BLACK TRADE UNIONISM DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR - THE WITWATERSRAND STRIKES OF DECEMBER 1942

by

Mark Stein

During the Second World War black trade unionism expanded very rapidly. According to available estimates, on the Witwatersrand alone the number of unions rose from twenty with 23,000 members in 1940 to fifty with 80,000 members in 1945. (1) The war-time level of strike action was higher than during the 1930s, but its scale was far smaller than one might have expected considering the proportions reached by the union movement. The largest war-time outbreak of black strike action was in December 1942, involving over 8,000 workers from several Witwatersrand industries. This was the largest outbreak in the whole country between the two gold miners' strikes of February 1920 and August 1946.

In this paper I will endeavour to answer four questions. Firstly, how did government labour policy respond to the particular pressures created by World War Two? Secondly, how did the Wage Board's policy unintentionally provoke the December 1942 strikes? Thirdly, how successful were the strikes? Fourthly, why did they not recur for the rest of the war?

With regard to the first question, there was no sudden break between war-time labour policy and that of the second half of the 1930s. Before the war the Labour Department had encouraged black unions in certain industries where the black workers were mostly skilled or semi-skilled and permanently urbanized. This encouragement took the form of wage increases awarded by the Wage Board and Labour Department assistance with the enforcement of legal minimum wages. Its object was to prevent strike action which might be successful and spread to the unskilled migrant majority of the black labour force, especially the gold miners. One sign of the success of this policy was that between 1937 and 1940 Max Gordon's unions (the largest group) did not call a single strike. (2) During 1928-1929 the black clothing union had been very militant, but by the late 1930s it was a passive appendage of the white union. (3)

For the unskilled migrant majority of the black labour force the state had almost nothing to offer besides such acts of repression as the tightening up of influx control by the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act and the empty promise of more land in the reserves. The government's policy can be seen as designed to co-opt one section of the black working class so as to repress the rest, especially the gold miners, more effectively. (It was a partial implementation of the proposals of the 1930-1932 Native Economic Commission, which recommended higher wages for the skilled and semi-skilled urbanized minority plus the reduction of the number of unskilled migrants in the towns, not by tighter influx control but by the resuscitation of agriculture in the reserves.) (4)

The nature of the war-time economy - rapid inflation, a large expansion of manufacturing output and labour shortage resulting from military recruitment - obliged the government to raise black wages. (5) But in doing so it initially followed the lines of its pre-war policy. For the first three years of the war the government refused to give any increase to the gold miners. They were excluded from the cost of living allowance received by white workers and blacks in commerce and industry. They were also excluded from the Wage Board programme.

The most important war-time Wage Board investigation was that into Unskilled Labour, Witwatersrand and Pretoria, which white liberals had been requesting since at least 1935. Commencing in mid-1941, this investigation covered 47,000 workers in thirty-four industries. It ended in Wage Determination 105, which fixed a minimum wage of 25/- per week, rising to 27/- over two years, and came into force on 30th November 1942. This wage was almost double the average wage on the gold mines. The fixing of such a wage reflected official recognition of the fact that a large, and increasing, percentage of those employed in commerce and industry were permanently urbanized. However, it fell well below the wage - about 37/6 per week - which the Smit Report at the end of 1942 calculated as the poverty datum line for an average urban African family. (6) Presumably the state expected black labourers and their families to endure poverty conditions, although the basic wage would have been supplemented to some extent by overtime and the earnings of wives and children.

During the first two and a half years of the war the black union movement expanded but the level of strike action remained quite low. During this period - as later - the black unions repeatedly complained that wage increases were inadequate and/or slow to materialize. The African Dairy Workers' Union - for example - reminded the Wage Board in September 1941 that since the union's formation in 1938

> Many times the Dairy workers were on the point of coming out on strike because their employers refused to discuss their grievances with the Union's representatives, but they did not do so as they were put off by promises that the Wage Board would attend to their complaints. (7)

During 1939 they had been told that they would be covered by Wage Determination 70 for the commercial distributive trade. But when the employers protested that they could not afford to pay labourers 27/8 per week, the dairy workers were excluded and promised a separate Wage Board investigation.

> Again 'the game of hide and seek' was played with the workers. They were told 'Do not strike, the Wage Board will settle your grievances ...' But a year and a half passed before the Wage Board's Recommendation was gazetted, and in the meanwhile Dairy Workers ... reached the utmost limit of their patience and endurance ... Rather than accept the Board's proposals they are prepared to strike ... (8)

Yet it was not until December 1942 - fifteen months later - that this strike threat was fulfilled. This well illustrates the reluctance of black unions to resort to strike action, which was not only illegal but would jeopardize the union's relationship with the Labour Department.

Table 1

Black Labour Unrest, the Witwatersrand, September 1942-February 1943

14.9.42 to 14.10.42	Johannesburg sweet workers strike (600 whites and 400 blacks)
19.10.42	40 strike at Germiston coal yard
20.10.42	600 at Kazerne railway yard

6.11.42	Wage Determination 105, Unskilled Work, Witwatersrand and Pretoria, published.
30.11.42	Wage Determination 105 comes into effect
1.12.42	1,400 dairy workers strike
8.12.42	2,000 municipal workers strike strike at Rand Mining Timber
9.12.42	500-600 strike at Van Beek St. municipal compound, Johannesburg.
13.12.42	general meeting of African Motor Industry Workers' Union issues strike threat
14.12.42	strikes by 800 clay workers 150 at Suncrush (mineral water) 1,000 in wholesale meat trade
17.12.42	900 strike in retail meat trade
19.12.42	War Measure No. 145
21.12.42	iron and steel workers reported to be threatening to strike
28.12.42	Pretoria municipal workers riot over wages - 17 killed

(On an unknown date in December 1942 there was a strike - or threat of one - in the power industry.)

7.1.43	500 strike at Langlaagte mine compound
13.1.43	29 milling workers strike
16.1.43	60 on hunger strike at Rosherville power station (VFP Co)
12.2.43	Rand Water Board agrees to observe Wage Determination 105 (100 per cent increase)

How did Wage Board policy (unintentionally) provoke the December 1942 strikes? My answer is divided into four points, the first of which is the lowness of the minimum fixed by Wage Determination 105. Many strikers asked for no more than this minimum, but for others, especially the meat workers, it represented no increase on existing rates. (Meat workers' wages were relatively high because of the success of their union in negotiating wage increases for them during 1941.) (9)

The second point is that dairy workers in September 1942 and municipal workers in November 1942 had had wage increases revoked because of pressure from white interests. Immediately after the dairy wage determination had been published - three years after the black workers had first been promised it - the Minister of Labour suspended it on the grounds that it was not clear whether the exclusion of all farming operations from the scope of the Wage Act rendered it impossible for the determination to apply to farmers who engaged in the dairy trade (producer-distributors). Other traders argued that if producer-distributors were excluded from the wage determination, by paying lower wages and charging lower prices they would be able to drive their competitors out of business. To protect them from this the dairy wage determination was suspended altogether. (10) Municipal workers were the only large group for which Wage Determination 105 had brought about a substantial increase: 11,330 Johannesburg workers got 33 per cent extra (8/6 per week) and 6,800 Witwatersrand and 3,172 Pretoria workers got 30 and 33 per cent, respectively. (11) The extra annual cost imposed on Johannesburg alone was £300,000-£400,000. It would appear that the Wage Board imposed this drastic increase because, unlike other industries, municipalities do not produce for profit in a competitive market, and the burden would be spread over the whole rate-paying community. The municipal representatives were, however, able to convince the Minister that their towns could not afford to implement the wage determination immediately, and he agreed to suspend it in their case until the beginning of the next financial year. (12)

The third point is that workers in certain industries - mining timber, clay, power, water - were bitterly dissatisfied with being excluded from Wage Determination 105. The reason for their exclusion appears to have been that they

were largely unskilled migrants paid on the same level as the gold miners. (13) In accounting for the unrest in these industries one must bear in mind that, although it was predominantly intended to assist permanently urbanized workers, many of those covered by Wage Determination 105 were unskilled migrants. (At a time when urbanization was proceeding virtually unchecked, the state possessed no means for distinguishing between the two groups.) Thus the state was giving an increase to some unskilled migrants but not to others.

Fourthly, the fact that Wage Determination 105 applied to so large a section of the black labour force ensured that its coming into force on 30th November 1942 would bring unrest to a head among the different groups of workers who wanted more money but for various reasons did not benefit from Wage Determination 105.

The degree of success obtained by the strikers can be attributed to four inter-related factors: non-availability of alternative labour; violent picketing; police restraint; and the role of the black union leadership.

War-time labour demands meant that unemployment was at a comparatively low level. (14) Moreover, even though they might officially be classified as labourers, many of the strikers were doing jobs which required a degree of skill. During the dairy strike, for example, Die Transvaler commented:

> It will be anything but easy to replace the milkboys. A Native who does not know the town needs about three weeks to learn his round. (15)

To force those who had not joined the strike to cease work, the meat and dairy workers patrolled the streets in bands armed with sticks, lengths of plank and knobkerries. (16) Violent scenes ensued. The clay strikers surrounded their factory eight hundred strong.

> They refused entry to the works to customers who wanted to collect bricks. One lorry which dared to go in was stoned. The police could do nothing. When Die Transvaler's reporter approached them in a car they suddenly charged towards him with a shout and waving of sticks. Our reporter decided that he had seen enough and retreated to a safe distance. The Natives presumably thought that the car contained customers or police. (17)

The success of violent picketing depended upon the authorities' reluctance to use all the repressive force at their command. No one was killed in Johannesburg during December 1942. One presumes that the need for black support for the war effort made the government reluctant to be seen shooting black strikers dead. The most severe police action in Johannesburg took place in the second half of the month, during the strikes of wholesale and retail meat workers. (18) Several workers were arrested, convicted of riotous behaviour and given up to two months' imprisonment. On 28th December - after the strikes in Johannesburg had subsided - panicky troops shot sixteen blacks dead in a riot over wages at the Pretoria municipal compound. The government expressed regret and appointed a commission, which condemned the shootings and recommended the payment of compensation.

Most of the Johannesburg strikes were ended within a day or so after negotiations had begun between employers, the Labour Department and black union officials. Union officials would persuade strikers to resume work while the union negotiated on their behalf. The armed mobs of strikers were consequently removed from the streets without the authorities having to use force. The black union leadership played a far more prominent role in settling the December 1942 strikes than it did in bringing them about. In a number of industries - e.g. meat and iron and steel - the union leaders were less militant than the rank and file. During the meat workers' strike (14th December) their secretary, W. A. R. Mokoena, was initially nowhere to be found. When he did turn up, he was heckled and jeered when he urged the strikers to go back to work. Within two months his career as a union leader was at an end: the

discovery that he had been embezzling union funds completed his discrediting in the eyes of the workers. (19) After a threat of strike action in the third week of December, the employers in the iron and steel industry offered an extra 3/- per week for labourers and 3/9 for semi-skilled on the existing wages of 21/- and 24/-. At a general meeting in January 1943 rank and file workers protested that they were starving and demanded immediate action to win 40/- per week. But the union leadership prevailed upon the workers for the sake of the war effort to refrain from striking while it attempted to negotiate a further increase. (20)

Exactly what wage increases resulted from the strikes? Municipal, clay, mining timber, water and power workers demanded payment in terms of Wage Determination 105: all but power were successful; the wage increases appear to have been extended to a total of 21,000 municipal workers and 15,000 clay workers. The dairy workers obtained the introduction of their suspended wage determination (which laid down a minimum wage of only 23/3 per week). Demands for 40/- per week or more were made by meat, dairy, mineral water and some municipal workers; but none of these were granted.

Because of their close ties with the gold mining industry, the power workers' wage demand was referred to the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wages Commission appointed in February 1943. The appointment of this commission was very important in that it represented a departure from the earlier policy of refusing any wage increase to mine workers. The miners had taken no part in the strikes, except for five hundred who came out early in January 1943. (21) But the fact that the December 1942 strikers were largely migrant labourers made it seem likely that the migrant labourers on the mines would soon come out on strike en masse unless something were done. The commission made an exhaustive investigation of what the mines could "afford" and reported in March 1944, recommending a wage increase for the miners of approximately 16/- per month. Out of solicitude for the capitalists, the government reduced the actual wage increase that was paid to about 10/10 per month. (22) It ignored complaints from the African Mine Workers' Union that even 16/- per month was too little. For the power workers, the commission had recommended inclusion in Wage Determination 105 on the grounds that a large proportion were permanently urbanized. The government refused to implement this, accepting the employers' contention that,because two power stations were situated next to mines (collieries),

> if any substantial increase in rates of pay were accorded to the V.F.P. Native employees it could not but have a very serious effect on the Mine Native labourers. (23)

From the official point of view, the commission served as an effective delaying tactic.

The strike wave fizzled out after the promulgation of War Measure 145 on 19th December 1942. This raised the maximum penalty for taking part in or instigating a strike to a £500 fine or three years imprisonment, a vast increase on previous penalties. Black unions could now ask the Minister of Labour to appoint an arbitrator to consider their demands. If the massive increase in penalties for striking was the "stick" to keep the black workers in order, the arbitration machinery was the "carrot". The huge maximum penalty was evidently intended for use against union leaders rather than ordinary workers, providing the former with a strong incentive to hold their followers back from strike action. Arbitrators were in practice always members of the Wage Board, but since the arbitration machinery bypassed the Wage Board's slow procedure of hearing evidence, collecting statistics, calculating profitability and considering objections, it made it possible for particularly militant groups of black workers to be quickly appeased by wage increases (e.g. the speed with which the coal trade workers were awarded an increase after the strike of June 1944). Since the appointment of arbitrators was absolutely at the Minister's discretion, weaker unions could simply be kept waiting.

After the December 1942 strikes, black union officials received an increased degree of informal recognition from employers in commerce and industry anxious to prevent unrest among their workers. The nature of the relationship which developed is well illustrated by the record of a meeting between the African Cement Workers' Union

and Pretoria Portland Cement Co in March 1943. Management stated that it

> would not recognize a Native Trade Union until such time as the Government recognized it. (24)

But it agreed to permit union organizers to enter the company's property and hold meetings (subject to prior notice), to consider representations made by the union on behalf of the workers and to allow one of the workers to act as shop steward.

> The General Manager also stressed the fact that the Company would look to the union for collaboration in preventing disputes arising as a result of the mischievous activities of irresponsible persons. (25)

Three other industries in which essentially similar management-union relationships are known to have developed are clay, iron and steel, and power. (26) Gana Makabeni, CNETU chairman, was commended by the Mine Wages Commission for holding the power workers back while the commission was considering their demands. On Makabeni's role the Progressive Trade Union Group commented in mid-1945 that

> The VFP strike was a challenge to the cheap labour policy of the Chamber of Mines. The success would have had repercussions on the whole mining industry and, powerless to do anything by itself, the Government had to employ somebody to 'DISCIPLINE' the workers. (27)

(The Progressive Trade Union Group was a small group of black union leaders formed during 1944 by the Johannesburg Trotskyist group, the Workers' International League, to campaign within CNETU against the leadership's lack of militancy.)

Nothing on the scale of the December 1942 strike wave took place for the rest of the war, although there was quite a large number of stoppages. (28) Four of the largest of these took place in 1944. On 21st January 2,300 power workers struck over the delay in publishing the Mine Wages Commission report. (They went back to work after a massive government show of force.) On 5th June 1,100 coal trade workers struck for higher wages, as did 350 baking workers on 7th July. In both cases the strikers were arrested, but the charges were later withdrawn and wage increases conceded. The strike of 1,900 milling workers on 11th September at one stage appeared to have been defeated, after many strikers had been replaced by fresh labour. But in the end the workers were granted a wage increase. It is also necessary to mention the Alexandra bus boycotts of 1943 and 1944 and the success of the commercial distributive workers early in 1944 in obtaining a substantial wage increase without strike action.

A detailed discussion of these disputes is not possible here. (29) One point which I do wish to stress is that, had the workers of the gold mining and iron and steel industries come out on strike in 1944, they would have made those strikes that did take place look small. Why didn't they? In gold mining the Lansdowne Commission kept the workers quiet for a year without any wage increase, as they waited for the Commission's report. Something similar happened in iron and steel, with a Wage Board investigation which began in June 1943 and was aborted a year later. (30) What is remarkable is that, by late 1944, the hopes of the workers in these two key industries for substantial wage increases had been dashed, yet no strike action took place until mid-1946, when in both cases it was defeated. (31)

Late in 1944 at least two unsuccessful attempts were made to bring about large-scale strike action on the Witwatersrand. At a conference of the African Mine Workers' Union, Senator Basner recalled two years later,

> over 1000 delegates from different shafts on the Witwatersrand were present. They wanted ... to strike there and then ... and on the other hand you had officials who wanted to know whether we had exhausted all channels of negociation for coming to an amicable settlement. (32)

In September, when the milling strikers' defeat appeared imminent, the Progressive Trade Union Group called for a general strike on the Witwatersrand.

The major reasons for the failure of the black unions to confront the government at this stage were evidently their fear of the repression they might provoke and their reluctance to risk ending the informal co-operation which they were receiving from some employers and the Labour Department.

Two other factors deserve particular mention: the role of the Communist Party and the class background of the black union leadership.

The Party had a general policy of preferring to settle disputes by negotiation and opposing strikes, except as a last resort, because of the damage they did to the war effort. (33) Individual Party members can be picked out who definitely played a strike-breaking role, e.g. R. Fleet, Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council's Johannesburg Local Committee, who claimed in September 1944 that it was he who had persuaded the black union leaders involved to call off the planned general strike. (34) However, the Party certainly had no monopoly of non-militant union leaders, as was shown, for example, by the ignominious behaviour of C. F. Phoffu (one of the leading figures in the Progressive Trade Union Group) during the strikes in the woodworking industry in late 1945. (35)

Black union officials appear on the whole to have been men of above average education. Such men were required to negotiate with employers and officials and take up complaints about the evasion of workers' legal rights. In considering why these people became union officials one should bear in mind that the career opportunities for blacks of above-average education who aspired to a "middle class" life-style were very limited. (36) People who became union leaders at least partly for career reasons, lacking in real political commitment, might have been expected to divert union funds for personal use, to avoid any confrontation with the state which might lead to their being sent to jail, and to look for other jobs when official policy towards black unions turned hostile in the late 1940s. The evidence suggests that many, although far from all, black union leaders were of this type. (37)

Black trade unionism in South Africa has never regained the numerical proportions which it reached during the Second World War. But the unions' rapid growth contained the seeds of its own decline. They were fatally dependent on official co-operation, which reached the level it did because of the particular economic and political situation created by the war; it diminished after the war, when the need to use unions to hold the black workers in check was no longer so pressing; when the Nationalists came to power in 1948, all official co-operation with black unions ceased. One may speculate that, had the war-time unions been more militant, this would have provoked severe state repression but might, on the other hand, have created a lasting rank and file base for the union movement.

It is not difficult to draw an analogy with the present situation: there are genuinely militant black unions which the government has extensively persecuted and may soon try to suppress completely; there are also elements - e.g. the leadership of the National Union of Clothing Workers - who have adopted a much less militant line and explicitly repudiated any association with radical political change in South Africa. It is the latter elements which the government will seek to build upon when it announces its long-awaited scheme for giving legal recognition to black worker organizations. To enhance South Africa's image abroad, a very large number of black workers may well be press-ganged into parallel unions, or whatever other form of organization the government prescribes. Although the nominal membership of such bodies would be large, their ability to advance the economic and political interests of the rank and file workers may be even more limited than that of the black unions of the Second World War. (38)

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Notes

(1) A. L. Saffery, "African Trade Unions and the Institute", Race Relations, VIII, 1941; W. H. Andrews, Class Struggles in South Africa (Johannesburg, 1941); E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope (Johannesburg, 1948), p. 327.

(2) On Max Gordon, see my article in E. Webster, Essays in Southern African Labour History (Johannesburg, 1978), and Baruch Hirson's essay in ICS, Collected Seminar Papers. The Societies of Southern Africa Vol. 7.

(3) SA Worker, 30.3.28, 11.5.28, 25.5.28. Minutes of a meeting of representatives of Garment Workers' Union and the SA Clothing Workers' Union, 14.8.39, Garment Workers' Union Records (Wits.).

(4) Native Economic Commission, UG 22-1932, paras. 556-563. See also my forthcoming MPhil thesis, "African Trade Unionism in South Africa" (Warwick, 1979).

(5) For the liberal political gestures made by the government during the war, see P. Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa (London, 1970), Ch. XI.

(6) Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Conditions of Urban Natives.

(7) Dairy Workers' Union, Objection to Wage Board's Recommendation, 20.9.41, Rheinallt Jones Papers (Wits.).

(8) Ibid.

(9) Inkululeko, May 1942.

(10) Star, 1.12.42.

(11) Report of the Wage Board, Unskilled Work, Witwatersrand and Pretoria, 18.7.42 (mimeo).

(12) Guardian, 19.3.42; Star, 22.12.42.

(13) In water, wages were less than 12/6 per week; in power, about the same; in clay 12/- to 15/-; and in mining timber 16/- to 20/-. (See S. Mampuru, Report to Friends of Africa, Nov.-Dec. 1942, Jan.-Feb. 1943, Ballinger Papers (SOAS); Arbitrators' Reports, Clay and Mining Timber Industries (1943), Labour Department Records, Vol. 1384.) The principal reason for mining timber's exclusion may have been that any wage increase would affect the working costs of the gold mines.

(14) Report of Department of Native Affairs, 1942-1943, p. 9. The labour shortage was, however, much more serious in agriculture and the mines than in the towns: in October 1942 it was possible to recruit 600 scabs at Langlaagte and Prospect Township in an unsuccessful attempt to break the Kazerne strike (Transvaler, 21.10.42).

(15) Transvaler, 2.12.42 (own translation). The Kazerne labourers were also not completely unskilled (Transvaler, 21.10.42). Some of the meat workers were skilled or semi-skilled (SA Worker, 29.8.36, 26.9.36).

(16) Star, 15.12.42.

(17) Transvaler, 15.12.42.

(18) Star, 22.12.42; Transvaler, 1.1.42; Rand Daily Mail, 7.1.43.

(19) S. Mampuru, Report to Friends of Africa, Nov.-Dec. 1942, Jan.-Feb. 1943, Ballinger Papers.

(20) Forward, 31.12.42, 8.1.43, 22.1.43.

(21) Rand Daily Mail, 16.1.43. The strike was over excessive overtime and beatings, not wages.

(22) Star, 24.3.44; Sunday Times, 26.3.44; Cape Argus, 2.9.46.

(23) VFP Co to SA Trades & Labour Council, 17.8.44, TUCSA Records (ICS).

(24) Pretoria Portland Cement Co to Divisional Inspector of Labour, Johannesburg, 16.3.43, Labour Department Records, Vol. 1355.

(25) Ibid.

(26) Star, 9.6.43; Forward, 12.2.43.

(27) 'The Progressive Group Speaks' in "Report on the Split in the African Trade Union Movement, Johannesburg" (mimeo), SAIRR Library.

(28) See the strike-tables in the 1946 Official Year Book, Ch. VI, and the 1945 Annual Report of the Department of Labour.

(29) See my thesis.

(30) By the signing of a new industrial council agreement (Inkululeko, 5.6.43, 8.7.44).

(31) For the strike of 6,000 Vereeniging steel workers in June-July 1946, see Rand Daily Mail, 5.7.46.

(32) Transcript of Rex v. J. B. Marks and 51 Others (September 1946), p. 88, TUCSA Records.

(33) See 1944 conference resolution quoted in A. Brooks, "From Class Struggle to National Liberation, the Communist Party of South Africa, 1940-1950" (MA, Sussex, 1967), p. 58.

(34) Johannesburg Local Committee Minutes, 21.9.44, TUCSA Records. In July 1945 Fleet claimed that he had no less than four times dissuaded the black workers at Modderfontein Dynamite Factory from striking("Meeting with Minister of Labour, 19th July 1945", TUCSA Records).

(35) Phoffu (so Socialist Action, January 1946, complained)

> preferred to run around the official departments in a vain attempt to stave off the strike rather than to build up the strength and militancy of his real employers - the workers in his union.

(36) Native Economic Commission Evidence (SOAS), p. 5908.

(37) Several leaders are definitely known to have left their unions to seek "middle class" jobs, e.g. Daniel Koza of the African Commercial Distributive Workers' Union, the outstanding union leader of the 1940s, left for England in 1951 to train as a lawyer. See also N. Mokgatle, The Autobiography of an Unknown South African (California, 1971), pp. 222, 256.

(38) I must here acknowledge my debt to discussions with Dave Hemson and Mike Murphy. Baruch Hirson and Martin Legassick commented on earlier versions of this paper.

AUTHOR'S NOTE, July 1979: I have drastically altered paragraphs three and four of this paper in a revised and enlarged version which will be published elsewhere.

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List of Abbreviations

CNETU	Council of Non-European Trade Unions
ICS	Institute of Commonwealth Studies
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
TUCSA	Trade Union Council of South Africa
VFP	Victoria Falls Power
Wits.	Witwatersrand University