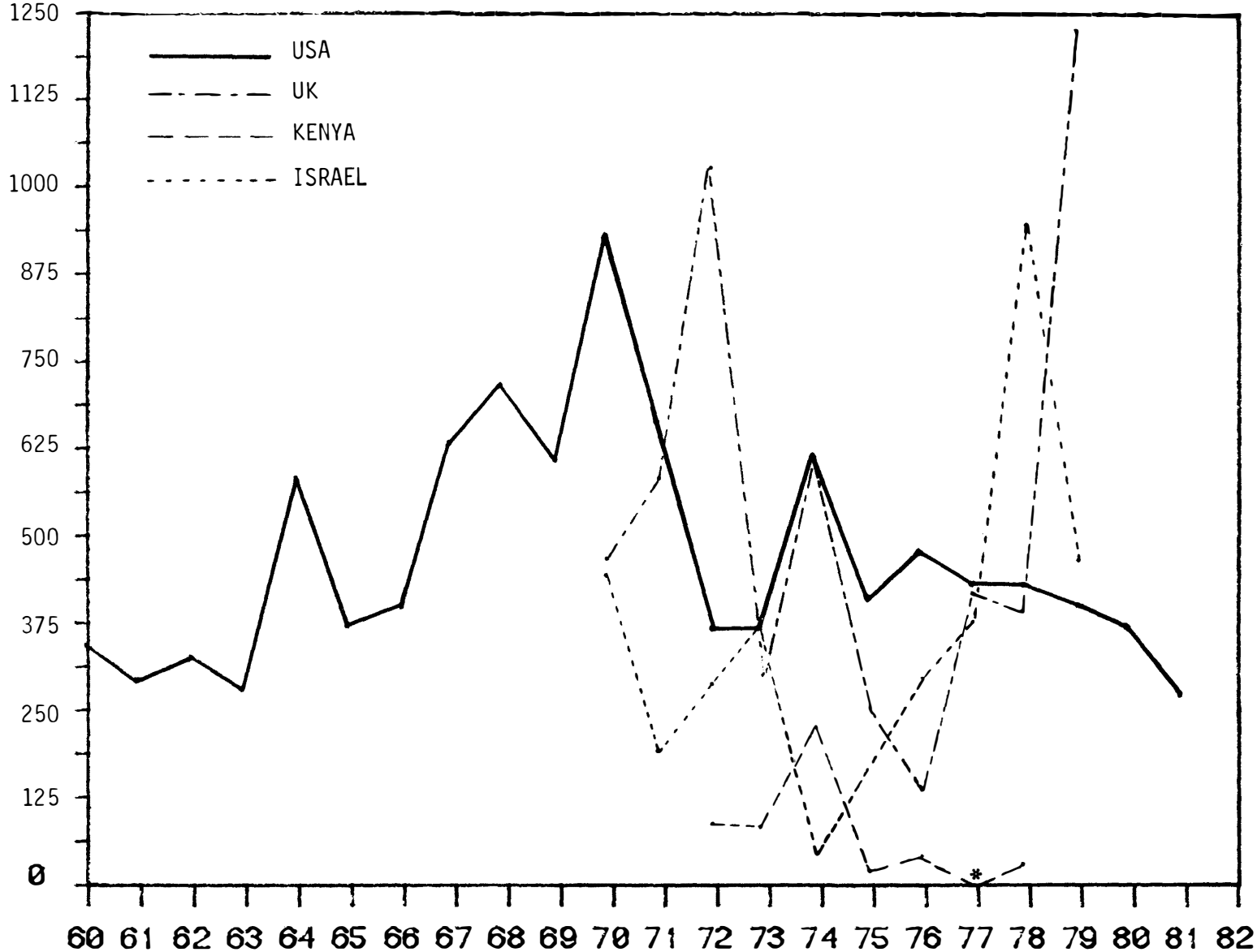


GRAPH 42

GRAPH 43 : WORKDAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYED (excluding agricultural) IN FOUR COUNTRIES (USA, UK, KENYA, ISRAEL)

An observation from this graph is the very variable nature of strike activity in these four countries. In this respect there is a similarity with the situation in South Africa. An obvious difference is that strike activity is at a far higher level in Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States of America than in South Africa. There is, unfortunately, a dearth of data relating to strike activity in countries in Africa which would enable further comparisons of strike activity to be made.

GRAPH ___ - **WORKDAYS LOST PER** 1 000 EMPLOYED
(EXCLUDING AGRICULTURAL) IN FOUR COUNTRIES



GRAPH 43

* Missing information

CONCLUSIONS

This report allows for a long-term overview of strike activity for the period 1960 - 1984 in South Africa, with data for 1960 - 1983 standardised for employment and for population.

Strike activity in 1982, measured in workdays lost per thousand, was the highest for the period for which standardized data is available, namely 1960-1983. (It would appear that 1984 figures would be somewhat higher.) It is worth comparing this level with that of Japan and the Netherlands, two countries with low strike activity. According to Creigh, Donaldson and Hawthorn's (1982) statistics, the level of strike activity in South Africa in 1982 was about half of Japan's annual average in the decade 1970-1979 and about the same as that of the Netherlands in 1978. Although the strike has become a more frequent phenomenon in South Africa, total strike activity is low when compared to internationally. Some of the reasons for this may be:

* South African differences in the legal framework within which industrial relations are conducted;
* the extent to which workers are organized;
* a societal disinclination to enter into strikes; or
* to the present rate of unemployment.

The graphs on strike activity show some relationship to population groups in terms of length and numbers involved. These population divisions still represent differences in skills, aspirations and expectations, whilst some pressures are common to all groups, such as inflation. This report has aggregated data on strikes for the specific purpose of disseminating information on twenty-five years of strike activity. However, each strike is a unique occurrence, as shown by the variability of the graphs. Thus a strike should not result in a stereotyped response on the part of those handling it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations which arise from this study relate primarily to future research possibilities. It is recommended that:

(i) the NIPR maintain and revise annually the data used in this study;

(ii) a current source of demographic data be developed to allow standardisation of strike data for comparative purposes;

(iii) parallel research be carried out to determine the attitudes to, and opinions about, striking held by members of different groups;

(iv) further analysis be carried out on the data reported in this study to provide more information on the level and fluctuations in strike activity across population groups, industries and areas;

(v) parallel research be carried out to determine the economic, psychological and sociological factors associated with striking.

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