

THE SELEBI-PHIKWE STRIKE, BOTSWANA, 1975:
THE STATE, MINE WORKERS AND THE MULTINATIONALS

by

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The Strike Event*

In 1959, seven years before Botswana's independence, the Chief of the "Ngwato (Tribal) Reserve" negotiated a concession agreement with the Rhodesian Selection Trust (now Roan Selection Trust) to prospect for minerals in that area. RST controlled a major share of the copper production at the time in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). By 1967, the copper-nickel deposits at the two cattle posts of Selebi and Phikwe, fifteen kilometers apart, seemed the most promising of numerous other mineral finds (Optima, 1972: 63-67).

In 1971, construction began and the mine came on stream in 1974. The initial estimated capital costs were R107 million for the private mine complex and R53 million for the government controlled general infrastructure. By 1976 this had escalated to R272 million for the total capital costs which included the mine and the infrastructure. (1) After considerable financial reorganization of the ownership of the mining enterprise, the end result was that by 1972 production was being undertaken by the locally incorporated company, Bamangwato Concessions Limited (BCL). The latter's equity capital is owned 85% by Botswana RST Limited (BRST), with the remaining 15% being the Botswana government's free share as provided for in the 1959 original concession agreement (Master Agreement, 1972: 1-2). BRST's equity is itself controlled: (a) by a 30% shareholding of American Metal Climax (Amx), which company has a major shareholding in RST in Zambia and is listed as one of the nine largest USA multinationals engaged in non-petroleum mineral extraction; (b) by a 30% shareholding of the Anglo-American Corporation/Charter Consolidated Group, which has extensive southern African interests and also controls the De Beers (Botswana) company, which has undertaken extremely profitable diamond mining in Orapa and Letlhakane in the 1970s; and (c) 40% by small shareholders, mostly the general public of the USA. (2)

Besides the actual mining complex, the general infrastructure financed by the Botswana government by means of foreign loans (see below) included (a) new rail and road linkages; (b) a power station adjacent to the mine, burning coal from the mine at Morupule in Botswana, specifically developed by an Anglo-American subsidiary for this project; (c) a dam at the Shashe river and an 80 km. pipeline to the water works in Phikwe (3); (d) a township and supportive municipal services. The town was designed for an initially estimated population of 12,000 in the township and adjacent "Site and Service" area (Town Planning Report, 1970: appendix 2). By 1975, this township had a population of around 11,000. Ever since construction first began, however, people had spontaneously formed a village-style residence in "Botshabelo" ("a place of refuge") near the mine site, and this population had swelled to over

8,000 (Report of the Census of Selebi-Phikwe, 1975: preface).

On 29th July 1975, Botswana experienced the most serious strike in its labour history so far. (4) Discontent, which focussed on the annual wage increments expected at the end of that month (July), culminated in the temporary adjournment of negotiations between a delegation of mine workers and the BCL management on the afternoon of the 28th. Early the next day, when the day shift was to take over, some of the workers closed the main gates of the mine. Others entered the mine to inform the workers therein to join the strike, so as to facilitate a complete shutdown of production. In this connection, they evicted expatriate staff from the smelter plant and other departments and caused minor damage to some buildings by breaking windows. Outside the mine, many groups of workers went into the township and Botshabelo, to notify others of the strike. Some groups, carrying sticks, also attempted to round up all the BCL marked cars, used by many of the expatriate staff, and drive them to be left just outside the mine gates. In the process, some cars were damaged and stones were thrown at the personnel superintendent's car, and a number of unpopular expatriates were assaulted. Some of the doctors and nurses were evicted from the BCL clinic and only the presence of an alsatian dog prevented strikers breaking into the BCL-financed primary school.

A unit of the para-military Police Mobile Unit arrived from Francistown (5). At noon, the Vice President arrived from Gaborone with two other Ministers and attempted to address an estimated crowd of over 2,000 assembled at the gates (Botswana Daily News, 1975, a). When he began to raise the issue of the smelter - that if technicians had not managed to shut it down operation of the mine could have been halted for over a year - he was shouted down and abused. The chairman of the local Mine Workers' Union was also shouted down. The PMU moved in and dispersed the crowd with teargas.

PMU reinforcements were airlifted into the area, which came under heavy police security for some days. On the 30th most of the expatriate workers resumed maintenance work, while all the 2,800 Batswana were told to report at the personnel offices the following day. Here they were selectively reinstated on the basis of lists drawn up by the various (expatriate) heads of departments, 622 losing their jobs. (6) 180 people were detained by the police and later released on bail. Eventually, two months after the strike, 60 male and 2 female former BCL workers went on trial, "charged alternatively with rioting, intimidation and malicious damage to property". In December, 34 were convicted and received jail sentences from 3 to 12 months (Botswana Daily News, 1975, b, c, d).

In the President's broadcast to the nation the day after the strike, he had stated that "the Company is not obliged to re-employ any of the workers". (7) Much of the ensuing debate during the following twelve months focussed on this local issue. The President himself, when he came to address workers in Phikwe in December, after the trial had ended, stated he never intended to give the Company an excuse, "economic or otherwise ... to weed out the people they did not like prior to the disturbances" (Speech ... 19th December 1975: 5). Although the opposition parties called for a commission of enquiry (Botswana Daily News, 1976 b), the Government adopted an approach of informal discussions which eventually led to half of those originally sacked being reinstated. By the time of the annual BMWU conference at the end of 1976 in Phikwe, the atmosphere was one of letting matters rest. (8)

None the less, the strike did raise much broader issues which the President did elaborate on in his two speeches, but which were never publicly debated thereafter. In December his speech was more conciliatory to the workers, mentioning the tardiness in localization of BCL posts as well as grievances about race relations in the town - not raised in the earlier address. The latter, however, deals more concisely with the three issues on which this paper will focus. It is useful to quote these extensively:

(Issue one) ... The mine has been running at a loss of R3 million a month and just when it appeared that the various technical problems were nearly solved, the irresponsible action of

a handful of Batswana has caused a complete close down ... it is essential for Botswana's development that we should retain foreign investment and attract much more such investment. It is also necessary for us to import expatriate skills to aid us in our development. This can only be done if the companies who invest here obtain a reasonable return on their investments and if the skilled expatriates feel that their lives and property are safe ... illegal and unnecessary strikes have continued to such an extent that Botswana will lose its reputation as a stable and safe country in which to invest money ...

(Issue two) ... The number of Batswana employed in mining and industry constitutes a very small part of our total labour force. For every Motswana who is employed in these sectors there are at least five others who would like to be similarly employed but are forced to eke out a living in the rural areas or seek employment outside Botswana. My Government is committed to the sharing out of the revenue derived from mining and industry among all Batswana. A strike at Selebi-Phikwe, Orapa, Morupule or elsewhere, therefore, does not only harm the companies, who own the undertaking, but Botswana as a whole ...

(Issue three) ... The procedure for settling disputes is clearly laid down in our laws... I am aware that the large majority of workers do not wish to participate in these strikes but are intimidated into doing so by a hard core of politically motivated individuals ... [who] hope to reap political rewards from the chaos which could result...

In focussing on these issues, this paper will not use the strike in order to understand the trade union history of Botswana - though such a study is still an urgent necessity. Rather, an attempt will be made to relate the strike event to the type of social structure that is emerging in a Botswana considered as a structural part of the Southern African periphery. It is easy for title of this paper to evoke metaphors such as "working class" or "urbanization", which might derive some of their reality from contexts such as Western Europe. Botswana has, however, had "agrostads" of over 10,000 persons existing as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, and most of the Phikwe "working class" is best conceived of as "absentee farmers". Some discussion of the earlier social structures existing in Botswana is necessary so that the metaphors used later to describe the present class structure in Phikwe can derive their reality from this historical framework, and I have undertaken this in the full version of this paper. (See **Historical Structures for summary.)

The State - Multinational Relations

In the first issue of the President's speech, he was quite realistic in his fear of upsetting foreign investors. For this to be appreciated, the relationship between the state and the multinationals must be examined in terms of the foreign economic networks which penetrate Selebi-Phikwe. The other two issues bear more directly on the workers' situation and will be dealt with later.

The US Ambassador to the United Nations has recently stated:

The United States has to do to help Africa some of the things it did in Europe at the end of the Second World War. Expansion of Communism was contained by a development through the Marshall Plan and I think that what we see now in Africa is the beginning of a development strategy for

this continent which involves all the West, not just Western governments.
(Mr Andrew Young, in The Guardian, 1977: 8)

This level of self-consciousness was seldom present when the Phikwe negotiations began in 1968; none the less, the underlying structures and interests were, and it was these which the strike threatened.

Amax, Anglo-American, and the smaller shareholders, provided around R36 million as equity share capital for the initial financing of the private mining complex (Ostrander, 1974: 541). The two multinationals have since had to provide massive additional funding to keep the project alive because of recurrent technical problems.

The total financial package incorporated a much wider net of "Western" interests, however. R52 million for the mining enterprise was loaned at a low rate of interest (9 $\frac{3}{4}$ %, Ostrander, 1974: 544) by an investment bank owned by the West German government and an associated consortium of German commercial banks. In return, BCL has signed a fifteen year contract to sell 55% of the nickel and all the copper to a large West German firm which stood as guarantee for that part of the West German bank loan not guaranteed by the Bonn Government (Master Agreement, 1972: 5). The remaining nickel will also be sold in West Germany by BCL, thereby securing a copper and nickel supply for this country for 15 years (Ostrander, 1972: 541). However, before being sold in West Germany, the ore is first shipped from Botswana (via Mafeking, Johannesburg, Maputo) to the Amax refinery at Port Nickel in the USA for processing. This was of interest to Amax, who preferred this arrangement to utilizing Zambian or South African refining facilities, since their Port Nickel plant was operating below capacity (Lewis, 1974: 210). Even more important: this ore contains a $\frac{1}{2}$ % Cobalt content, and since the USA has no domestic supply of this metal (externally obtained from Zaire, however), it is said the US Government was favourably disposed to the World Bank co-ordinating these loan agreements and overcoming the often complex difficulties. Some Pentagon Generals even recently visited Phikwe on "a study of strategic materials".

The remaining principal loan finance for the private mining complex (R13.5 million) was provided by the Industrial Development Corporation, an official investment bank of South Africa, at an even lower interest rate (6 $\frac{1}{2}$ %, Ostrander, 1974: 541). A condition for the loan was that the South African content of capital goods and services for the mine construction contracts totalled at least R13.5 million. (9) Like the renegotiated Customs Union agreement with Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland in 1969, relatively favourable terms for these countries also imply increased economic linkages with South Africa, with political consequences.

In addition to the private mining side, the loans for the infrastructure also exhibited this network of linkages. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) gave loans to the Botswana Government at little or no interest, towards the costs of the water and power facilities, respectively. Because the CIDA loan was tied to purchasing Canadian equipment for the power station, the costs were higher than would have occurred in a free market situation (Puisano ..., 1972: 2). At the same time the Botswana Government did insist on the development of the local colliery at Morupule as opposed to the cheaper option of importing electrical power from South Africa or coal from South Africa or Rhodesia.

A World Bank loan provided for much of the remaining infrastructure costs, though small grants came from the UK and Danish governments (World Bank ... 1972: annex, 2). The Botswana Government put great emphasis on being financially responsible, through receipt of these loans, for this infrastructure, rather than it being developed by the mining company (as in Orapa). Moreover, BCL entered into a long-term agreement with the Government to pay water and power minimum rates (to the parastatal Water and Power Corporations), railway surcharges, and an annual "Township Contribution". This almost fully services the Government's debt commitments on the above loans.

Few workers in Phikwe in 1976, including the trade union leadership, were found to make clear conceptual distinctions between the multinationals and foreign governments, nor between the foreign shareholders of BCL and the local expatriate technocracy. The dominant model current in people's minds was of "Whites ['Makgoa' Whites, the term used for expatriates] sent by their countries to steal the copper of Botswana", with their own Government seen as a passive or ineffectual bystander. The strikers thus acted out the strike on the stage of Selebi-Phikwe without a clear idea of the maze of networks within which they were caught. While this model might capture some of the spirit of their situation, an effective long-term strategy would have to take into account a much more complex picture, including a knowledge that an anti-nationalization clause had been included in the Master Agreement (1972: 49). If the workers were largely unaware of these complexities, some of the principal foreign actors were not. In a paper given to a Southern African conference, a leading Amax official stated:

It has become an axiom of U.S. government and international development agencies that projects involving investment from several national sources are to be preferred to projects having a single national source of finance ... The finger of nationalistic anger or political animosity is not as apt to be pointed in several directions at once, as it is at a single-nationality investor ... The assurance given by multi-national sources of finance is only one of the protections for the outside investor that has been built into the structure of the Selebi-Pikwe deal ... [moreover] Botswana has [agreed in the Master Agreement] to submit any major disputes with the investor to arbitration by the new World Bank-sponsored International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (I.C.S.I.D.). Any serious contravention of such arbitration, or any unjustified tampering with the underlying security of the World Bank loan, would certainly jeopardize a government's access to further World Bank credit.
(Ostrander, 1974: 543)

It would be unfortunate if the above analysis is taken as full support for either a theory of conspiracy by the relevant actors or a theory of structural determinism whereby actors have no options open to them in the situation. This network of economic forces which affected the life chances of the Phikwe strikers in a largely hidden way was, after all, set up by human actors. When negotiations began from 1968 onwards, the present political uncertainty in Southern Africa could not have been a dominant factor. The negotiators for the multi-nationals were primarily interested in obtaining a rate of profit as good as or better than they might get elsewhere in the world - as well as having the long-term calculation of gaining a foothold ahead of any competitors in a country which geological finds of the 1960s were shown to contain a vast mineral potential. A country like Germany - or rather the state apparatus in that society as an amalgam of a set of complementary and conflicting class interests existent there (including its own working class) - was obviously interested in a long-term supply of metals as well as generally increasing its interests in the area. (10) The aid organizations, and particularly the multitude of their local representatives in Botswana, are to some extent genuine in their desire to help what they perceive as a "poor, non-racial Third World country". The latter paradigm, the conception of poverty and the abhorrence of apartheid in nearby South Africa, has a strong influence on all these organizations and undoubtedly also prevailed upon most of the foreign government and multi-national negotiators as well. This paradigm is not simply a rationalization of other interests, though an effect of this world view is to reinforce the hidden nature of these linkages.

What is important is that there are "boundary conditions" which set limits on these negotiators, i.e. there is a region of choices "out of bounds". As the Amax representative put it:

... practically none of the capital being loaned to the Botswana government for the purpose of constructing this infrastructure would have been made available to it, if it were not for the existence of the private mining enterprise.

(Ostrander, 1974: 541)

I have argued in the historical section (***) that during the colonial period the earlier mode of production retained many of its essential features. If one can talk about a crossroads period for a mode of production, this is probably true for Botswana in the late 1950s and early 1960s period, when moves towards independence began to take shape. The British administration was more favourably inclined to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which has since independence had a parliamentary majority, than it was to the chief-orientated factions, on the one hand, or what it perceived as the "Pan-Africanist" factions, on the other (Halpern, 1965: 285-297). In terms of foreign policy, a main thrust of the BDP has been to try to extricate itself as much as possible from the economic and political networks directed from Pretoria. (11) It has never so far had a theoretical perspective which could assess whether it was not simply trying to incorporate itself in an alternative network with nearly equal dangers. In the 1960s the attempts to move away from South Africa were fairly progressive in the Southern African context, and it could be argued that a more radical stance by the BDP would have been squashed by foreign intrigues, as in Lesotho.

In the 1960s the degree to which this BDP receptiveness to the above Western aid was influenced by the objective economic interests of the factions supporting it - as against the influence of ideological determinants (anti-apartheid attitudes, internationalization of a specific world view derived from Western educational influences, etc.) - cannot be gone into here. As a minimum, it could be said some factions intuitively realized in the 1960s that this external economic network would at least not harm their interests. After more than a decade of incorporation, however, the external networks have helped to shape the internal class structure. As will be shown below, the strike revealed classes which threaten this finely balanced network, however unintentionally they do so. Similarly, the paper has really only been talking so far about government apparatus - multinational relationships. The broadening of the former into a concept of the "State apparatus" which responds to and processes demands from the internal class structure can only be dealt with in relation to the strike after a class analysis is made below.

It should be stressed that these Phikwe networks are not an isolated case and thus such a strike has wide ramifications. Throughout Botswana the predominant British colonial influence has slowly been augmented by influences from North America, Western Europe and Scandinavia. (12) The operation of the Lomé Convention and the way in which the European Economic Community reduced the import levy on Botswana beef in 1975 by 90% because it threatened to harm the country's economy are replications of the copper-nickel story, with cattle this time. (13) Nor has this led to underdevelopment in the sense of an actual falling of real income. What has occurred, at least in the Botswana case, has been distorted development within a situation of a rising standard of living for virtually everyone in the post-independence decade. The strike took place within this context of rising expectations. In the light of the earlier colonial history of Botswana, what Sweezy says of Cuba could just as well have been said of Botswana:

We were, we [Sweezy and Huberman] wrote in the spring of 1960, struck again and again during our stay in Cuba by 'the extent to which rapid and important results could be obtained merely by eliminating the worst abuses and wastes of the old order'. To put the point in different terms, there was a very large unused (or abused) potential in the Cuban economy and society ...
(Sweezy and Magdoff, 1974: 18)

This occurred even more so in Phikwe than the rest of Botswana, with the massive injection of modern machinery (embodying "dead labour" from outside Botswana)

and the utilizing of local labour which was previously either underemployed in the rural areas or employed in South Africa. Nor is the President wrong about some of the economic benefits made available from Phikwe which the strike could have jeopardized. Revenues for the government are obtained from (a) corporate profit taxation, (b) royalties and dividends (the Government's 15% share), (c) Taxation of wage income, (d) customs duties on mining imports, (e) interest from the various power, water, etc., surcharges. (14)

It is proclaimed government policy to utilize these revenues in pursuing its policy of the primacy of rural development (National Development Plan, 1973: Part I), and customs duties during the construction phase were considerable. However, owing mainly to world inflation, the poor metal prices on the world market, engineering design mistakes, and technical problems concerning ore extraction, the mine has been running at an enormous, unanticipated loss. It could be argued that in this venture, at least so far, the multinationals have lost more than Botswana! (15) Moreover, in what was to be Botswana's next major mining project, Amax has declined to take up its option to develop salt and soda ash production in 1976 at the Sua Pan, both for economic reasons and because of political uncertainty prevailing in Southern Africa. The recent budget proposals also reduce the period in which capital mining costs are written off for tax purposes:

The Government sees this proposal as a clear indication that it is looking for investment on a large scale in the development of Botswana's mineral resources.

(Budget Speech, 1977: item 73)

Other amendments to the 1972 Master Agreement are also in the pipeline (Budget Speech 1977: item 20). This development path thus acquires its own momentum and constraints. A series of strikes in the urban areas during the few years prior to the Phikwe strike had already made the government sensitive. Thus, four months before the strike, the Botswana Daily News headlined the speech of the outgoing Phikwe branch chairman of the Botswana Mine Workers' Union, in which he called for proper procedures to be followed prior to strike action, as "Illegal Strikes in Phikwe rapped" (1975 f). A month before the strike, a feature article followed: "Our Trade Unions ... are they coming or going" (Botswana Daily News, 1975 g). There were deeper causes in Phikwe, however, besides urban "instability" and "Trade Unions", related to this form of distorted development mentioned - in particular (a) the expatriate situation and (b) the Phikwe class structure, both generated by the external economic networks just described.

Phikwe Miners - a Labour Aristocracy?

The President's second point viewed the mine workers as a "labour aristocracy" (cf Waterman [1975]). The appeal was for them to temper their wage demands because this could result in similar claims being made by civil servants and others in wage employment, thereby (a) creating a "high wage-low volume of employment" phenomenon in the urban sector, (b) increasing the rural-urban wage gap, the volume of migration to the towns, and urban unemployment, and (c) decreasing the nett governmental revenues available for rural development. (16) This point can be considered in relation to the two aspects of distorted development mentioned above.

(i) The Expatriate Situation***

(ii) The Phikwe Internal Class Structure

A whole set of issues hinted at above, including this form of distorted development, require this analysis before the actual role played in the strike by various strata can be interpreted. This analysis cannot be detailed, but at the same time it also cannot ignore the situation of the urban wage sector in general nor the articulation of the Phikwe class structure with the rural mode of production. (17)

The six large "agrostad" capitals of what used to be the major tribal "Reserves" (now "Districts") have steadily increased their role in the twentieth century as centres of trade and local government. (18) Simultaneously, there has been a tendency for some people to make their homes permanently at the lands, for economic and social reasons, and abandon their village residence (Silitshena, 1976 b). If the populations of the other two large villages that have emerged along the railway line are included with these six, the de facto populations of these eight rural centres made up 15% of the total village plus lands plus cattle-post population of Botswana in 1971. (19) On the other hand, 72% of the total Batswana de facto rural population were in rural settlements with a population of under 1000 persons. (20) The Rural Income Distribution Survey found the median rural income per month of households in these eight centres to be P73, as against P50 for the rest of the rural population. (21) The rural population must, therefore, be seen as stratified in part by the large village/small village-lands-cattle post gradation, and this itself reflects the ethnic-politico "state formation" of each Reserve, discussed in the "Historical Structures" section.

A characteristic of colonial underdevelopment was that in 1960 wage employment in the "Protectorate" was only around 13,000, more or less evenly distributed between government, agriculture (mostly European farms), trade and industry, and domestic service (cf Halpern, 1965: 307). In the colonial administration there was no policy of localization at all until 1961 (Smit, 1970: 67), and in 1960 only 41 out of the 597 persons in the clerical and higher grades of the administration were Batswana (Halpern, 1965: 313).

In 1963, it was decided to move from the old colonial headquarters in Mafeking (20 miles south of the border, in South Africa) and to construct the new capital at Gaborone, then a police post. By 1975 Gaborone had a population of around 35,000 (Stephens, 1976: 19). Francistown, the old commercial centre of the Tati Company in the north-east, had more than doubled its population since 1964, as had Lobatse, the centre of the beef export industry since 1954. If one includes the populations of Selebi-Phikwe and Orapa with these three, this "urban" population, as the 1971 census defines it, has grown from around 20,000 in 1964 to just over 95,000 in 1975, this population now being 14% of the total Botswana population (Vanhanen, 1976: 2).

Although there is no clear definition of "urban" as opposed to "large village", what distinguishes the two is really the predominance of mid-twentieth century forces of production (technology) underpinning the economy of these "towns" and thereby influencing the social relations of production existent there. (22) By 1975 wage employment in what is termed the "formal sector" included nearly 48,000 Botswana citizens, i.e. around 20% of all Botswana citizens between the economically "active" ages of 15 to 54. (23) These (nearly) 48,000 were employed as follows (24):

State Sectors	43%
Mining and Quarrying	7%
Manufacture and Construction	18%
Agriculture	7%
Commerce and Finance, Transport and Services	25%

Moreover, a total of nearly 64% of all this wage employment was in the "towns" and another 18% in rural District government service (derived from Employment Survey, August 1975, 1976: 6). Two factors stand out, therefore, in Botswana's development since 1960: (i) the growth of wage employment in the towns; (ii) the incorporation of a large number of the employed into the various state sectors. The latter has been made possible partly by the expansion of secondary school facilities - in 1960, of the meagre 561 children attending secondary school in the "Protectorate", half were in the first form and only 18 sitting for their matriculation (Halpern, 1965: 311). The fact that besides these 48,000 there were nearly 8,000 domestic servants and gardeners in Botswana, according to the 1971 Census (1972: Table 29), points to the distorted nature of some of this development.

Selebi-Phikwe is in many ways a microcosm of this development. A rough estimate for the number of Batswana in employment in Selebi-Phikwe in April 1975 was as follows (25)

Mining (BCL)	2800
Manufacture, Engineering, Construction	1200
State Sectors	700
Commerce and Finance, Transport and Services	700
Domestic Servants, Gardeners	1000
Batswana aged 15-54 who stated they were not formally employed (two-thirds female)	4500
Total Batswana aged 10+ in Phikwe	<u>10900</u>

In trying to conceptualize the class structure from this mass of employment figures, it is useful to begin with a breakdown of wage divisions; then introduce relevant economic and cultural factors, including the positions occupied by different groups in the production/distribution process; and, finally, relate workers' articulation with the rural mode of production. What one is looking for ultimately is a clarification of which groups will tend to emerge, as well as form alliances with other such groups, in order to pursue their material interests in obtaining or increasing their segment of the total economic product - in a struggle which ranges from informal economic exchanges to fully-fledged political organization.

A breakdown of wage employment divisions for citizens in Botswana as a whole was as follows in 1975 (26):

	"Stratum a"	"Stratum b"	"Stratum c"
wage/month	P 1-100	P 101-P 200	above P 200
Non-State Sectors	89%	9%	2%
State Sectors	77%	17%	6%

It will be shown that in Selebi-Phikwe these break-points are significant, and they have thus been divided here as Strata a, b, c. Because Government employment forms a large proportion of total wage employment, because other state sectors and mining follow the government wage levels closely, and because other private industries do not diverge greatly, these strata levels can be said to have significance throughout the country (if break-points are taken as a rough guide).

BCL divides all "local" workers into Grades One to Eight. The breakdown was as follows (27):

	"Stratum a"	"Stratum b"	"Stratum c"
Grades	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-6	Grades 6-8
wage/month	P 40-80	P 85-200	above P 200
	78%	20%	2%

One factor reinforcing mere income levels in Selebi-Phikwe (and in Gaborone) is the allocation of Government, Parastatal and BCL housing in the township, according to income level. The planned Phikwe township (i.e. excluding Botshabelo) has the main road running from west to east and cutting the township in two, with the shopping mall right in the centre. The north side contains "low cost" houses in which BCL grades 1-3 live as well as a few "stratum a" state sector employees. Still on this side but near the mall (and extending westwards) and just across the road (south) near the mall (and extending eastwards) is a belt of "medium cost" houses. All the BCL grades 4-6

are eligible for housing in these north side houses, which have been supplied with electricity, which are better finished on the outside than the other BCL "low cost" houses, and which western region has been coined "Orlando" after the relatively "up-graded" area of the African township of Soweto, Johannesburg. "Stratum b" state sector employees live in this belt on both sides of the road. Further south on the south side are the "high cost" houses in which expatriates and some of the Batswana "stratum c" BCL and state sector employees live.

A cultural factor is relevant, however. There tends to be some social separation (for example, attendance at public bars versus "shebeens" in private houses) between educated and less educated Batswana in Phikwe - which is complex, but if one wants a crude cut-off point it is the completion of three years of secondary school (the "Junior Certificate" examination).

This is reflected in the housing situation. There is the Government distinction between "industrial class" and "staff", whose conditions of service are different and with only the latter eligible for government housing. Some of the former are skilled workers (e.g. painters) who actually can earn above P 100 (i.e. stratum b), while the entry point for the lowest "staff" grade (clerical and typists) is the Junior Certificate pass, with the starting salary around P 60 (i.e. stratum a). (28) In BCL it is basically the "grade" that matters. Yet in Orlando there tends to be informal differences. Many of the grade 4-6 workers are relatively uneducated, often having been "boss-boys" or other semi-skilled workers in the South African mines. BCL has been able to utilize this, and they have often become "shift bosses", "heavy machine operators", etc., in Phikwe. Many of these grade fours, earning as they do between P 85 and P 100, actually live in the "low cost" housing area, while some of the clerical grade threes have "medium cost" housing. On the other hand, research showed the local trade union leadership at the time of the strike was predominantly from the educated sector of grades 4-6. There is also a tendency for educated grade sixes to obtain housing across the road in the south side. However, since many of the less educated BCL grades 4-6 are attempting to give their children a good education (personal interviews), this division is not reproducing itself.

In 1976 no expatriates at all lived on the north side of the main road. After 1968, when the original township plans were drawn up, there was an attempt by some expatriate government planners, who anticipated what they perceived to be a de facto racialist divide emerging in the housing, to create a more integrated housing system. With BCL management and some other groups against this, the Cabinet decision eventually opted for relatively minor adjustments. (29) The effect of the external networks in shaping the internal structure is thus direct in this case.

It can be seen that, in terms of consciousness, housing selection and role in the production process, what is termed here the lower level (Stratum b) bureaucratic bourgeoisie is separated off from other workers. Their actual productive role is important: there is a group of JC (Junior Certificate) or higher educated workers who are being trained by BCL and the State as skilled artisans, and their production role and relations with other workers makes them better conceived of as part of the latter. Higher level technical supervisors (e.g. senior shift foremen) are postulated, however, as part of the stratum c, high level bureaucratic bourgeoisie (see Table 1 for the way the initial wage level strata have thus been transformed).

Nearly half the population of Selebi-Phikwe live outside the planned township, in the unplanned Botshabelo and the Site and Service area established south of the "high cost" housing area in 1975. This scheme is really a "planned Botshabelo", with a plot being provided for the household to construct a dwelling (sometimes of brick/zinc, sometimes mud/thatch), water stand-pipes and a road network also being provided. Botshabelo is now being similarly developed. Selebi-Phikwe is not unique in having these "peri-urban" areas, as they are termed; 75% of the population of Francistown and 25% of that of Gaborone live in such areas (Peri-Urban Survey, 1974: ii).

About 20% of all BCL employees live in Botshabelo, primarily to avoid the P 4 per month rent for "low cost" BCL housing and also so as to have the security of their own dwelling. Nearly all of these are part of "stratum" in terms of their

TABLE 1

<u>Workers</u>	<u>Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie</u>	<u>Petty Bourgeoisie</u>
	Unemployed.	
<u>Stratum A.1</u>	Domestic Servants, unskilled construction/engineering workers.	
	Unskilled workers (P40-44): BCL Grade 1, State Industrial Class Group 4.	Small scale beer brewers, hawkers, shoe repairers, etc.
<u>Stratum A.2</u>	Semiskilled workers (P45-120): BCL Grades 2-4 (underground spannermen, drivers, etc.), State Industrial Class Groups 3-1.	
<u>Stratum B</u>	Skilled workers: less educated BCL Grades 5-6 (heavy equipment drivers, shift bosses, etc., P100-200); State and BCL (Grades 2-6) technical trainees and artisans (J.C. certif. P60-200)	Few self- employed (around P100-200)
<u>Stratum C.1</u>	Educated BCL Grades 6-8 (senior shift foremen, accountants, personnel officers, etc. P200-330); Senior Civil Servants (above P200)	Small capitalists, especially shopowners.
<u>Stratum C.2</u>	Expatriate artisans, Middle and upper level management (all above P500).	Expatriate and Asian retail store owners; engineering/ construction firm owners.

wage grades. (30) If they do not live with a relative in town, most of the government industrial class live in these two peri-urban areas. So do many of the construction and engineering unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the domestic servants, and various workers in shops and other commercial establishments. At the time of the strike, the wages of the lowest unskilled BCL and government workers were both P 40 per month. This was always higher than the wages of unskilled workers in these other sectors, with some domestic servants and shop assistants even falling below P 20. Thus, although most persons in these peri-urban areas are part of stratum a, there are levels of gradation amongst the poor, with the unemployed at the bottom.

Besides the employed in Phikwe, one has to consider the self-employed, broadly divided into (i) traders of various levels, (ii) petty commodity producers. (31) The latter in Phikwe and Botswana as a whole are not numerous, the economic and cultural domination of South Africa having resulted in the importation of tinned foods, clothes, household utensils, etc. Thus most are involved in trade of some sort. Women - single, widowed, or the wives of workers (including those in BCL low cost housing and Orlando) - are heavily involved in beer brewing, retailing commercial beer, and the sale of meat and beer at parties ("motshelo"). In 1976, with reasonable application, at least P 30 per month could be made by such women, the really enterprising even penetrating into stratum b. In Phikwe (but not the rural areas), retail trade is still dominated by expatriates and some local citizen Asians. Botswana are mostly small scale hawkers, vendors and taximen of stratum a or b, though a few large traders have emerged, definitely of stratum c.

Besides the factors discussed above, differentiating stratum a as a whole from stratum b, the most important is actually their articulation with the rural mode of production: for most workers in Botswana towns are objectively and subjectively still migrant peasants who own their own means of production and accumulation. Crucial to this are the factors discussed earlier, of Botswana history and social structure: (i) very little land alienation, little land shortage and ease of obtaining arable land simply by applying to the headman; (ii) the type of arable farming which, except for ploughing, can be done entirely by women; (iii) the herdsmen system of cattle care.

In this situation many of the male workers in Phikwe were leaving their wives and children behind in the village, the wife assisted by kin working on the lands and coming to Phikwe for visits or after the harvest. This was economical and also reinforced by a culture of migrant labour generated over decades of men going to the South African mines. For most, the past decade of town development in eastern Botswana has simply been to "transport" wage employment opportunities there instead of these existing across the South African border - the village still remains the base. For people in the low-cost housing and peri-urban areas, rural agriculture was a major way of making ends meet and a security (food supply) if they lost their job. Although some of the more educated stratum b workers were bringing their wives (often also fairly educated) to Phikwe, many were also employing tractor-owners to plough for them and hiring people to assist in the harvest, the wife being a general supervisor at the lands. This was even more so with cattle: although the Rural Income Distribution Survey found 45% of rural households owning no cattle at all (1976: 110), it was hard to find in Selebi-Phikwe a married male worker in stratum b who had no cattle, or who was not at least planning to buy soon. (32) With the "going rate" for herdsmen being P 12 or less per month in 1976 (with benefits of milk and cattle for use in ploughing included in this "mafisa" system, and perhaps a calf a year as well), those in stratum b or c were situated in an advantageous exchange network with those permanently in the rural areas.

The urban worker/rural peasant dichotomy must thus be seen to be false. The only adults found to be significantly committed solely to the urban areas were some single or divorced women. Workers in stratum b and above tend to be, or are becoming, richer farmers as well, and hence are a "labour aristocracy" in two senses. This form of mining development is thus reinforcing this tendency significantly.

What of stratum a? It can be recalled that the Rural Income Distribution found the median income (including transfers from urban workers) to be P 73 and P 50 per month for large village and small village/lands/cattle post households, respectively - not therefore significantly different from an employed unskilled worker in Phikwe, who would be earning P 20 to P 50 per month, whose crops probably failed because of lack of rain in December 1976, and who never can save enough money to accumulate cattle. The latter point is crucial, since, although a person earning P 50 to P 100 might begin to buy some cattle, the recurrent droughts, the loss of animals because of poor herdsmanhip, and the often numerous dependants draining his income make it difficult to "take-off" with cattle. This crucial dividing line between stratum a and stratum b, where the latter's level of wages makes cattle accumulation a reasonable possibility, is given added support by the fact that the upper levels of stratum a provided the core elements in the strike (omitted).

Since the above P 50 for small villages is a median, there must be 30%-40% of these households (for convenience, termed stratum x) situated outside both the towns and the eight large villages that are very poor indeed. Initial impressions from some of the data collected suggest many of the BCL and government semi-skilled workers earning P 45 to P 100, come from the villages of Botswana of over 1000 persons, which only make up 28% of the de facto rural population. If this proves correct, this stratum x is even worse off in having relatively fewer members of their households serving them as target workers in the towns. (33) In addition, 56% of the Selebi-Phikwe population came to Phikwe from Districts within a 250 kilometre radius and which contain only three of the eight large villages (cf Sociological and Housing Attitudes ... 1975: 162); and a larger proportion of this group tend to be the unskilled workers predominating in the peri-urban areas. (34) Similar trends are discernible in Francistown and Gaborone. Thus there is another very poor stratum a (1), living generally in the peri-urban areas, unemployed or employed below P 45, often in non-government and non-mine sectors, who themselves come from the poorer rural areas. Some of their household members are continually flowing back and forth during different periods of the agricultural cycle, involved in various enterprises simultaneously, simply to make ends meet: lands and few/no cattle, unskilled employment and/or self-employment. Stratum x and stratum a (1), one rural, the other peri-urban and rural, are the very poor of Botswana. The semi-skilled and skilled workers, stratum a (2) earning from P 45 to the P 100-P 120 range, are relatively better off, but because they are generally unable to accumulate significant agricultural capital in the form of cattle, should thus be included within the broad term of "Third World poor", stratum a.

Actors in the Strike ****

* This paper is an extract from the initial draft of a longer one of the same title, to be published in 1978. Relevant omitted sections are indicated. Some points below have been further elaborated in the final draft, particularly (i) the role played by national (metropole) social formations as a base from which multi-nationals conduct their international activities and (ii) the relative weighting of factors structuring the Phikwe internal class structure, especially wage levels versus role in the production process. The final synthesis has, however, been included by means of Table 1.

** Historical Structures omitted: discusses tributary mode of production of the four dominant Tswana chiefdoms, their ethnic-politico structure and underlying relations of production centred on household lands and cattle activities; the maintenance of many of these structures through the creation of "Reserves" during colonial rule, the emergence of the "Protectorate" as a labour reserve for South African capital, and the transformation of this status, after independence, through the penetration primarily of "Western" based capital and, secondarily, of South African based capital.

*** The Expatriate Situation omitted: their occupational structure; racist practices and the strikers' attacks on cars, clinic, etc., in response to this; and

Government income policy in relation to what is termed "expatriate/local" differentiation.

**** Actors in the Strike omitted: Botswana trade union laws and Phikwe union structure; the role of Union in the strike, the leading role of stratum a.2 underground workers and their reference to South African mine wages; the relationship between the state and "power bloc" of dominant internal classes and its reflection in the state's strong-arm crushing of the strike.

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Notes

- (1) When Botswana changed her currency from the South African Rand (R) to the Pula (P) (tied to the Dollar) in late August 1976, one Rand = one Pula = 1.16 US Dollars. The initial estimates quoted (Optima, 1972: 63) have escalated because of world inflation and technical problems (see later). These latest figures in March 1976 were announced in parliament (Botswana Daily News, 1976 a). It should be noted that in 1969 Botswana's gross domestic product was about R48 million, and total exports in 1970 only R16 million, mainly meat and livestock products from the cattle industry (Ostrander, 1974: p. 535).
- (2) Cf Lewis, 1974: 158-160. This study provides a valuable analysis of the whole financial structure of the mining enterprise. The USA general public origin information is obtained from discussions with BCL.
- (3) For convenience, the shortened term used by people in Selebi-Phikwe will be used. The township and mine works have actually been constructed at Phikwe. The other mine shaft has already been sunk at Selebi and production is expected to begin there in 1979.
- (4) This account draws on personal interviews conducted informally during 1976, when the author was engaged in another study project concerning Phikwe workers' migration patterns and economic linkages with the rural areas, and which involved

residence in the township throughout that year and the collection of 160 life histories of these workers. Botswana Daily News reports of the strike were also used, as were notes and an unpublished paper by Diane Cooper (1976), who interviewed some of the strikers.

- (5) Botswana has no army.
- (6) This figure and the later figure of the numbers subsequently re-employed were obtained from the Labour Office, Selebi-Phikwe, in December 1976.
- (7) This speech was printed in full in the Botswana Daily News on 31st July 1975.
- (8) Personal attendance at the hearing of various delegates' speeches.
- (9) Tricomf Fertiliser of South Africa also negotiated a long-term contract for supply of two-thirds of the sulphur, a by-product from the Smelter process.
- (10) Since then, a major local industry, the Gaborone-based brewery, has been established with German company participation. In 1977 a leading German firm of industrial consultants has been engaged to assist with the Ministry of Commerce's industrial study (Botswana Daily News, 1977a).
- (11) cf Henderson, 1974, who assesses Botswana's independence purely in these terms.
- (12) cf Sillery(1974: 166), in which a list of Foreign Aid for development in 1972-73 is given.
- (13) The Lomé Convention, 1975, between the EEC and countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean (ACP). This beef export crisis is outlined in Chiepe (1975).
- (14) cf Lewis, 1974, for a cost-benefit analysis.
- (15) This mine is at a competitive advantage, however, with any other world copper mine which might be started now at the much higher capital costs prevailing in the late 1970s. With the Selebi and two other possible nearby ore deposits still to be mined, and with the copper price potentially still to rise, enormous profits could still be made.
- (16) The President's Speech (19th December 1975: 3) briefly makes these points, which themselves have their origin in the dominant development paradigm adhered to by planners in Botswana. This paradigm was elaborated on by the consultant Professor Ghai (1971), the Government's National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profits (1972), the Rural Development Report (Chambers and Feldman, 1973), and the National Development Plan 1973-78 (1973).
- (17) This summary here is derived from data obtained by interviewing the 160 workers drawn from skilled and unskilled miners and households in the "Site and Service" area. The statistics to be obtained from these "life history" interviews are yet not available, but some of the main trends are apparent.
- (18) Serowe, Kanye, Molepolole, Maun, Mochudi, and Ramotswa.
- (19) The two are Mahalapye and Palapye, thereby giving the eight villages in Botswana which had a de facto population of over 5000 in late August 1971, the period after the harvest when the 1971 Census hoped to find the maximum number of persons actually back from the lands living in the villages (Report of the Population Census 1971: 103). De facto = people actually living at the place of enumeration. The 15% is 77,658 out of 501,328, computed from pages 103 and 97, respectively.
- (20) i.e. 360,981 out of 501,328, computed from pages 98 and 97, respectively.
- (21) Computed from annual income figures of The Rural Income Distribution Survey in Botswana, 1974/75 (1976: 88). Although this survey's statistics should only be taken as a rough guide (because of response error, particularly), it was theoretically extremely rigorous. It covered a stratified sample of over 1800 out of the 93,000 rural households, interviewed rural households each month for 12 months, and included a wide definition of income (e.g. income in kind, income from livestock in terms of a "weight gained" concept, transferred income from absent members, imputed rental benefit from owner occupied housing, etc.). The figures quoted are for "Gross Available Income" to the household "after deducting ordinary running expenses [e.g. cost of seed] (excluding depreciation) and after deducting household taxes" (1976: 23).
- (22) "Predominance" because, although the large "agrostads" have developed a few craft industries and commercial structures (e.g. banks), with even some tractors beginning to be used for ploughing, the earlier forces and social relations of production still predominate.

- (23) This uses the 1971 Census figure of 235,919 (1972: 135) for all citizens aged 15-54 present in Botswana. Some people above 54 are employed, and the figure is for 1971, not 1975. However, this will not greatly affect the 20% proportion.
- (24) Computed from Employment Survey, August 1975 (1976: 2). The survey excludes seasonal employment on the "Tribal Lands", i.e. "Agriculture" only includes wage employment on the 189 commercial farms (1976: 7). The "informal sector" is also excluded. The survey did not include the Parastatals (100% Government shareholding) as part of the "state sectors" but, since wages and conditions of service are similar, I have computed an overall "state sectors" figure from those of "Central Government", "Local Government", "Education", "Electricity and Water" (1976: 2) and 1500 for the Botswana Meat Commission, subtracted from "Manufacturing" - this latter figure is estimated from Manpower and Employment in Botswana (1973: 11, 187).
- (25) This is a rough estimate, which attempted to get the best figures from three sources: The Selebi-Phikwe Census, April 1975 (1976: Tables 13-17); the Selebi-Phikwe Labour Office's figures from their survey in August 1976; personal interviews of nearly every employing organization by the author in 1976.
- (26) Derived from Employment Survey, August 1975 (1976: 4) and rounded to the nearest percent. The State Sector = "Central and Local Government" (including the "Industrial Class"), "Education" and "Electricity and Water". No better breakdown is possible, though here, as before, the "Non-State Sector" includes a few state-owned organizations.
- (27) Obtained from the breakdown of the 2432 BCL "local" employees' employment cards, Personnel Department records, February 1976, and correlated with the Bamangwato Concessions Limited Local Employees Wage Schedule - 1st July 1975.
- (28) cf Report of the (Government) Salaries Review Commission, 1974.
- (29) See correspondence between 24th September 1969 and 18th March 1970 in File number 7, "Township 1968", of Shashe Project Management Unit collection. It is to the Government's credit that the National Development Plan 1973-78 stresses the mixing of areas in future planning.
- (30) Information from BCL Housing Department.
- (31) In Phikwe, chiefly dressmakers and skin curers; builders, thatchers, fencers, carpenters; watch, shoe, bicycle, motor-car repairers; metal workers; witch doctors. All information from interviews and participant observation.
- (32) Interviews with the Batswana traders of stratum c showed a large proportion of their profits being invested in cattle, not additional stock.
- (33) The question of where the migrants that go to the South African mines come from could alter this - but initial impressions suggest they come from the same sort of areas as Phikwe miners come from (and the latter had often been in the South African mines as well).
- (34) This is because the converse (obtained from interviews) holds, viz that skilled workers predominate in the township area, and these skilled workers tend to come from farther afield, particularly the south-east.

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