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AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS : - LABOUR IDEOLOGY -
INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS UNION
OF AFRICA



BY

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INTRODUCTION

This work has grown from, and come to supercede, an honours dissertation written on roughly the same area of interest. The scope of this work is significantly broader though. There are two major foci of interest, which, it is hoped, blend to provide a more representative overview of this particular period. The first focus rests on Johannesburg for the reason that it was South Africa's most rapidly developing industrial centre; It was here that the predominant capitalist social formations were most truly represented. The other focus turns on the ICU and its peculiar development. The closing chapters are an attempt to locate the ICU in Johannesburg, to look at the manner in which the ICU might or might not have resonated the feeling of the people of that city.

The period in which this thesis is set, 1917 to 1930, possibly witnessed some of the earliest attempts to seize in harness the 'black' labour force, to manipulate and control its movements at the urban level. The Pass Laws and urban regulations, statutorily sanctioned by the Urban Areas Act of 1923, nurtured a proletarian class, hampered not only in its ability to live where it chose, but in its very ability to sell its labour power. The effect which these measures

gave rise to is of immense interest. For a long time, it has been suspected and known that alternative methods have been devised in the urban African context simply to overcome the difficulty of surviving; the growth of intensive informal market networks is perhaps one of the most significant indicators about the attitude of victim people to their kind of existence.

I have not been able to pursue the structure of this sub-market in this thesis. It is sufficient to note its pervasive presence against the development of organisations which grew out of the working class, and try to understand the dynamics or interactions of consciousness which were produced in this situation. It is my understanding that real interaction, between the working class and its highly peculiar approach to the struggle and the organisations and the approach of expediency which they adopted, never really came about. It would thus be possible to argue that the ICU and other similar organisations failed to comprehend and take advantage of the level of thinking of the workers themselves.

The material which the ICU drew on, was, arguably, considerably advanced in its degree of proletarianisation. The urban workers, unlike the mine workers, had no access to a subsistence mode of production.

Their source of income was classical wage payment, in return for labour power expended on the job market. The ICU was thus dealing with the elementary material of a trade union. The purpose of this thesis is to look at how the ICU used this material.

Although the ICU was not a trade union in the industrial sense, in that it was not sectioned into industries, I have approached it as a normal trade union. My comments and criticisms of the Union are therefore specifically aimed at the ICU as a trade union structure and not as a political organisation. Where the ICU takes on political questions, it seems that it has to be looked at as a trade union entering the realm of politics. Criticism thus proceeds not from the political nature of the ICU, but from its industrial nature extruding into the political.

In this thesis, trade unions are to be approached from the view-point derived from Lenin. Lenin, in developing the Marxist approach to trade unions in the struggle against capitalism, came to see trade unions as primarily responsible for encouraging an 'economistic' approach as distinct from a total approach to the struggle. Workers concentrated on specific trade union problems,

trade union politics and left the Marxist intelligentsia to concern trade on the political struggle. (1)

Lenin considered the economic element itself to be a central educative instrument in the growth of the whole struggle; the exposure of factory evils was seen as a "starting point for the awakening of class-consciousness, for the beginning of a trade union struggle." (2)

However, Lenin felt that the exposure of factory conditions was not to be substituted as an activity in itself. All that it was capable of achieving was the amelioration of conditions in the factory and possibly better terms for the sale of labour power. (3) The real struggle itself, was essentially political, aimed at the structural inequalities represented in capitalism.

My approach thus emphasizes the bargaining origin of trade unions. Trade unions are ab initio not revolutionary organisations, but designed chiefly to accomplish a trade-off of their position for certain economic rights. This is the primary objective of trade unions, and contains intrinsic limitations; in the first place trade unionism is a product of and is tied to capitalism, secondly, trade unionism cannot change or transform capitalism, it can only negotiate with it. Trade unions thus have a crucial interest in the capitalist system being able to meet their demands.

This means that whatever political scope the trade union has in any situation, it cannot overreach the economic commitment. The consequences of trade-unionism are a result of a functional appreciation of capitalism, an appreciation which is posited on the premise of the workers' deprivation. As far as this is legitimated in its actions, it disguises the essential reality of relationships in the objective situation. As Grossman says, the worker is politically reformist and conservative in that he has an anticipation of his trade union demands being met. This is the result of the primacy of a bourgeois ideology which precedes his trade union. This ideology can only be challenged by a process of demystification undertaken by revolutionary socialist agitation. Unless this occurs the class which the worker represents cannot progress beyond the bounds prescribed by the dominant bourgeois ideology.

Lenin said, "we must actively take up the political education of the working class, and the development of its political consciousness." (4) The reason for so doing is that the process of capitalism has the effect of fragmenting the unity of capitalism in its analysis when it is clear that opposition to the social system has to be developed on an opposition of capitalism in its totality. This failure to conceive of a struggle against capitalism in its entirety, is part of trade-

unionism's character to find ad hoc solutions, solutions which fail to locate the essential reality of exploitation. These solutions indicate a gravitation to economism since opposition is developed on the grounds of economic inadequacies and worker deprivation. It is on this pivotal error that the struggle is mystified, even when trade unions enter political questions. On entering the political arena the trade union's politics are the politics of reformism; this is so because the political struggle is largely that of redressing economic grievances as they affect the trade union and its members. In as far as it seeks the correction of these grievances, trade unionism appeals to a notion which holds the pervasiveness of capitalism as the defining condition of the struggle. This conception of the perfectability of capitalism stems, at root, from the ideological limitations of trade unionism. The logical outcome of struggle by the trade unions, in whatever form, is the relegation of that struggle to a wage struggle. This real limitation leads one to the conclusion that all trade unions, whatever their political affiliation, have a common qualitatively similar role. (5)

The major point to be made here is that trade unions cannot transcend the limitations of the bourgeois imposition at all. This is because, when and if

they enter a so-called socialist struggle, they are operating only as a result of factors which have pre-determined the possibilities of trade union activity. When they expand and generate demands, they only further generate those factors which were instrumental in determining their own character. Their alliance with socialism is merely an addition to their trade union consciousness, and because of this, the socialist input is secondary to the bargaining function of the trade union. (Lane calls these people 'spare-time socialists'.)

(6) The process of mystification of a class consciousness arises from the basic inability of a trade-union to overcome its limitations and for its tendency to predicate the struggle as being a trade union struggle. Herein, the role of the working class is handed over to the trade union, which by itself is incapable of meeting the demands of a class-conscious proletariat.

I have thus approached the question of trade unions with an initially clear mind, that supposedly revolutionary organisation and even action by such bodies in the South African, and any other context, is necessarily of a reformist nature. It is in the position where the society opens and broadens its ranks and concedes to union demands that a trade union achieves political success; such success does not encompass radical

transformations of the social structure. To claim that trade unions are socialist organisations ignores their commitment to the continuing functioning of capitalism and their basic inability to motivate real class consciousness.

Much respect has been accorded to left-wing organisations which have come into being and threatened the social order. Such sentiment is moved chiefly by respect for the oppressed and their struggle but it ignores the basic inabilities of these organisations, and tends to romanticise their victories. I have tried to report the ICU and the working class as faithfully as I see; to this extent I may have been unsympathetic to the ICU. However, one cannot hallucinate and invest in the ICU characteristics which it did not possess. The ICU was never a revolutionary organisation; the body was a trade union which may have given the impression of being radical, and not revolutionary, at one stage of its life. Its function though, was the reparation of the economic inadequacies of its members.

The thesis is broken into a number of recognisable subsections. Chapter one attempts to provide a theoretical background to the whole work. It is an independent

chapter which will give, it is hoped, a definition to the entire thesis. The second chapter stresses the rise of spontaneous protest in Johannesburg. It is argued there, that conditions had become so intolerably bad that people were forced to come out and register their dissatisfaction. Chapter three follows chronologically from the second, but is also a thematic development; it is taken that the heightened dissatisfaction exhibited during the last few years of the Great War and immediately thereafter, logically found its conclusion in the establishment of worker based organisations. It was in this period that the ICU and a number of other bodies came into being. It is an underlying theme of this thesis that once protest has been organisationally expropriated, it was subdued and turned away from the people themselves - protest thereafter was articulated and defined by leadership who were considerably removed from the workers.

Chapter four looks at Johannesburg during the years 1921-1924. The city experienced an organisational vacuum during this period, and the Joint Councils were allowed to be presented as the dominant voice of the African people. It was during this time that liberalism and moderatism were in the ascendancy.

Chapter five covers the same period in the development of the ICU. The ICU was relatively calm in these four years. Organisation was extended to the other provinces. Crucial events in this period were the ICU's rapprochement with the Nationalist Party. The most recognisable characteristic of the ICU, later to become very clear, emerged in this time period -the ability to make and break alliances as they suited the convenience of the ICU.

Chapters six and seven basically constitute a unit. These chapters focus on the relationship which the ICU had with the communists and the liberals. Chapter six also looks at the material situation of the Johannesburg working class and the proximity of the ICU to the workers themselves. In chapters six and seven the element of expediency reveals itself characteristically. Chapter eight investigates the ICU's relationship with the British labour movement, its activities on the rural and the urban fronts, and its penchant for litigation and financial speculation. Chapter nine is an account of the final years of the ICU's life. The consummation of the liberal input into the Union is looked at in this chapter through the arrival of the liberals and the ousting of Champion and later Kadalie himself. Chapter ten is a concluding chapter; it specifically looks at the disjunction between worker and organisational

interest and the implications which this held for the workers movement..

I have considered race and colour as variables in this thesis. They are not objective facts of a capitalist society, but are an imposition which build a factor of distortion into capitalism. For this reason, I have deliberately used inverted commas whenever I have had to use a colour designation. Despite the durability of this factor in the South African social formation, I firmly believe that colour and race distinctions are artificial. The colour problem is not dismissed at all though, indeed the racial problem, which comes close to possessing a dynamism of its own, is considered to be of fundamental importance in the resolution of South Africa's problem.

As a final point, let me say here that when people speak of the era of the ICU as a period when a promising opportunity for the resistance movement was lost, it seems that it is correct to say that the opportunity was already lost when the organisation was defined in trade union terms. There were people inside, and outside the ICU, who claimed that the vision of the ICU was socialist, this thesis is also an attempt to show where such a vision foundered.

N O T E S

1. IV Lenin. What is to be Done? in E Burns
(Editor) A Handbook of Marxism p583
2. Ibid p588
3. Ibid
4. Lenin Op Cit p589
5. Grossman; Trade Unionism and Revolution. p53
6. Ibid Grossman Op Cit quoting Lane p86

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMYINTRODUCTION :

With the development of capitalist hegemony in South Africa and the consequent phasing out of the subsistence mode of production (for both Africans and Afrikaners), important transitions in the structure of the society took place. Social formations disintegrated and fresh ones were produced. Indeed there had not been an absolute traumatic switch from subsistence rural production to capitalist wage labour. An intervening stage had occurred which saw African farmers in some of the reserves adapting their crop production to take advantage of market opportunities as a preferred alternative to wage labour on 'white' colonists' terms. (1) It is bigotry and high presumption to assume that Africans entered the wage and cash economy without an appreciation of its mechanics.

In the period (1917-1930) we are looking at, an economy dominated by the capitalist form of production had come into being with hardly fifty years experience. Within this short period a complex society emerged with a clear class structure in the 'white' group, and an incipient but uncrystallised like formation within the African group. Despite the absorption of Africans into the capitalist mode of production, class distinctions and class interests were mystified by the dominance of racial ideology in the society. Because of the cleavage of colour, the society's structure was skewed so that where class interests between groups with identical economic interests should have created a fused

unity, there existed instead a number of fractions within the working class. Instead of all South Africa's workers forming a large interest bloc, there existed a division between franchised 'white' workers and unfranchised 'black' workers. The 'white' workers, in addition were 'free' in the sense that they had the ability to sell their labour power where they chose. In contrast, the 'black' workers, apart from suffering franchise disabilities, were 'unfree'. These unfranchised workers were kept in check by pass regulations which prevented them from selling their labour freely on the labour market. (So-called Coloured and Indian workers occupied the intermediate position. They were unfranchised but were relatively 'free' to sell their labour where they chose.)

The South African bourgeoisie, similarly, had evolved into a complex group. Different fractions of bourgeoisie had come into being with very distinctive demands from the capitalist economy.

THE BOURGEOISIE

Historically the Boer and the English speaking South Africans have confronted each other with festering resentment. In the closing decades of the last century the English clashed with the Afrikaner in attempts to assert hegemony over the South African configuration. The Kruger regime in the South African Republic with its rural Calvinistic outlook hindered the expansion of the new mining monopolies. Conflict was brought to a head with the Jameson Raid in 1895. The raid was soon followed by threatening actions on both the

the parts of the British and the Afrikaner. The Boer War erupted which gave the British control of the rural Republics in which the fabulously wealthy gold-fields lay. The metropolitan bourgeoisie in economic ascendancy, now had the political measure of their rural and indigenous counterparts.

In applying a Marxian analysis to South Africa it is correct to perceive the situation as that of a society not only divided in its working class but also in its bourgeoisie.

Capitalist hegemony, in the early years after the formation of the unified state, was not a commonality of the interests of the various fractions of the bourgeoisie. Out of the historical development of capitalism, political formations crystallised around a metropolitan bourgeoisie vis-a-vis a local agricultural orientated bourgeoisie. (Simplistically, that of mining interests, of foreign control, against the farming Afrikaner ruling class.) The role of the metropolitan fraction was progressive and attuned to unbridled capitalist development. The formation of the unified state was an early expression of the intention to bring in harness a South African political totality, whereas the Afrikaner ruling class fought for the preservation of parochial ideals which were cultivated in their struggles against the British and the African groups they encountered in their Great Trek.

However, as a caveat, despite the isolationist tendencies of the Afrikaners and the resulting problematic inner articulation within the bourgeoisie, the state existed to ensure the continuing primacy of the bourgeois class' interests above all other interests. Thus the state was able to contain

struggles within the bourgeoisie and furthermore establish an order which over-reached the inner tensions of the bourgeoisie. The nature of the capitalist state was such though, that the more deeply threaded contradictions (capitalist/worker) were not able to be repaired.

In South Africa, conflict at the level of the power bloc derived directly from the uneven development of capitalism. The contradiction of a burgeoning capitalist industry set in the background of a rurally backward Republic set forth awkward disjunctions between metropolitan capital and agricultural capital. The schism had its origin in the rapid flowering of the capitalist mining sector. Gold mining began in a period of low prices and also at a time when the world demand "was critically in excess of the prevailing supply." (2) Within a decade of the founding of the gold mines the economy of the Transvaal had progressed by bounds. Gold formed 97 percent of the Republic's export output, labour employment had climbed to 96,704. (3)

Concomitant with this growth was the spread of monopoly control over these interests, both in diamond and gold mining. To entrench this assertion of monopoly, the metropolitan bourgeoisie had to dominate all other competing interests in the social formation. In addition where it appeared that labour was in short supply, the compound system was introduced and institutionalised on the Rand by 1906 as a measure of control. (4)

With the metropolitan fraction's pursuit for domination the struggle against the agricultural capital fraction was intensified. Obviously smarting from the effects of uneven development, agricultural capital first of all had to transform from being feudal and subsistence orientated to being capitalist in its orientation. It was concerned with retaining the surplus from gold mining for internal development, as against the arrangement of repatriating the surplus to the metropolis as desired by the mining bourgeoisie.

The character of the political economy and its struggles was thus defined in essence by the direction of the movement of the surplus capital produced; whether it would be channelled into monopoly and imperialist expropriation, or whether it would be used for the benefit of the indigenous bourgeoisie. The struggle over capital was the defining one of the early South African scene, but not always the only one. Allied to the surplus struggle were the policies taken with regard to labour, and more specific to our context, to the different fractions of the working class. The differential treatment of segments of the proletarianised and semi-proletarianised workers in the social formation was a specific zone of disjunction between the fractions of the bourgeoisie. Even though it was at the level of surplus that the conflict manifested itself, it hinged also on the structural relationships which were made between fractions of capital and fractions of the working class. To clarify the argument thus far, surplus allocation was competed for by the metropolitan and indigenous bourgeoisie; yet further, there was also a division of interest about labour.

The shortage of capital funds in agriculture and industry was emphasized in the lag with which they followed the development of mining capital. In finding capital funds they had come to rely on the state to subsidize them. This subsidy came from "artificially diverted" surpluses from the mining industry, chiefly through taxation, price raising measures and so on. (5) Kaplan says that agriculture in particular had to depend on the assistance of the mining sector. (6) However, more important in the political formation, was the protection given to the agricultural fraction of capital. Kaplan says,

"the direct transfer of resources from mining to agriculture was a less important element in the cost structure of the mining companies and subsidy to agriculture, than was state action to ensure that farmers received higher than world prices for the commodities they produced." (7)

Agriculture itself had become capitalised, a process which had its origin not with the farmers themselves, but with the government. (8) The objective was to improve the production techniques of the sector as well as to give attention to the low level of prices which affected the farmers. It became apparent after Union, that legislation for agriculture was designed to achieve the regulation of agricultural production aimed at export. (When Hertzog was excluded from the Cabinet in 1912 tension arose though between mining and agriculture.)

The nature of legislation for the benefit of the agricultural sector during the South African Party's rule was regulatory in character. In contrast, the Pact Government

after 1924 promulgated legislation which was more distinctly protectionist in nature. This protectionism was also extended to industry. To achieve this aim prices had to be falsified to ensure the viability of the agrarian fraction of the bourgeoisie. In its transition from feudal relationships to wage labour relationships, the agricultural sector had become capitalistic in its structure, and to this extent had become increasingly more dependent on the prices its produce fetched on the open market. "The question of market and price are thus dominant and spell the very existence of the South African farmer." (9)

This rise of capitalist agriculture during the decade before the twenties strengthened the political farming fraction. Thus by 1924, the rural bourgeoisie had become an important component of the bourgeoisie as a whole. It had thrown off the stifling caste structure which it had possessed and had witnessed a large migration of the burdensome 'bywoner' class to the towns. At the same time the diaspora of the Boer folk group enabled the patriotic party, the Nationalist Party, to acquire an urban political base.

The farmer capitalists were not always happy with the kind of legislation intended to favour their production. This emerges from Rich's paper where the 1913 African Land Act was seen only as a placatory gesture to farmers who felt the competition of Africans. The farmers only gained satisfaction after subsequent Land Acts which brought the situation more into line. (10)

The political power of the rural fraction of the bourgeoisie attained hegemony in 1924 when specific attempts were made to redress the grievances of rural capital. Thus during the hegemony of the Pact Government, as Kaplan says, there was "a major quantitative and qualitative shift in surplus diversion." (11) The role of the state in this instance focused on its redistributive function. The state became, as Marx said, "nothing more" than the form of organisation which the bourgeois necessarily adopt for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests." (12) The functions of the state were organised so that :

- (a) industry enjoyed a large measure of protection after 1925
- (b) price support policies for agricultural commodities were introduced
- (c) tax payments to the state by the gold mining industry were increased quantitatively
- (d) the state itself became a major producer of intermediate goods and could exercise effective discrimination in its pricing policies in favour of the indigenous sectors. (13)

In this action the lack of an independent base by the state was further illustrated, where the state not only mediated for the interests of the bourgeoisie, but was in itself, in some instances, the encapsulation and legitimator of ruling class interests. The state was thus the product and manifestation of the irreconcilable nature of class interests.

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It was not an imposition from outside, but merely the manifest product of society at a very particular stage of its development. The character of the state was a mirror reflection of societal developments with its stresses and contradictions.

In pursuing Kaplan's analysis, it was the redistribution of surplus and the domination of the precapitalist mode of production which provided the impetus to bourgeois capitalism in South Africa. The inability of the metropolitan fraction to capture alliances with either the indigenous urban bourgeoisie or classes vitiated in the subjugation of the precapitalist mode of production, allowed the indigenous fractions in 1924 to seize hold of political control. Since the cleavage between the indigenous and metropolitan bases were wide, the former, seeking to enlarge its productive base on the grounds of capital funds being expatriated, could assume a nationalistic outlook. The character of nationalism was such that it could use the 'white' fraction of the working class in an alliance against the powers of the grand capitalists. It was only by contracting such an alliance in the social formation, under the ideological banner of 'nationalism' could a change in the form of the state be brought about.

The alliance between a fraction of the working class and the indigenous bourgeoisie found a raison d'etre, in objective terms, in the crucial diversion of surplus from

the mining sector. "In essence higher wages for 'white' workers was only one mechanism of surplus appropriation from the hitherto dominant metropolitan bourgeoisie." (14) This became the paramount cause for an alliance, which was rendered possible by early joint action, rapprochement with Afrikaner nationalism. The workers discovered that the "Dutch temperament had a remarkable leaven of what really approaches to socialistic ideas." Hertzog had much the same outlook as labour on such matters as 'financial imperialism', the immigration of low-paid workers, racial segregation and the white labour policy. His party and the Labour Party "represent the real forces of progress in South Africa." (15) In this way the political representatives of metropolitan capital, already threatened at the polls in 1915 were ousted from power in a pact between the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party in 1924. The links between the two parties were strengthened by the Rand Rebellion of 1922 when the 'white' workers clashed with the Chamber of Mines and experienced harsh and repressive action by the Smuts Government.

At the immediate level the issue which motivated the Rebellion was the substitution of cheaper 'black' labour for 'white' labour. Since the working class character had become largely Afrikaner, an immediate nexus between the rural farmer and his lately urbanised cousin was available. This alliance secured the revision of the state character, although, as Kaplan says, the metropolitan

bourgeoisie "remained a potent force, though not the dominant one." (16)

Important in the elucidation of the state's functions was the state's contiguity to 'white' interests and its direct participation in the capitalist construct. With the state adopting a 'nationalist' struggle, the 'white' working class was able to be harboured and protected from metropolitan interests threatening icons such as 'race', 'religion' and 'civilization'.

A visible unfranchised bourgeoisie did not emerge in the early years of capitalism in South Africa. This fact did much to cement the opinion that conflict in South Africa pivoted around a 'white' franchised ruling class vis-avis a 'black' voteless subordinate group. The analysis was generalised to a 'white/black' struggle with seemingly sufficient explanatory power to contain the dynamism of the South African situation. This helped to prompt the 'Black Republic' analysis of the South African Communist party. However attractive the prognosis appeared, it cannot be ignored that in reality the foetus of an unfranchised bourgeoisie did exist. Furthermore, the weight and influence of this inchoate group-represented by individuals in the African Congress, The Native Voters Associations, the Bantu Union and the small professional and propertied class - was disproportionate to its size. Its cumulative voice was in fact stronger than that of the working class over which it had

established control. There were also distinct petty-bourgeois attitudes present in the working class and the organisations which drew on its support.

It was only in the political arena that clear alliances between franchised and unfranchised bourgeois and petty-bourgeois types were contracted. The Sogas and the Jabavus in the Eastern Cape and, by the twenties, the leaders in the African community in Johannesburg participated in organisations which took a 'liberal' view of South African political questions. Their participation was of a symbiotic character, they received certain rake-offs and in return gave to such organisations, with their liberal credoes, a definite credibility.

THE WORKING CLASS

The working class in South Africa was broken up into a number of fractions. As indicated in the first section of this chapter, there existed three recognizable sub-groups; the franchised and 'free' working class, the unfranchised and 'free' working class and the section which was both unfranchised and 'unfree'.

The productive forces within the capitalist setting engendered highly specific consciousnesses in these different fractions. Overriding a class consciousness in the broad sense, the capitalist/racist society gave birth to consciousnesses which were defined solely in terms of colour. Thus with the 1922 Rebellion a highly motivated consciousness was exhibited by the franchised

workers, not on the basis of the working class, but on the 'white' working class alone. According to Kaplan's analysis the position of the franchised working class was crucial in the level of support it lent to the different fractions of the bourgeoisie. The indigenous and metropolitan fractions of the bourgeoisie practiced sharply diverging policies with regard to the franchised workers. The metropolitan fraction, as far as it was concerned, "paid for 'white' worker privilege through (a) a higher wage bill in its own operations, (b) increased revenues... accruing to state and provincial governments... and (c) the increased cost of inputs from protected secondary industry employing high cost 'white' labour." (17)

As far as the agricultural and indigenous bourgeoisie were concerned "higher wages for whites working at the mines would merely reduce the repatriated surplus of the metropolitan bourgeoisie, and the added spending and saving power accruing to 'white' workers would directly benefit the internal bourgeoisie through firstly an expansion of the internal market, and secondly through providing additional sources of savings and taxation revenues." (18)

An objective *raison d'etre* for an alliance between the franchised workers and the indigenous bourgeoisie was thus found in the very conflict between the two main fractions of the bourgeoisie - the question of surplus appropriation. This alliance, as indicated before, also produced the strength needed to terminate the hegemony

of the metropolitan fraction. It is in this sense that the political instance emerged as the mainspring perpetrating the dissolution of working class unity.

This usage of the political instance perpetuated racial exclusivism. It had already been used in 1893 to effect a job colour bar on the mines. As Legassick says, the effect of the 'law was to give the state the right to define a 'miner' ... which the power bloc chose to do in racial ideology. Rather than 'whites' being defined as miners, miners were being defined as 'whites'." (19)

One can explain the nature of conflict intensity and consciousness in the South African context according to the degree of alienation experienced within the job environment, against the wage and privilege input as an attempt to compensate and mediate for the former experience. This also provides a rough guide to the capacity for 'conciliation' of classes which particular groups within the proletariat exhibit. We assume that a conflict consciousness is an inevitable product of capitalist relations. It includes sporadic outbursts of a situational character to specific organised protest. It is argued here that the degree of incorporation into the norm and value-schema of the society affects the intensity of conflict consciousness. However, this consciousness in reflecting the thinking of a group at a very specific juncture, differs from a revolutionary consciousness. With this basic guide-post we can briefly thread our way through the development of the divided working class and try to evaluate their struggles in terms of the consciousness which they displayed.

The franchised working class in taking up the position of a working class aristocracy, benefitted in that they gained access to societal amenities on the same apparent basis as the bourgeois class. The degree of their conflict consciousness under these circumstances was numbed. Instead their consciousness turned upon a preservation of the status quo and the ordering of classes within the society. The dominant objective of this class became neither the modification of market capacity to secure scarce resources nor the struggle for management control, but the entrenchment of a position which preserved the illusion of inter-class fluidity and mobility between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This by no means implies that this group was insensitive to real economic hardship, such as, for instance, the diminution of the real value of cash wages. The franchise workers did, on many occasions, strike for reasons other than the 'threat' of 'black' displacement of their jobs. Strikes throughout the war period occurred for reasons with which we are most familiar, such as bad working conditions, higher wages and so on.

The early stimulus to the formation of a 'white' working class came with the growth of the gold mines late in the 19th century. In 1922 the number of 'white' workers had risen to 21,000. (20) The composition of this labour force was revealing. Most of the miners and artisans on the Rand came from Australia and England, and it appears, as the Simons suggest, "the colonial society was not so different from their own to cause a sense of alienation.

They fitted into the order of things and did what they could to better their conditions." They were "not pioneers, frontiersmen or revolutionaries", and "they combined in various ways familiar to them... the means they took varied according to the state of the labour market, the composition factors, rather than differences in origin or outlook, accounted for the contrasting policies adopted by the labour movement in the Cape and the Northern colonies." (21)

The addition of an Afrikaner component to the 'white' labour force began in 1907 and continued steadily thereafter. This component was swelled by the departure of several British mine workers on war service during the first world war. The major effect of the change in the composition of, what was to become the franchised proletariat, was the mass political support the indigenous agricultural bourgeoisie was able to utilize. Indeed, even before the 'Afrikanerization' of the franchised proletariat, the South African Labour Party had come into being as an attempt to represent, politically, organised labour. The Labour Party, however, fared poorly at both provincial and general elections. Its rare successes were due to electoral agreements with the Nationalist Party. As Garson says, it recorded two high points, the 1914 provincial election and the general elections of 1920 and 1924. (22)

Yet even at its most powerful moments, the party could never mobilize enough power to place a government in power.

In so far as the party claimed to represent working class interests its fortunes were unpromising and this represented the political weakness of the party. It could be claimed that the Nationalist Party had a stronger working class component than the Labour Party. The character of the Labour Party closely paralleled the closed-in nature of South Africa's very early trade and craft unions. "Neither before or after the Great War did they represent a genuine socialist movement, for their province was not the entire labouring population." (23) The Labour Party and its direct industrial counterpart, the trade union movement, cocked their attention at the elite section of the working class, those who possessed special trade skills and qualified for 'white' classification.

Apart from the poor 'whites', the franchised workers occupied a very special position in the South African social formation. In the mines and the industries of the city and the town they received wages "which brought them well within the ranks of the middle classes." (24) The historian adds that "unique amongst the skilled workers of the Empire, the South African artisan revealed his especial rank by being himself a frequent employer of labour." (25)

Under circumstances such as these, the aristocracy of the working class was instrumental in giving fodder to racist colonial ideology. In that their degree of alienation from the fruits of the productive process was cushioned by inflated wages and an unprecedented share in the rake-offs of the system, they appeared to be co-partners with the

bourgeoisie in the exploitative system. In the nature of things, the franchised workers were thus firmly ensconced and involved in the exploitative and productive relations of the economy. If they were not direct exploiters, they assisted in the exploiting process, in their capacities as supervisors and foremen.

This section of the working class, because of its integration into the political order, developed a stake in the preservation of the existing system. Thus any alliance with the non-franchised workers, who also sought this integration into the political order, was not feasible, since the franchised workers' position and place in the society was contingent, in the first instance, on the exclusion and exploitation of the unfranchised workers. This crucial disjunction between the two sections of the working-class was based on what is called the 'political instance'. The dominant political theme in the society was the racial one. Despite the fact that the productive relations in the society were capitalist, they were also determined and influenced by the racial structure. Because of this the deeper capitalist threads in the society were disguised by the racial structure and even subordinated.

The franchised workers capacity for revolutionary involvement was thus small, although their strike propensity during the period under review remained great. These workers had a sensitivity to the stability of their working arrangements. With the dubious legal operation

of the Mines and Works Act of 1911 and 1926 (Colour Bar Acts) as sanction, they protested vociferously each time their status seemed threatened. Their consciousness as indicated earlier, focused on the conservation of their privilege.

An exception to the imperviousness of the franchised workers, were the International Social Leaguers. The ISL was started in 1914 as a breakaway movement from the Labour Party and professed to continue the principles of socialism. At the time of splintering, the League had taken a stand on the war issue and refused to enter as volunteers 'for the capitalists'. The league had taken exception to the 'white-policy' of the Labour Party and felt that a working class organisation, which a Labour Party by definition implies to be, ought to admit the African worker. This group, led by exciting proletarian leaders such as Bunting, Ivon-Jones, Andrews etc, actively propogated unity with the unfranchised working class and generally were aware of the purpose of racialist ideology within the capitalist circumference.

Any connection between the two sections of the working-class was circumvented by the important "political" instance. This "political" instance was to set the tone of all future relationships between the major sections of the working class. When the ICU was launched in 1919 its primary aim for most of its life was to seek this consolidation between the two major sections of the working class. The importance of

isolating the "political" as the factor perpetuating division in the working-class was reflected in the growth of a specific approach to their franchise incapacity by the unfranchised workers. Much of this approach consisted in many places of ingratiating with the powers that be to prove their acceptability on the terms of the franchised workers. In this sense the legacy absorbed by the unfranchised workers from the franchised was entirely retrogressive. Unity of the working class was desirable, but seeking solidarity on the terms of an ideologically reactionary front was to introduce a brake on the raising of the consciousness of the 'black' workers. (And further, this political impediment prevented the working class as a whole from realising its historical congruence of interests.)

During the last few years of the second decade and the beginning of the third, the urban population of South Africa grew rapidly. The urban increase was due, in large measure, to the development of gold mining and its ancillary industries. There were 193,110 African workers on the mines in 1917. (This figure showed a marked decline on the figure of 214,467 for 1916. It is only in 1928 that the employment figure reached the 200,000 mark again.) (26)

In the towns the Africans came face to face with an entirely new environment. Their homes were invariably the tin shanty variations camouflaged amid filth and anonymity. "The natives were exchanging the spontaneous discipline and the familiar morality of the tribe for the arbitrary

restraints of police and the confused morality of wretched living conditions The fruit of poverty was restlessness. The fruit of neglect was delinquency." (27)

A completely new cultural synthesis came into being among the unfranchised workers, it had a system of values and norms which (although not uniform) reflected the inferior status which the status quo had determined for them. (28)

The condition of the unfranchised worker's existence was determined by his very cheapness. This cheapness reverberated in his capacity to survive in the town. Furthermore, his place in the town was not that of the exploited proletarian only, but also that of the minion deprived of equal recourse to the law with the franchised worker. The African workers job conditions were removed "out of the realm of civil law into the realm of criminal law, so that breaches of contract or labour agitation were punishable as crimes." (29) The role of the bourgeoisie in the South African context thus took on another dimension, the object of the complete control of the unfranchised workforce. In the process, through the justification of this treatment with claims of higher civilisation, race superiority and so on, the workers experienced the deprivation of one of their most basic rights. The workers, generally, had their ability to sell their labour power taken away from them. In this way even the illusion of the capitalist-worker exchange of equal commodities (wage for labour) was removed. The workers could not negotiate their wages,

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they were compelled to accept the ruling rate of wages determined by capitalists eager to minimise production costs. (30)

Because of the uneven development of town and country, the rural areas were even more depressed than the urban working environments. Wages on the farms and in the rural areas were very low and invariably paid in 'kind'. In some areas, the workers, 'labour tenants' received no wage for the work they did in return for the right to 'graze cattle and cultivate fields.' (31)

Under conditions such as these, it was hardly cause for any surprise that workers sought to avoid the rural areas and flocked to the towns. Their availability on the job market made it easier for the bourgeoisie to contain calls for the increase of their more skilled African workers wages. However, the rural workers came into the towns and added an element of instability into the overall definition of the new unfranchised urban working class. The influx of many new people also attenuated two existing problems; that of finding accommodation for the urban population, and the problem of increasing the competition amongst franchised and unfranchised workers on the job market. The first problem was attended to by the stringent application of the pass laws and the introduction of the Urban Areas Acts aimed at ensuring segregation of 'blacks' and 'whites' with a much higher potential for control of the African population. The awkwardness of

job competition was removed with the legal reinstatement of the Mines and Works Act of 1926 (The Colour Bar Act).

The situation of the unfranchised worker in general was one of intense subjection to myriads of laws affecting virtually every facet of his daily existence. The African worker thus developed a consciousness which, in its many and diverse forms, contained a high element of conflict awareness. This was illustrated in the low-keyed, but effective, attitude to work situations, where a high degree of alienation was accompanied by a corresponding high level of opposition in the form of go-slows, boycotts and desertions. (32) It also manifested itself in more significant co-operative form during the period of unrest on the Reef between 1917 and 1920. (33) The objects of attack were the most manifest symbols of the oppression of the workers, amongst these were the Pass Laws, the Concession Stores. (It must be noted that we are talking at a high level of generalization.)

The consciousness of the workers was consistent with their material conditions. It contained a high political element under the Congress guidance accompanied by an economic awareness. This marriage of the conflict in these two orders was natural in the circumstances, but it was hampered by a loyal expression of faith in the correctability of the social order. Thus a conflict awareness emerged tempered by a strong reformist streak.

It is clear then, despite their objective situations, that the franchised working class was behaving less manifestly

as a real working class and were being absorbed into the value schema of the bourgeois system. This meant that they were therefore less likely to coalesce with their unfranchised counterparts and had deposited all their aspirations in the continued functioning of the bourgeois order as it peculiarly operated in South Africa. This in no way discounts or ignores their objective differentiation from the capitalists, it merely means that their privileged positions and their false consciousness deterred them from realising their true class interest. This meant that waiting on the franchised workers to realise their class consciousness actually served to stall for that 'right' moment in time when the right mix would arise. This was essentially an impediment and serves to underline the diversity of restraints which acted on the 'black' working class.

It is with these sort of qualifications that the resistance of that period foundered and which fundamentally added to the mystification of the trade-union (ICU, ICWU etc)struggle... The postulation of a successful struggle on the basis of working-class unity in South Africa was a constant companion to the thinking of the new African labour leaders. This dogmatic approach to the problem ignored the relative conflict awareness which the African workers possessed and neglected to take this as a more fruitful point of departure than the failing vision of the concerted joint rapprochement of the working class as a whole.

It is possible that some members of the CP realised this; but then we should also stress that the errors of analysis which the ICU made in its militant period were those largely derived from the Communists perhaps. The error, in defining agents of change, was to make the vehicle of change the industrial organisations rather than the working class guided by a revolutionary party.

NOTES

1. Bundy Emergence and decline of a South African Peasantry p369
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3. Morris Apartheid, Agriculture and the State, 1976
4. Van Onselen Chibaro pp131-132
5. Kaplan Capitalist Development in South Africa 1974 p8
6. Ibid
7. Ibid p9
8. Hobart Houghton South African Economy p58
9. Finlay Capitalist Agriculture and the State p4
10. Rich African Farming and the 1913 Natives' Land Act 1976 p19
11. Kaplan Op Cit p12
12. K Marx and F Engels German Ideology part 1 p80
13. Kaplan Op Cit p12
14. Ibid p16
15. Simons and Simons Class and Colour in South Africa p159

16. Kaplan Op Cit p17
17. Ibid p15
18. Ibid
19. Legassick The Mining Economy and the White Working Class
20. Garson The Political Role of the White Working Class in South Africa 1902-1924 1976 p9
21. Simons and Simons Op Cit p73
22. Garson Op Cit 1976
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24. De Kiewiet Op Cit p209
25. Ibid
26. Van der Horst Native Labour in South Africa p230-1
27. De Kiewiet p229
28. Modikwe Dikobe Morabi Dance
29. De Kiewiet Op Cit p230
30. Johnstone : Class Race and Gold..
31. Van der Horst Op Cit p281
32. See S Moroney : Industrial Conflict in a Labour Repressive Economy
33. See Chapter two

1917-1920 SPONTANEOUS PROTEST IN JOHANNESBURG

Section one

INTRODUCTION

During 1917 and 1920, a flood of protest by the African people in Johannesburg grew, against low wages, against location and living conditions and against the Pass laws. The Pass laws prescribed their own form of terror and there were certain sections of the ruling class (and its subsidized appendage, the 'white' working class) who even clamoured for the extension of passes to women. However, high-handed and politically and economically skewed policy in favour of the 'whites' was not allowed to go unchallenged. It is generally understood that war situations produce hardships, but when it became apparent that wage compensation and other concessions were reserved for 'white' workers (albeit after strike protest), and that the lot of the dusky proletariat assisted by discriminatory laws, was deteriorating, protest rose to a public level hardly ever equalled before in the then short history of capitalist relations in South Africa.

This chapter thus focuses on the conditions and the resulting protest which came out of the urban environment. It looks at those factors which forced the African people to rise up in spontaneous protest. Low wages, atrocious living conditions and the Pass laws were the three major factors which contributed to the peculiar life style of the urban African. In this chapter

petty-bourgeois thinking which dominated much of the thinking of the early African urban leadership. Many of these leaders, schooled and socialised in a relatively liberal environment (their schools, churches), found their own liberalism obstructed by the racist conventions of the society.

It also needs to be stressed here, that while we are looking at high points of protest, it is a safe presumption to make that the day-to-day strategy of indigents, employed in the city, was to try to come to terms with the situation on a basis satisfactory to themselves. The existence of an informal market and^a/highly structured system of banditry, which parasitically subsisted off the society through organised crime, are two major indications of the adaptation and kind of participation of the urban African in the cash economy. (2) (3)

PASSES AND WAGES :

Passes, in their several varieties, acted as a strong punitive measure on the African people in Johannesburg. James Makgatho, the Congress leader in the Transvaal described the Pass situation. He said,

"The Pass Law in the Transvaal makes criminals of many of our people who are not, inherently criminal. Those who try to beguile us into believing that the Pass Law is for our protection, remind me of the blandishments addressed by the spider to the fly. Let us take the case of a native up-country, say at Pietersburg, who wants to go to Pretoria to work.

He first applies to his chief for a certain Pass to seek work. This takes him to the nearest Police Post or Native Affairs office. There he gets his second pass, stating his destination. He then takes the train to Pretoria and goes to Marabasstad Location. The chances are that if the Police find him at Marabasstad with the pass from the sub-native Commissioner, Pietersburg, he will be arrested because it has not been endorsed by the Sub-Native Commissioner, Pretoria. He may be fined 10/-. When he gets to Pretoria he has to obtain a ten days' pass from the Sub-Native Commissioner to seek work. Perhaps he cannot get suitable employment in that period. He then goes back again and applies for a 5 day pass. At the end of that time he is still without employment. He gets another pass for two or three days. If by then he has not obtained work, in most cases he is not granted a further extension and if he continues to remain in Pretoria he is arrested as a criminal. In our view he should have as long a period as he likes...to look for work...Having found work, the Native has to get a monthly pass. Although he has that pass, if the police find him in Arcadia or Sunnyside he is liable to arrest unless he has a 'further' 'special' pass...A native in Pretoria may have his monthly pass and a special pass from his master. His master may send him to Arcadia or Sunnyside, say at 8 p.m. At 9 p.m. he is in one of these places, and although he possesses both the monthly and special passes referred to, he is nevertheless arrested because he has no night pass..." (4)

The Transvaal Missionary Association felt

"The monthly pass does not appear to us to serve any necessary purpose beyond that of a means of revenue. It certainly tends to perpetuate the Natives' dislike to the whole pass system..... The ordinary pass ought to allow its holder to travel anywhere within the municipal bounds without a special permit from his employer..." (5)

The Pass regulations were a constant source of irritation. The African workers recognized the effect of the law on their ability to sell their labour power where they chose.

This restriction on their freedom to sell their labour emerged as a powerful source of dissatisfaction in the Transvaal. (See sections below on the Pass Boycotts)

The wages of unskilled labourers varied throughout South Africa. According to Van der Horst, the "highest rates.....were found for domestic, commercial and general service in Johannesburg...the next highest were those on the Witwatersrand gold-mines (where money wages averaged about two shillings a shift...)" (6) The Congress movement contended that the average wage of the African in the city of Johannesburg was 1/8d per day. Exceptions existed where some Africans earned between £2 and £5 a month. (7) The workers employed by the Town Council received from £2.1s9d to £2.10s6d as their wage. (8) This contrasted with the wage of £3 per month paid to workers on the mines.

It is certain that the cost of living had climbed dramatically during the War years. The price index had risen from 1000 to 2,249. Articles of clothing such as boots for example, which could have been purchased for 15/- to 20/-, had doubled in price. Generally the commodities which the Africans were accustomed to buying increased over 75 percent in value. (See appendix for a chart of pre-war and post-war selling prices)

The wages of the African workers remained largely unaltered during the war years. This meant that the price spiral severely curtailed not only the purchasing power

of African workers, but in addition also affected the workers' very ability to live and survive in the urban environment.

HOUSING

"A large number of natives are undoubtedly permanent urban residents and many have been born in locations and know no other home." (9)

The question of African housing was prominent in 1917. Much discussion and criticism was levelled at the Johannesburg City Council. It is partly true that this interest was motivated by the high incidence of liquor trafficking, drunkennes and the increasing evils of prostitution and other immoralities. (10)

The Joint Council of Europeans and Natives made a survey of Housing Conditions in 1923. Its report is an instructive one, and holds for the years 1917-1920 as well. It broke the population into three groups. The first group consisted of "Natives for whom housing accommodation is provided by their employers upon their premises, including :

(1) domestics

(2) industrially employed ... especially those housed in compounds under private control, as in mining, industry,"

Class two : "Natives housed in compounds and Locations under municipal control."

Class three: "Natives who have to find accommodation for themselves as best they can. Includes the mass of permanent native residents, and of native families in the town." (11)

The first group, it was felt, was normally well provided for, however the other two classes lived unsatisfactorily.(12)

The second class was generally found, in accordance with the findings of the Government Housing Commission of 1919 and the Housing Committee of the Federation of Rate Payers Association (JHB), to be entirely unsatisfactory. The failure and absence of planning, and lack of sanitation generally made these sites unfit for human habitation.

LOCATIONS

The committee reported that the Malay Location was in an anomalous position

"in that there has always been considerable doubt as to the powers (one) can exercise in regard to it... The only possible one would be its destruction. At the present time it is inhabited by about 8000 persons, about half of whom are natives. Before 1907 it had already been reported as a grave danger to Johannesburg from the public point of view and in his most recent report the Medical Officer of Health reports that in 1919-1920

'.... it remains largely owing to overcrowding, bad arrangements and structural defects, a festering menace to the community.' " (13)

The Medical Officer of Health quoted the Asiatic Inquiry Commission of 1921 saying that its worst experience was at Vrededorp

"... where we found as many Natives and Cape Coloured people as Indians...we found the inhabitants crowded and huddled together in small hovels amidst indescribable filth and leading a most insanitary mode of life.'" (14)

A report in the Star described the Vrededorp location

thus :

"At present the ...location consists of 450 stands with $9\frac{1}{4}$ rooms to each stand. There is a total population of 7572, which works out at about $16\frac{1}{2}$ persons to each stand.... and the crowding of population is constantly increased by the ingress of natives ejected from other parts of the town. The location has been the starting point of the plague epidemic of 1904, and nearly every small-pox outbreak since then and the incidence of the recent influenza outbreak was specially severe therein.' " (15)

It appeared that a large number of the Africans in the township were employed on neighbouring mines. Police reports averred that the workers kept women in the location for the purpose of making and trading in illicit liquor. The Rev W Meara's descriptions were more vivid

"In one yard in Ferreirastown he saw about fifty people drunk on a Sunday afternoon, fighting and quarrelling." (16)

Despite the fact that the inhabitants of the surrounding suburbs of Mayfair, Brixton and also the 'white' residents of Vrededorp, protested vociferously against the existence of this slum on their doorstep, there were in fact dozens of poor 'whites' who lived around compounds, that in Brixton for instance, for the sole purpose of keeping the compounders supplied with liquor. The black hole, indeed contained a melange of people (similarly economically depressed) the likes of which Johannesburg would seldom experience as intensively again. Detective Jesse Vowell of the Liquor Department gave evidence before the Local Government Commission to show that

that inadequate housing, particularly for the African and Coloured people, was closely connected with the illicit liquor traffic. (17) He said,

"The Coloured people are surrounded by liquor. They live among Europeans, and the lower class of Europeans live on terms of equality with the Coloured population, and in those circumstances it is impossible to prevent coloured persons from getting what the others in whose midst they live, are entitled to have by law.... People of all shades of colour were compelled to live in a congested and over-crowded manner without any regard for morals or decency." (18)

He felt that something ought to be done to prevent coloured people from living in such disgusting conditions which prevented "them from growing up into decent and respectable citizens." The mixing of the races, he emphasized, resulted in a criminal tendency. He advocated the building of townships where respectable Africans could bring up their children away from criminal taints. (19)

There were two locations under municipal jurisdiction by 1923. These were Klipspruit and Western Native Township. The latter only came into being by 1920 (we will discuss this elsewhere), but Klipspruit had been set up before 1909. Under Government Notice 63 of 1909 the Johannesburg Municipality prohibited Africans from living outside locations, except for certain defined classes (domestic etc).

"The decision was partially enforced, thus the only place where natives other than those relieved from the scope of the order could legitimately live was at Klipspruit Location." (20)

The location was situated next to a sewerage farm and the choice of the site was such that the adjoining ground could be used for grazing purposes. At least, this was the impression gained by a man called William Bambesa who was a member of the original deputation which had accompanied the town councillors to investigate the site. Bambesa described the initial visit :

"They viewed it (the site) from a hill and they had been told that the ground would be their veld and their grazing ground, and that natives would be able to plough and live happily." (21)

This was to become an enormously contentious issue, because as the location inhabitants discovered, the grounds were fenced off and their cattle were impounded. The location was twelve miles from the town and was serviced by a railway which operated only in the early morning and the late afternoon. The water supply both for washing and drinking purposes was inadequate. The dwellings were V-shaped huts consisting of an iron roof placed on the ground. The Joint Council reported

"... that such dwellings are really in the nature of things unfit for human habitation." (22)

The chief grievance was the frail security of tenure, especially where stands had been leased and the occupant himself had built a hut on it. It was found in cases of arrears, even negligible ones, that the occupant had to forfeit his house, and furthermore receive no compensation for it.

The Medical Officer of Health for Johannesburg reported in 1929 that the location was a grave health menace. In December of 1929, of the forty-four deaths reported in the location, 72 per cent were due to enteritis. For the previous year the average death rate accountable to the same illness was 31 per cent. He reported that "the high death rate from enteritis at Klipspruit is not therefore a NEW feature." (23) The infantile mortality rate in the location for 1929 was at the incredibly high rate of 958 per 1000. The rates at Klipspruit show a very marked difference with figures compiled at other locations. (These were high as well, but not as drastic as the above). The damning factor at Klipspruit, the report continued, "... is the presence of flies and the vicinity of the sewerage farm." (24)

The flies feeding off the sludge and the soil saturated by effluent, despite the presence of good sanitation, were the chief carriers of disease.

"...Klipspruit Location is and will continue to be an extremely insanitary property, utterly unfit and dangerous for human habitation and should accordingly be abolished." (25)

There is no reason whatsoever to assume that conditions, even ten years earlier, could have been any better.

COMPOUNDS

The Committee reported on what they felt was the worst

compound i.e. The Natal Street Compound and Sanitary Department. It was described thus :

"This compound adjoins the destructor and has from 300 to 330 boys. The area of the building is given as 554 square feet.....The main portion of the building is three storeys in height and cannot be described as anything but a slum; the existence of such a compound is a disgrace to the town..... in the case of a fire the building would be a death-trap for the natives living in the upper storeys of the building." (26)

Other compounds were marginally better. There were a few of an exceptionally high standard, such as the Smit Street Compound.

Compounds, were far from ideal havens of refuge. The concentration of working men separated from wives and families, despite efforts by the Town Council to create congenial environments, produced the inevitable result of these men indulging in other past-times. It is true that in addition to the purpose of providing accommodation, the compounds also served as makeshift social centres. The compounds held, together with workers holding regular jobs,

"boys who for one reason or another, are out of employment, and who are therefore provided at the compound with night accommodation at the rate of 3d per night.....only about half of these (night visitors) are legitimately employed natives, the other half coming there for a jolly old carouse."(27)

It was found that the beer-brewing and skokiaan trade, especially at Salisbury and Jubilee, was an exceptionally

intensive business. Weekly confiscations of the brew by the police amounted to 500 gallons on average. The trade was facilitated by 'Ricksha boys' who were freely permitted entry into the compound. These men

"who have hired their own vehicles, are free men, and may work at their own leisure. Often they prefer the easier and altogether more lucrative method of earning their daily bread by dealing in skokiaan." (28)

Drunkenness at the Salisbury-Jubilee Compound over weekends was endemic. It appeared that the suburbs in which the compounds were situated resented their presence. For many years the Council would encounter great resistance to their attempts to set up new compounds and hostels in the various parts of the city.

OTHER ACCOMMODATION

The Joint Council found that the "crux of the question lies in the housing of large and increasing numbers of natives", especially of African families who cannot be accommodated in municipal locations. "They form the bulk of the inhabitants of our city", for whom conditions were described as appalling, "and it includes the bulk of the better educated natives and those who have been regular dwellers in the town". (From a modest estimate there were probably over 20000 such people.)

In the urban areas the committee found that

"it seems in practice to be possible for anyone possessing a yard or some vacant ground to erect

any sort of hovel upon it to let it at an exorbitant rent to a native family. The temptation to do so must be great, because the speculation seems to be a very remunerative one. The yard system in Johannesburg is very extensive, being spread over most of the Eastern, Southern and Western districts. Yet there would seem to be no lack of tenants, as it is not at all common to find unoccupied premises. These conditions lead naturally to desperate overcrowding, very insanitary states of existence, make decency all but impracticable, and act as a direct incentive to crime." (30)

Despite the patronizing remark that conditions in these slums due to the people's efforts, were better than expected (higher than the case of 'Europeans' living under similar conditions), the outlook was a very grim one. The average size of rooms was estimated to be 12 square feet resulting in the packing of the unbelievably high number of twenty families in a yard. An ensuing result was the inevitable mixing of the sexes and also the absence of privacy. The health aspect in general was atrocious, with poorly laid on sanitation. Rubbish was seldom collected or cleaned up with the result that garbage piles grew high in these areas. The structures ranged from dilapidated brick to tin shanties for which an average rental of 30 shillings per month was charged. (Advancement in positions was normally accompanied by increases in rentals.) No doubt the market structure of housing in Johannesburg promoted the cause of the supplier, the Reef 'rent lords'. With the massive attractive force of the city on the population from the

rural areas, urban numbers, of both Africans and Afrikaners, quickly swelled. It is estimated that by 1923 the African population in Johannesburg was approximately 120 000 of which about half held registered employment. The infant mortality rate was one in three or 355,81 per 1000. (31) With such a large population to accommodate, the slum landlords had the power to push up prices.

Even in the areas where stands were able to be purchased, at Sophiatown and Alexandra, little interest was displayed by the Town Council. Sophiatown was described thus, "there are no adequate roads, no water or lighting worth mentioning, nor the amenities of life such as the humblest citizen is entitled to." (32)

The housing situation was bleak indeed. With a rising price index and the lack of compensation for the decline of real wage power, the urban proletariat found that the move from the country to the town was not the happy transition it was thought to be. Slums and ghettos seemed to be a feature of South African towns in this time period, although the situation in Johannesburg was singled out as far and above the worst. (33)

It is curious that the municipal project at N'dabeni in Cape Town was a great deal more successful. The Medical Officer of Health for Cape Town produced reports

for the years of 1916 and 1918 which revealed an advanced and more progressive attitude to the problem than shown by most other local governments.

Before and during 1916, the location at N'dabeni had acquired an unwholesome reputation which was ascribed "to our failure to provide accommodation fit for occupation by the better class native." (33)(i) Two years later, alterations having been effected (additonal two- and four-roomed houses having been built), the population of the location doubled from 1600 and 3365 in 1918.

Not only had the public health aspect been improved (apart from the continued existence of 'filthy butchers'), but the revenue (£4000-£5000) drawn from the location had actually begun to exceed the expenditure poured into it. (33)(ii) The location had become, as it were, a paying concern. The success of N'dabeni Location in 1918 was due to the awareness of the Council of the benefits which would accrue from a healthy environment.

Commissions which came into operation in this period invariably commented on the lack of interest in the social welfare of the African people in the towns. The Local Government Commission sat in 1920. It heard evidence from people such as Major Bell (Sub-Native Commissioner for the Witwatersrand) and SM Pritchard who commented on the unsatisfactory position of the locations. Bell felt that :

"there is, as I have already stated, a respectable and educated class of natives growing up amongst us, who thoroughly understand the benefits of civilisation and decent methods of living. Nothing is being done to meet the requirements of this class, some of whom claim to be the leaders of the natives and develop into bitter agitators." (33)(iii)

The Commission later met with the Commission for Native Affairs. The conclusions of this meeting reveal, in clear-cut fashion, the commission's preoccupation with an influx-egress equilibrium. As becomes clearer in later years, the accommodation of Africans and the Housing question in South Africa gains stature chiefly with respect to its consequences on the labour supply. (33)(iv)

The Joint Committees of the two Commissions conclusions included the following :

"...(2) That a statutory duty be placed on municipal bodies to provide adequate housing accommodation for all natives within its area and that suitable power be given to these bodies to control the ingress of natives into its area...

(4) That an economic rent should be charged for housing accommodation.

(5) It is recognised that the existence of a redundant black population in municipal areas is a source of the gravest peril and responsible in great measure for the unsatisfactory conditions prevailing.

To combat this evil the following practical measures are recommended. (By redundant native is meant the native male or female who is not required to minister to the wants of the white population, but does not include a native who ministers to the legitimate needs of his fellows within the municipal area.):

(a) The provision of a rest house... where all natives looking for employment will be housed.

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(a) The provision of a rest house... where all natives looking for employment will be housed.

- (b) The prevention of any native...living elsewhere than on his master's premises, in the native village....
- (c) The registration of natives... no native to be registered to any employer or allowed to reside outside the rest house or native village without the certificate...of the municipality certifying that there is suitable accommodation for the employee...." (33) (v)

These developments, which later took more tangible form in the Urban Areas Acts, indicated that the question of labour and its control was the paramount consideration in the solution of the housing predicament in South Africa. An excess of labour on the market proved to lay on more disadvantages than the benefits which came from it.

Indeed, the evils of insanitary conditions and health hazards weighed heavily on the policy taken with regard to the housing situation, but sight was never lost of the beneficial effects which would accrue to the authorities with the improvement of the accommodation of the urban African. While it was desirable that the African worker remain a sojourner, it was also in the interests of the authorities to have a stable workforce. The purpose of preventing labour from drifting into towns allowed the authorities to control the labour force, as well as minimize the cost of harbouring the excess population.

SECTION TWO ORGANISATION AND PROTESTTHE IWA

When protest up to now within the strict urban context had been present (and would continue to be) in muted local strategies chiefly, (34) it now came into the open, and reached a pitch which was to instil alarm in the minds of those in authority. Even the 'white' working-class was to react negatively to the extent of preparing to set up back-up commandoes for the assistance of the authorities.

The first group to build on the existing dissatisfaction, significantly was the International Socialist League. Up to this point organisation of Africans was the domain of the South African National Native Congress. (35) The ISL was a radical splinter group from the Labour Party and had in its ranks highly motivated people such as David Ivon-Jones, SP Bunting and Bill Andrews inter alia. From the outset the objective of the ISL was to find a means of either incorporating African workers into a trade-union structure (at this stage Bunting was Secretary of the Rand Workers' Club) or to encourage them to found an organisation themselves. Their objective in doing so was primarily political. The ISL, by 1916, was making overtures to the African working-class. Its organ 'The International' published articles and speeches condemning the "indentured system of black labour" and calling for the abolition of

forced compounds and passports" (36) The League's outlook developed into a fairly sophisticated analysis afterwards, one which recognised the instrument of racism as a means of institutionalising capitalist exploitation in South Africa. Encouraged by individuals such as Msane (an editor of Abantu Batho) and Isiah Bud M'Belle (as clerk for the attorney Seme), people like Bunting could arrive at the following conclusions,

"....It is not a question of teaching the nigger socialism, only help him to appreciate the simple implications of his own actual economic position, and the time will come when, instead of the 'white' unions opening the doors to their 'black' fellow workers, they will be asking the 'blacks' to open their doors to 'whites'. " (37)

The appraisal of the ISL's foremost strategists was that craft-unionism, prejudice etc, in perpetuating the exclusion of African Labour from organisation, encouraged the sacrifice of the most proletarian workers and thus removed the motive force of revolution. The revolution then no longer depended on the 'white' workers, but on the 'black' workers joined by the 'whites'. From July of 1917 the ISL held weekly meetings of African workers in Johannesburg. The number of people present at these meetings was never spectacular, in the early stages, the average attendance was between 15 and 20 people. Dunbar and Bunting were the chief organisers of these gatherings.

A pattern was set whereby each meeting would be preceded by a lecture designed to increase the understanding of

socialism and to cultivate a political awareness, thereafter general discussion would follow. Dunbar told the first meeting that

"(it) was held on behalf of all working-classes of South Africa and they were trying to make the natives who are the working-class of South Africa be organised and have rights as a 'white' man. They said that the natives should first of all have political rights so as to avoid Pass Laws, and then they will be able to strike for the other things thereafter. (He).... explained that they cannot do anything for a native, but if the natives make meetings of their own ... they - members of the socialists can come and give natives a hand and instruct them what to do to succeed. At the same time the natives wanted to know what they could do to succeed. The answer was that 'if the natives in the mines be formed in a union, and strike and not go to work, and say that we cannot go to work unless we are paid a certain sum of money a day then the government seeing that the work is down will give a native what he wants.' On discussing about the matter it was found that a 'native should strike for everything.' (SIFUNA ZONKE!) One native (Msane) said... it should be better if every boy who completed his contract to return back home and come back no more, and that will make the mines stop working so they will be short of natives, and then the government will increase the native wages". (38)

The radicalisation of the ISL in South African was due, to a large measure, to the events in Russia in 1917. Ivon Jones said

"We must educate the people in the principles of the Russian Revolution as we have never done before... and in so preparing spread the flames of the most glorious and most peaceful revolution of all time." (39)

The socialists attempted to foster this radicalisation within its weekly group. And to this aim, launched into

discourses on political economy, capitalism, religion and whatever reactionary activity could divert the struggle. In these sessions the SANNC was singled out as one such reactionary organisation. It was said in the meetings that "this Congress was composed of well-known men who owned lands, were exempted from native laws and they had nothing to say as regards the bad treatment of the natives in South Africa....." Since then a small feud with the Congress began.

By late September of 1917, the conditions seemed appropriate to bring an organisation into being. After some desperate encouragement by Dunbar, it was agreed among the African members to start their own society, which Dunbar called 'The Industrial Workers of the World'.(40) Detective Inspector Moorosi says that the Organisation decided to adopt the name 'The Industrial Workers of Africa' at a meeting on the 11th of October. (41) The organisation was modelled after the American IWW. Only a few months earlier, claimed Dunbar, (correctly), "an IWW branch consisting chiefly of Indians was started in Durban, and in a short time we would be linked with them."(42) A man called Tsetse was elected Chairman and Bud M'belle elected the secretary. As with earlier meetings, Dunbar strongly emphasised the need for abolishing the Pass Laws. He saw the Pass Laws as the chief obstacle to political enfranchisement.

For a while the number of people attending the meetings

increased to an average of forty. This figure belies the high turnover of weekly membership. People came out of curiosity from the mines, from the town, but seldom stayed to become regular members. By October, Dunbar's "Abolish Passes"...leit motif was already assimilated by the members of the organisation. It is Msane who, with the passion of the naive hero, is supposed to have said that "he would die to prevent such laws and would fight to the end. He might be killed, as well as a great many more, but the remainder must take up the fight and carry it through." (43) In the same month a group was selected to supervise the printing and distribution of pamphlets on the Reef. (44) (45)

This upsurge of activity prompted the well informed secretary of NA to suggest to the Secretary of Justice that action be taken against the International Socialists under the Volksraad Resolution dated 31st August 1895 (article 1066).(46) However, it was felt that the time was not ripe to stop the socialists. The flurry of pamphlets and the noises made by people in the IWA had the effect of inducing fear in the ruling class. General Botha issued a warning to the African workers to be wary of the dangerous teachings of certain pernicious people. It was felt in the IWA that 'the whole of Johannesburg is troubled in heart by what we are doing here now.....'(47) Taberer, of the National Recruiting Corporation felt... "in regard to the International Socialists in Johannesburg,

something ought to be done by the Government to stop these meetings, and in any case I feel that the printing of the circulars ought to be prevented....." (48) Members of the IWA were much emboldened by these developments. The Chairman explained that he felt that the IWA was stronger than Congress and hoped that "some members of the Congress will come and attend our meetings because their meeting is of no use to natives." (49)

From November to April of the next year, attempts were made on two occasions to expand the IWA. Both these attempts were singularly unsuccessful. Firstly, the Johannesburg branch of the APO made overtures to the IWA, as well as the SANNC, the object being the establishment of one society of workers, Africans and Coloured.(50) The exploratory meetings did not come to anything, apart from showing evidence of IWA members needling the delegates from the Congress. (51) The outcome of the talks was that each society should organise separately "and we shall come and join each other at the end when things come right." (52)

The second attempt was motivated by the ISL in March. A conference was convened with a view to starting one big non-racial industrial union which would supply the core of an alternative to the existing industrial union structure. The idea was to gather all workers together, 'black and white',

"so that when we happen to come on strike we may all strike together demanding what we want, and surely we will have no trouble in obtaining it.... The idea of forming this new system of organisation is to try and abolish the capitalist system altogether, with the wage system...." (53)

The name of this body, confusingly, was to be the 'IWA'-- which in essence meant the expansion of the original IWA to embrace a wider membership. The enlarged IWA held a few more meetings which were dominated by the ISL members. The IWA thus became, albeit nominally only, a non-racial union. The constitution (as recorded by Jali) is not of great informative use. It has an interesting introduction which according to Jali goes thus

"Objects of the above said heading is to find the better way of living and to inspire the true essence of unity to meet together periodically to discuss matters socially and general interest to mutual improvement to organise the members and to do without the capitalist...." (54)

Although this second attempt moved further than the first, there is no evidence that the new IWA had embarked on any distinctive strategical activity, indeed it is unlikely that the new body had become anything but a noble ideal.

Interesting developments were taking place in the IWA in the meantime. (In the early months of 1918 the East Rand Traders boycott occurred which we shall look at briefly). There is one curious incident which Jali saw fit to report. He claimed that Kapane Rueben was seen handing out IWA pamphlets at Benoni during the Boycott trouble there.

Rueben was a foundation member of the IWA and one of the most active. Det James King also claimed that Rueben, a commercial traveller, had been seen handing out pamphlets and lecturing to the workers at the Number 3 compound of the Consolidated Main Reef Gold Mine Company. (55)

Tsetse and M'belle had resigned their posts, claiming to have other commitments at the African Club and the Congress. The former reported that "he did not get paid for being a Chairman of this society ...and therefore could not waste his time." (56) M'belle was a member of the Tvl N Congress executive and was clearly more comfortable in that company. The attitude they adopted was consistent with the over-all aspirant-bourgeois attitude of the SANNC. There existed a considerable gulf of commitment between the IWA and the SANNC leaders to the cause of the workers.

People inside the IWA were also asking questions such as "is it necessary for this organisation to rely on these 'whitemen' (socialists)?" (57) Both the above developments initiated furious and near-violent confrontations in the IWA meetings. The early labour movements, such as the IWA, revealed the sustained obstacle of race in the South African setting and the obstructing ideological effect on its peoples.

(b) THE NATIVE TRADERS BOYCOTT

The boycott on the East Rand by the mine workers signalled the beginning of large-scale protest by the workers in this

particular period. This was later to be followed by sporadic strike outbursts by the municipal workers in June, and by others employed in secondary industries and services in the town of Johannesburg. The event unleashed a series of enquiries, both by commissions and select committees. These commonly acknowledged the danger of rising prices, falling real wages and the nature of the African's participation in the economy in its several aspects. One also saw the mounting involvement of the Native Congress in petitioning for reforms of the system.

This period, 1917-1920, was commonly referred to in Government correspondence and memoranda as the period of native unrest. It was characterised by the belief in the news media and the ruling class that unrest was due to agitators. An ideology resting largely on race awareness could, in these circumstances, through the news media, purvey the belief that 'disturbances' such as at Benoni and Boksburg could only come about through the instigation of trouble-makers. That a people should want to improve their conditions and their bargaining strength was incredulously rejected. However, many of the commissioners included in enquiries could see clearly that the protests were mostly motivated by simple hardships. Their reasoning, following logically, was that unrest could and would grow out of such immiseration.

The boycott itself began on or about the 7th of February 1918.

"For several days the mining stores of Brakpan, Benoni and Springs have been in a state of unrest and uncertainty owing to the attitude of the natives employed on the various properties, notably, the Van Ryn Deep, Kleinfontein, Modderfontein, Modder B, Geduld, Springs State Mines and Brakpan. It seems that the boys decided among themselves to boycott the traders on the grounds that the ruling prices are too high.... The boycott.... originated at the Van Ryn Deep and within forty-eight hours from its inception had spread throughout the district."(58)

The boycotters organised pickets posted around certain shops and

"boys attempting to enter certain stores were either dissuaded from doing so, or else upon emerging were deprived of their purchases.... Eventually most of the victims became converts to the cause," (59)

The shop of one Max Spiro situated near to the Kleinfontein Mines, was one of the objects of attention on the 12th. February. His customers were interfered with (and roughed up sometimes). (60) At Modder B and Brakpan the police were called when the boycotters started heckling the store-keepers "calling upon them to close their shops and making threatening gestures....." (61) The boycotting, accompanied by picketing, continued until the 15th of February when the police moved in and decided to arrest a number of the picketers. "The native boycotters at the Kleinfontein Compound received a sharp check yesterday morning, by the arrest of one of their pickets which consisted...(of)... boys mostly Shangaan." (62) By the 15th it was quiet on the East Rand. With the arrest of the picketers, the situation had reverted to normality.

At Langlaagte it seemed that picketing was still in operation. On the 25th of February, 300 to 400 boycotters gathered in the single quarters of the Langlaagte Compound. "They were very excited and after shouting and brandishing sticks, proceeded along the Main Reef Road." (63) It appeared that the boycotters were angry that their picketing colleagues had been arrested and sought to make their way to the police station to see what was happening to them. The gathering made its way towards Langlaagte and was intercepted by the police. Seven of the protesters were arrested.

The discussion and debate in the wake of the boycotting revealed the varied stances (and shades of ideologies) taken by those with some stake in the resolution of the issue. To the boycotters the trouble was anything but spontaneous. The IWA leaflets were discovered in compounds and it was deduced that certain dissatisfied white socialists and alleged pacifists are at the back of this movement." (64) The police, as usual, concurred with the above opinion, deprecating notions endowing the workers with a sense of independent action.

However, the police also saw what was becoming manifestly clear.

"The organisation amongst the natives in this matter is not to be lost sight of, because if they are successful in compelling the storekeepers to reduce their prices, as they have been in two instances, it will give them some idea of their power, and may result in a general strike for higher wages." (65)

The African boycotters did, in this instance, (wrongly)

attribute the high prices to the trading middleman. They admitted, in replies to questions, that they could not buy any more cheaply at other stores, but they were or professed to be under the impression that all stores were keeping up prices at the instigation of the so-called concession stores near the compounds." (66)

The Acting District Commandant said that he received the impression that the boycotters' argument went thus :

"That if on account of the war it was necessary to raise the prices of commodities, thus making it impossible for the natives to purchase on their existing wages, they ought to be paid more money. It is true that this does not seem to have been the general argument, but we thought it sufficiently significant to warrant and to consult with others." (67)

In conditions such as these the store-owners could not help but feel victimised.

Cooke reported that boycotting was hardly new to Africans and "he reminded me (Hamel) of an effective boycott of Indian traders that some years ago took place in the Boksburg Municipal Location." (68) Two things were thus being established by those in authority : that the boycott was indeed a reaction to high prices and/or the situation of prices and wages not rising commensurately, and that the workers were not ignorant of the boycott weapon to attempt to remedy their grievances. Whereas the boycotted reacted in an outraged manner, the mining authorities saw the true nature of the boycott more clearly.

For several months afterwards, even well into 1919, the boycott issue and its solution dogged a number of commissions and select committees. In addition the various Chambers of Commerce, shopowners, African buyers and politicians expressed their opinions on the subject. The Chambers of Commerce almost unanimously denied the charge of profiteering and sought the preservation of the existing arrangement. The Chambers of Commerce produced a chart indicating the price schedule to disprove the profiteering charge. (see appendix 1) "It should also be borne in mind that the turnover in this particular trade has not increased...." (69) Even the trading stands on the mines on the Government Areas complained that they could not pay the rental. "We find that since we are established that after hard work we could not make both ends meet, it now requires more than double the capital to work the concern than our original calculation." (70)

Some months afterwards, when the co-operative scheme for trading on the mines was mooted by the Cost of Living Commission, the Chambers of Commerce in unison rejected the idea. Even the Transvaal Native Congress expressed opposition. "They felt that the native will have to pay more than they do today if the co-operative system is established." (71) Taber of NRC claimed to have sounded out 'enlightened' Africans who supported the establishment of co-operatives. He himself had nothing against the

idea but felt strongly that it ought not to be done by the Chamber of Mines ("it might give rise to the possibility of trouble between employer and employee"). He "would rather see co-operative stores set up under the aegis of the government, or by natives themselves, but that is impossible, natives have not got to the stage of running co-operative stores yet." (72)

It is easy to understand the motive of the commercial bourgeoisie in rejecting co-operative schemes. It is more difficult with the Native Congress. The Natives Congress sent a detailed memorandum to the Native Trading on Mines Committee (which had been instituted in December of 1918). This memorandum contains an interesting history of trading on the Witwatersrand. The African Congress initially objected to the composition of the Committee. The committee consisted of Mr. Hamel (Mining Commissioner Boksburg) who was the chairman, JP du Toit (Mining Commissioner, Krugersdorp), JJI Middleton (Under Secretary for Finance) and HS Cooke (Acting Director of Native Labour). The Congress said that

"It is a well-known fact that the administration of laws affecting concession stores has been carried out by mining commissioners whom it would be desirable to call and give evidence before the committee regarding the methods and conduct of the above administration.... This meeting concludes that it is desirable that some impartial persons or magistrates who are in no way connected with the administration of the Acts, Laws and Regulations affecting native trading on the mines should be appointed to

the committee, instead of the two gentlemen (Hamel and Du Toit) referred to above." (73)

The Congress' protest was passed by, however. The thrust of the Congress' evidence was that the stores should be left as they were... "hold them to their contracts, they went in with their eyes open, they knew that the Law did not confer them any monopolies.... Let Parliament introduce (the following) amendments to Acts 35 - 1908 and Act 13 - 1910" (74) The suggested amendments aimed at providing the African businessman with an opportunity of competing on equal terms with 'white' businessmen on mining ground. The introduction of free trade on Proclaimed ground or ground held under mining title sought to give a person "after having complied with certain requirements, ... the right to carry on any trade or industry on such ground as upon any other ground." (75)

The Congress described how the existing legislation governing trading stores came into being. In the years 1896 and 1897 a great deal of liquor was sold to African miners at Krugersdorp and Randfontein. "This trade was a monopoly in the hands of a few 'uncrowned liquor kings', who by bribery and corruption and other malpractices became a power in themselves, so much so that unless you belonged to the ring you had no chance of getting a trading stand." (76) The evidence claimed that nearly all the mining stands on the West Rand were owned by these people. When Sir J B

Robinson (then Mr.) applied for a mining stand on one of the claims of his company in 1896, the Mining Commissioner refused his application. Sir J B Robinson applied to the High Court to call upon the Mine Commissioner to show cause why a stand should not be granted to him. The Mining Commissioner in his replying affidavit stated that "the granting of a stand in the neighbourhood would interfere with and be detrimental to the diggings." (77) The court decided that Mr. Robinson as a digger was more competent to decide whether such a stand would interfere with diggings and ordered that the stand be granted.

The Congress memorandum stated that the Liquor Kings had "decided that steps be taken through the officials that in future it shall be impossible for any unsuccessful or displeased applicant for a mining stand to go to Court and obtain relief." (78) Furthermore, owners of Mynpachten, who had the full privilege to use of their claims, also caused the Liquor-Kings some anxiety. The Liquor-Kings, contrived through officials (amongst whom they held enormous influence) to vest Mining Commissioners with arbitrary powers when considering an application for a stand license. (Law 15, 1898 Section 92). Moreover, the section also withdrew the right for land to be given out under Mynpacht (Mining Title). Congress claimed that the legislation had the following results :

- (a) It deprived the public of the privilege of the trade on Mining Ground held under Claim licence

- (b) It conferred autocratic powers on Mining Commissioners which is detrimental to the Public interest
- (c) It confiscated private property worth thousands of pounds without paying compensation to freehold owners of unproclaimed mynpachten.

"This is a very small part of the history of how trading on the Mines and proclaimed fields became restricted and the Native Mine Workers Commodities were placed on the High road of becoming monopolised... When Law 15 of 1898 came into force." (79)

The Congress claimed that in return for the 7/6d per month which stand landlords paid, they derived as much as three and four hundred pounds a month in income. Public applications for stands since then, were consistently refused, to retain "the native mine trading monopoly." Of some 845 trading sites on the Reef, over 800 had to be abandoned because of the 114 trading sites co-ordinated by the Trading Board and the Mining Commissioners. (80) The evidence quoted the Chamber of Commerce as always following "with moral and financial support on the heels of the concession combine that vested interests have to be protected. . Stability of trade must be maintained as far as they, the.. wholesale merchants are concerned, what matter is it to them that the Native Mine Workers and even the general public are being plundered.... The Chamber of Commerce is certain to urge upon the Government that the system of concession stores should not be disturbed." Even should the co-operative system be introduced and an agreement were made that all the stock for the stores be bought from half a dozen leading firms, "They ... will not oppose

the system of co-operative stores at the mine compounds."(81)

The staid gentlemen in the Congress movement, while inveighing against the monopolistic muscle of the concession stores, sought from well-intoned motives, the broadening of the commercial base. This small business aspiration was in line with the petty-bourgeois consciousness which dominated much of the thinking of the early urban African leadership. Within the material conditions of the society the liberalism which many of these gentlemen flaunted was obstructed by racialist legislation and custom. The Congress in taking on the issue had, in its own interests, veered the debate away from its original focus, the effect of high prices on miners, to another focal point which emphasized the frustration of the bourgeois interests of its class. The concession store issue had in fact become clouded by bureaucratic investigation. There is not a great deal of information which could lead one to suggest that the situation of the stores had changed as a result of these numerous investigations. It is probable that the falling price index in 1920 had silently killed off the controversy and its implications.

THE TRANSVAAL NATIVE CONGRESS : THE SHILLING STRIKE AND THE PASS DISTURBANCES

In April of 1918, after the clamour of the concession stores boycott had died down, 200 skilled engineers in Johannesburg downed tools. The strikers refused to seek the assistance of Crawford (a 'white' trade union leader) and relentlessly

pursued their object of gaining a wage increase. They had persuaded municipal engineers to down tools as well (and thereby effectively paralysed Johannesburg for a few hours). The municipal engineers' demands were quickly met and immediately after this victory they made a new demand that the wages of their fellow municipal employees be increased by 20 per cent as well. (82) The protracted labour dispute, which according to the newspapers was arousing the public's indignation, came to an end on the 28th of May. (83)

The effect of the 'white' workers strike on the 'black' workers is a questionable one. There is no doubt that the example of 'white' workers striking and succeeding was not lost on the African workers. African workers in municipal employ came out early in June (June 6-June 18) demanding increased wages. The causes of this wave of striking in early June were multiple. Of primary importance was the present condition of the African proletariat. The worker earning 1s6d, it is correct to assume, was conscious of the 'white' worker succeeding by striking and sought the use of the same action.

The famous 'bucket' strike of 1918 of the Johannesburg Municipal workers came in the wake of intense strife in the city. The Star described the events;

"on Thursday the natives in the sanitary department of the town council put in a demand for an increase of 6d a day in wages as value of their labour, and their action was followed by the natives employed in other municipal departments yesterday, some of

whom demanded 4d a day and others 6d a day. There are a minimum of 3,900 natives employed by the municipality and a maximum of 4,250 and their wages range from 1s8d to 2s6d per day." (84)

The sanitary services to the suburbs (including the northern suburbs) were held up. The City Council went into an emergency session and it was revealed there that an increase of 4d per day would add £20,592 to the annual budget, where an increase of 6d would cost £30,000. (85) Such an increase was not considered, instead recourse to the law was the solution. The alleged ring leaders were arrested and forty-nine of the sanitary workers were charged with breaches of the Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1914.

During the trial it appeared that the workers had made an appeal for an increase on the 3rd of June. The workers had, in discussion with the foreman, asked for an increase of their wages from 1s6d to 2s6d a day. A witness said that at dinner time the foreman and the acting manager came and told them that no increase would be given." They asked that if no increase was given they should be allowed to go on that night at ten o'clock, the time when they inspanned the mules preparatory to going to work. They wanted to hear what the reply was with reference to the increase they asked for. The night foreman said the increase could not be given. The compound manager came and spoke, ... telling them they would all have to go to Jeppe Police Station. At no time did they refuse to go to work, they were ready to go to work...." (86)

The compound authorities felt that the workers were distinctly hostile on the 9th of June. When they were ordered out at 8 p.m. in the usual way, they refused to respond and in result only 3 out of a possible 35 carts went out that night. (87)

From these muddled transcripts it appeared that the compound authorities had acted precipitately and that the workers were subjected to a great deal of brow-beating. The outcome of the trial was that the workers were sentenced to two months imprisonment. The presiding magistrate, Mr. McFie, in addition imposed severe restrictions on the workers. While in prison they would have to "do the same work as they had been doing, and would carry out that employment with an armed escort, including a guard of Zulus armed with assegais and 'white' men with guns. If they attempted to escape and if it were necessary they would be shot down. If they refused to obey orders they would receive lashes as often as might be necessary to make them understand they had to do what they were told." (88) Subsequently 152 more people were charged, their sentences were suspended contingent on their good behaviour. (89)

The sentences unleashed a flood of protest. The Annual Meeting of the South African Society (to promote the welfare of "the Native and Coloured races") spoke of the unfortunate nature of the sentence and "that natives had got the opinion that 'the powers that be' were unsympathetic

towards them, and that all that sort of thing gave natives a feeling that there had been established 'white justice' for white people and 'black justice' for black people."(90) This also gave the Transvaal Native Congress the opportunity of establishing a popular foothold amongst the disgruntled people.

They set about organising a series of public meetings for the purpose of discussing the sentence issue. These meetings provided a rallying place for the effervescent mood prevailing amongst the African people in Johannesburg and set in train a political custom of large open rallies. It is in this welter of activity that the Native Congress experienced a rising ascendancy in Johannesburg and the IWA its nadir. The IWA first enjoyed a brief moment of glory and then a rapid decline steered partly by the unscrupulous objectives of both the police and the government.

The Transvaal Native Congress held its first meeting two days before the final sentences were passed on the 12th of June. The IWA took advantage of the opportunity and regularly attended, contributed and played a guiding role with the Native Congress. The meetings contained these two conflicting elements awkwardly until the tension became too great. At the first meeting M'belle (his association with the IWA terminated) suggested that a petition be sent to the Governor-General to seek a reduction of the sentence.

To that another person said, "no, we should ask them to release our friends, if not so, we tell them that we shall all stop work and strike if they did not let them out." Tinker (a member of the ISL) suggested an alteration to the last recommendation, "we should all unite into thousands and go on strike, first for the release of our friends, and secondly for our rights." (91)

The Transvaal Native Congress and the IWA thus co-operated for some time, members of both executives addressing the public meetings. A joint committee had been set up by the IWA and the Transvaal Native Congress - "these five must find the ways we are going to get our rights." (92) The focus of the meetings had thus developed from protest to strategical planning aimed at a more constructive goal. The alliance however, was not a very comfortable one. The Congress members fulminated against white oppression - "all they are after is land and money..... what they are after is to finish the black race of South Africa. What we should do now is to unite and after that we can do the same with them." (93) The International explained the position of the IWA and the ISL, with regard to the Congress thus ;

"a body in whose more reactionary, middle class and religious-cum-racial tendencies, socialists can of course have no part, but which may be compelled by the close co-incidence of the native and the working-class interests to play a useful role." (94)

This was in contrast to the IWA's working class unity call. Moreover, a schism had arisen on whether the first of July

was intended to be a day of striking. The truth was that the Joint Committee through Mvabaza (an executive member of the Congress), had recommended that all employers be asked to award an increase of one shilling a day on the first of July only. Should the increase not be given a strike would follow thereafter.

It emerged that the people attending the meetings had somehow come to understand that a full strike would occur on the first of July. Much wrangling over the issue ensued and despite the fact that the IWA and ISL felt that times were not propitious for a strike, they argued the question with Congress. It also became known that a group of collaborators (aside from those employed by the police) had emerged. It is specious to claim that a significant body of such men did exist in the Native Congress, there were however, some of dubious loyalty. One such was Paul Msane. He had had discussions with Taberer (inter alia) and subsequently issued a pamphlet which came out against the Congress Leadership. This was so despite the fact that he had been present, vocally, at the public meetings as late as the 27th of June. His pamphlet, sophist in form, was played up by the Johannesburg newspapers as 'wise counsels'. "Do not let your fears carry you away," read the pamphlet,

"when you are living amongst white people you have to be careful where you put your feet..... If you wish to ask for more money, choose your leaders and approach your employers in the proper way.... One thing we ought to start to do is to ask the Government to reduce the rent which storekeepers near the compounds

have to pay. It is because of these rents that charges have gone up ... I am entirely opposed to anything like a strike. Not a single man must leave work. Keep at work all of you. The question of a rise in wages can be represented while you are at work." (95)

Cope also reports of Talbot Williams backing out of the organisational effort and pledging his assistance to MacFie (the magistrate) to do everything in his power to stop the movement. (96)

At the meeting on the 27th June speakers clashed over the misunderstanding, with elements in Congress averring that a strike was wholly indefensible. (97) The weight of individuals such as W Msimang (the attorney), Dr Rubusana (who later helped to found the Bantu Union) and Mbelle, was decidedly influential in dismissing the notion of a strike altogether. The emphasis was all on caution. Having failed to lay down a general strategy and to play a 'wait and see' game, the Congress failed to capitalise on the heightened spirit of unity which their increasing number of followers exhibited. (Thus for several months running into 1919 and 1920 the Congress was able to command large audiences but in turn provide but poor leadership.) The International commented "... the remedy is not ripe yet. The black workers are not yet ready to stand by each other as workers and rely on that weapon... against the claw and fang system. They still look from aid above. What aid will they get?" (98) Later they described some of the African leaders as 'Black Crawfords'. (99)

While these mass meetings continued, the IWA weekly meetings received a huge influx of new members. This however, was a short-lived Indian summer, and was no more than a flourish for the organisation before its final demise. Despite a general announcement that there would be no strike on the 1st of July, workers in a number of compounds who had been locked in had heard nothing of the announcement. Thus about 15,000 people downed tools on the assigned day and at two compounds ugly struggles developed between the police and the strikers. (100)

On July 30th a mass meeting was held at Newtown square which unanimously called for a shilling increase a day. At the close of the meeting messengers were despatched to different parts of the town to distribute the message of the Congress President that in no circumstances were the Africans to refuse to work that day. Despite this appeal and that of the exhortations of General Botha, playing upon the commendable response of Africans during the war, (coupled with the newspapers' sinister call for 'wiser counsels' to prevail) there were a number of workers both on the compounds and in the city who refused to work. At Ferreira, Ferreira Deep and Crown Mines the workers downed tools, taking up the cry for the wage increase. (101) At Robinson Deep, it was claimed that the Basutos had picketed other workers to down tools, unsuccessfully. The Daily Mail somewhat glibly spoke of the exceptional nature of the strike at Ferreriras.

" ... It was significant that of all the mines tampered with, only those near Ferreirastown proved fruitful ground for the agitators' seeds. 'International Socialism' so called has been germinating in Ferreirastown for months."(102)

Mr. Cooke (the Director of Native Labour) spoke to the strikers advising them not to be misled, and stressed the consequences of their action. The leaders, apparently, were imperturbable and despite the conciliatory gestures of the crowd, pressed their demands. It was said that they would 'rather starve than go back to work.' The police then made a show of force and seventy-one of the ring leaders were arrested. (103) This accomplished, the back of the protest was broken.

Another pending strike faced the authorities at Roodepoort municipality where the authorities were somewhat taken aback that there were no clear leaders. The demands here were disparate. Their incipient militance was quickly quelled by the patronising attitude of the town council.

Botha made another public warning, bluntly hinting at the presence of "intrigue which has reached the native population it is a question of 'other agencies' being at work with no less an objective than 'to subvert the constitution by means of violence'." (104) The laundry and hospital workers added to the general confusion a day later by complaining respectively that wages were not high enough and of underfeeding. (105) Furthermore the hospital board balked at the idea of granting a wage

increase until the municipality and the mines had made a firm decision.) The police made short work of the disturbance by summarily arresting all the striking laundry workers.

The authorities took the opportunity of bringing before the court, on July 8th, Bunting, Finker, Hanscombe of the ISL, Cetyiwe, Ngojo and Kraai of the IWA and Letanka and Mvabaza of the Transvaal Native Congress. They were charged with the crime of public violence under the Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1914.(106) The case was a protracted affair. However, the charges had to be withdrawn when it was discovered that a key witness for the Crown, Luke Messina, had made false affidavits, prompted by his employers.

This was a severe blow for the IWA, for the ISL thought that this direct approach to the African worker by Bunting and others was not the best mode of organisation. However, the IWA continued to meet and one hears of Jones and Tinker resuming their night classes for the workers. The last record there is of an IWA meeting is in February of 1919. (107) These continued meetings aside, the body was in fact by now a dying one. The IWA then disappeared and nothing was heard of it until the Cape Town Dockworkers strike in December of 1919. Even here this resurgence of the IWA, in the face of the ICU's dominance of leadership and membership, was brief and not of great significance.

This event marked the close of the IWA sojourn in South African labour history, a short existence remarkably conspicuous for its total inability to achieve any real high points. The IWA had, in any event, failed to grab a foothold amongst the African workers in Johannesburg. Its failure was due chiefly to its inability to secure this grass roots support. (See chapter 30 for a further discussion on the IWA).

The Congress on the other hand had its hand buttressed by the June/July events. The Congress held a mass meeting at Vrededorp attended by 5000 people on the 7th of July. The feeling of the meeting was in favour of the shilling increase, but the leaders emphasized the necessity for making demands in a constitutional fashion.(108) Nonetheless elements in the crowd stoned the police and a number of people were arrested. A deputation of twenty Africans (M'belle amongst them) was received by General Botha soon afterwards which made representations on the following subjects: (a) the economic position of Africans on the Rand having regard to (1) increased cost of living (2) the consequent demand for a wage increase (3) the housing situation (4) the inability to support families under these conditions (5) the colour bar in employment (6) and compensation in respect of mines phthisis and accidents on mines; (b) the enforcement of the night pass ordinance especially as regards women; (c) the non-availability of letters of exemption for respectable

natives and other presentations regarding the multiplicity of passes and restrictions on educational facilities.(109) A few more public meetings were held where the same resolutions were voted on and paraded over and over again. at the same time miners at the Van Ryn Estates and Robinson Deep struck for the shilling increase per day. These sporadic strikes did not reach any conclusion and by August the unrest had simmered down.

An investigation led by Mr. Moffat into the unrest was appointed. Cooke, in giving evidence to the Moffat Commission felt that the original strike had been spontaneous but could in part be attributed to "the fact that the Johannesburg Municipality's method of handling natives was not sufficiently concise....." (110) He also spoke of the prevalence of a certain atmosphere in Johannesburg, citing an article in Abantu Batho on revolution and the presence of socialist leaflets questioning or provoking questions on the relation of workers to capitalist. It does seem as if this charge of agitating was an overplayed one.

The Chamber of Mines reporting through the NRC, saw graver issues arising out of the unrest. It had experienced a threatening labour shortage throughout the year and attributed this, in part, to the unrest. It claimed that the underground component of the labour force was only 74.4 per cent of what it should have been. "The causes which gave rise to a continued shortage of native labour were

both numerous and complex, but there could be no doubt that the actions and utterances of certain misguided individuals in attempting to effect so-called reforms by creating industrial unrest and perpetuating an apprehension of it, had a most important bearing on the matter; and it was high time that employers generally realised the beneficial effects which these persons had upon the welfare of the crimes and the community as a whole." (111)

In assessing the role of the Native Congress it almost appears that it acted as a well intoned deterrent and had put a brake on the mood of the people.

In March of 1919 the lull ended and a spell of social alarm was cast anew on Johannesburg and much of the rest of South Africa. The Waaihoek disturbances in Bloemfontein (which we shall look at in the following chapter) led by Msimang, the workers demands in Port Elizabeth and the renewed tensions in Johannesburg gave rise to a fresh confrontation between the people and the authorities. On the 30th of March a mass meeting was held in Vrededorp. The feeling at the meeting, as a Star reporter claimed after interviewing a 'prominent native', was that it was said that 'whites', such as those at the Power Station, could go on strike for their rights "And you don't put them in gaol. But if we want to fight for our rights, the police lock us up. We don't want to make any trouble, but we want our rights." (112)

Mbelle and others said when they were charged "that their object in initiating passive resistance was not to challenge the government in any way. There was no disloyalty on their part and they owed absolute allegiance to the King and the British Constitution." Their grievances were the denial of citizenship rights and the denial through the colour bar, of the rights of ordinary human beings. (113) At no stage, they claimed, did their objective include the use of violence, even though picketing did occur, such action was not authorised.

It was decided there to go in a body to the Pass Office where everybody would hand back their passes as a protest against the pass law." (114) The meeting heard reports of the delegations sent to the Native Affairs Department, Chamber of Mines, the Municipality and the NRC. Of these delegations only the one to the Native Affairs department had been given a hearing and even then a negative one. The people were dissatisfied with these reports of employers after asking for a wage increase. "The people were dissatisfied and attributed the whole difficulty to the Pass System. The employers know that the natives are absolutely tied down by it. The people therefore decided that the only solution was to break away from the system. They came forward and laid down their passes." (115)

The meeting also heard complaints that the chiefs gathered

in Johannesburg by the NRC were not allowed to see Congress representatives. They thereupon decided to see the chiefs by force and a group began to make its way to the WNLA compound. It was intercepted by the police and fifteen people were arrested.

An anti-pass demonstration in the neighbourhood of the Fordsburg Pass Office was held on the following day where people were told to be prepared to go to gaol for their opinions. A deputation from the meeting consisting of M'belle and S'bana, inter alia, told Laurence, the Chief Pass Officer, that the protest "was the result of an accumulation of grievances" with the pass laws as the root of all grievances. Furthermore they complained that no action had been taken upon the Moffat Report. The demonstration peaceful as it was, gave the police the opportunity of charging the Congress leaders with "wrongfully and unlawfully inciting, instigating, commanding or procuring other persons to commit a contravention of the Pass Law. The leaders were fined £10 each.(116)

The arrests had a sequel in the centre of Johannesburg. When the 'offenders' were being tried thousands of people thronged in the streets around the courts. The police claimed that events there were becoming unwieldy and that intervention was necessary. The women had taunted their men, it was claimed, and the situation was becoming dangerous. Feelings were thus extremely high. When

the sentences were relayed outside (60 people were found guilty) impromptu meetings outside the Court followed which the police forcefully terminated. (117)

Despite this, huge catherings continued to take place at Vrededorp where more passes were collected and given in by the people. The rest of the Rand quickly responded to the cue provided by Johannesburg. In Pretoria, Benoni and even Bloemfontein rallies were held to hand in passes and to sympathise with the Johannesburg Pass boycotters. At a meeting on the 2nd of April, heavily supported by women who acted as collectors of passes, approximately three hundred people were arrested. Meanwhile in the location itself (Vrededorp) a confrontation between the 'black' and 'white' residents was brewing. The confrontation developed to near-riot levels. At the meeting on the fourth tensions could not be contained and the police entered to stop the meeting. Not only were 254 people arrested, but the local 'white' residents made common cause with the police and an African man was killed. (118) By April the 12th the fever came to an end. The Native Congress held one more meeting at Vrededorp where fewer than twenty people attended.

In the meanwhile away from the public glare, other developments were taking place. A deputation from the Transvaal Congress went to Pretoria to interview the Minister of Justice (the Minister of Native Affairs

was not available) on the 7th of April. At the meeting representatives of the Police, Native Affairs, Native Labour departments were also present. Msimang called for the abolition of the Pass System, the recruiting system, the concession stores and an improvement of the housing situation. He claimed that the pass system was creating an ever-growing criminal class and "..... that it seemed to me that the pass system was now chiefly used as a means of revenue while at the same time it limited a man's earning capacity by preventing him from selling his labour to best advantage..... the recruiting system had the same evil effect" (119) (As with most deputations, the African members put in their best form which at best was obsequious and compromising. Makgatho, the provincial president before explaining the pass situation expressed his greatest loyalty to the King.)

In addition a number of interesting representations were made too. Ngojo, now a member of Congress said that, "the Pass Law here makes criminals of the skebenga amaleita type, in this way. A person is arrested and serves a term of imprisonment for perhaps a small offence. When he proceeds to look for work on his release from gaol his pass is marked "F.I.R.D." which signifies to his employer that the man is a criminal. The man may have been quite innocent, but was perhaps wrongly or falsely identified as one who had done mischief." (120) Makgatho explained the intricacies of the pass system. It was revealed by

him too that contrary to the Moffat Report's conclusion that Africans on the mines had no grievance and that they were being stirred by agitators, "Natives have many grievances which go un-redressed because they are unable to present them through the right channels." (121) The deputation also complained of the behaviour of the police and the 'white' people in interfering in matters which did not concern them. They also said that the police, at the Vrededorp meetings, deliberately provoked the women by charging them with batons.

At another level, other developments were taking place. The NRC had invited the African chiefs from all over South Africa to the Rand for the specific purpose of using them to counteract (through traditional ties) the growing militant consciousness which the workers on the mines were displaying. Evelyn Walters (Chambers of Mines) said "Now I hope that you have understood what I have said and that while you are here you will go round the mines and see the conditions under which your people work, and I hope you will set your face against those people who are trying to undermine your authority." (122)

Even amongst these chiefs an awareness of the prevailing conditions was not lost. The NRC may have succeeded in using the chiefs to diminish the threat of a strike but they also had to listen to the chiefs enunciating the same complaints about the cost of living as the workers. Chief Mpahlela said "We were not called here to discuss about

the Congress, as we were told there was going to be a strike amongst the natives.... that the strike was occasioned by a request made for increase of their wages. We do not want any strike... but what the natives do say is that the cost of living is very high. I would be glad if the labourers could get some increase in their wages so that they may be able to meet the increased cost of living. I would be glad if the letter which has been written (by the Transvaal Native Congress) could be respected by the authorities." (123)

One chief was reprimanded by the others when he had the temerity to say that

"I do not know whether the authorities sympathise with us or not, because there is also what is called the colour bar. This means that if a native is skilled to do certain work he is not allowed to touch it I think the colour bar is the cause of all this trouble.... some of my people at home are almost afraid to look at a white man.... sometimes they meet.... natives who are educated who tell them that the white man is useless and that they should have no confidence in him because the native is not treated fairly on account of the existence of the colour bar, and my request is that the Chamber of Mines should do all in their power to remove the colour bar."

Chief Mabandla responded to this by saying

"I think that the time is not yet opportune for the discussion of the subject.... We have already had a secret meeting of our own and we had come to the conclusion that we would wait and hear what the speakers had to say and to ask questions at a later stage." (124)

The subsequent meeting between the chiefs and Taberer revealed a certain degree of uneasiness amongst the

chiefs and also a lack of unanimity in spite of their attempts to seem to present a common front.

Chief Veldman in speaker said

"We do not deny the existence of the Congress but we do not know any of the people directly who say that they are representing our people.....The chiefs would like it made very clear that they do not know the Congress representatives and that those chiefs who went amongst the native miners came back with the report that the workers had not sent anyone to the Congress to represent them."

Chief Liniwe, warming to the occasion said that he saw the reason for the invitation to the Rand being because of the unrest; "That is why we ask you to find a remedy for these grievances and so put an end to all this strife. Whatever remedy you bring forward, if you can remedy the question of increased wages, you will be able to obliterate Congress as it were." (125)

It is not clear to what degree the chiefs were influential in dampening the idea of striking in the mines. Indeed, apart from minor incidents at individual mines, there was no strike action. The Congress leaders were annoyed that they could not interview the chiefs. Despite the fact that the power of traditional leadership was being confronted by the modern elitist leadership, an open conflict did not emerge. The chiefs pandered to the NRC and through the encouragement of these people only made disagreeable sounds about the new leadership. As was shown numerous times, the new leadership had not entirely cast off its traditional linkages. Its very origins

bound them in fealty to the chiefs. Yet because of the nature of capitalist relations in South Africa, Congress, unlike the chiefs (as a section of the black aspirant petty-bourgeoisie) did not have to depend on government goodwill and protection for the survival of its status. In this respect the urban aspirant bourgeois had a stronger hand and could begin dictating a path of development for urban Africans independent of the sanction of traditional leadership.

In May attempts were made to resurrect the anti-pass/higher wages campaign. The attempt was probably fired largely by the indignation of the sentences passed on the Klipspruit as well as the anti-pass boycott offenders. In any event, meetings held at Cleveland and Vrededorp were very poorly attended and inconclusive.

THE KLIPSPRUIT DISTURBANCES

March and April of 1919 were turbulent months in Johannesburg. To compound the Pass troubles a serious confrontation had brewed in the African location of Klipspruit, south-west of Johannesburg. (See earlier description of the location). It appeared that a long standing conflict had come to a head in the location. In many respect the superintendent of the place had come to represent the oppressive symbol of the town council and the police. And although the anger was directed towards him, it did in fact embrace deep-seated grievances which had been resolutely ignored by the town

council for ten years.

The Star, at the outbreak of the troubles described the events not without its usual degree of excessive imagination. In brief, the story went thus;

"Police, acting of course, on instructions, rounded up a head of cattle, some of which belonged to the natives, whose residential quarters are at the location. These particular boys took strong exception to the intervention of the police, and as a result there was very serious trouble. It must be mentioned here that for some time past the police have been investigating allegations in connection with the wholesale and barefaced thefts of cattle, and the thefts became so great that special men were deputed to ascertain the foundation of the offences. It was believed that some of the offenders could be found in the Klipspruit location, and Detective Calder and Detective Clark yesterday entered the location with a view to making a number of arrests.... They were met with a reception they will not forget for a long time. In short they were attacked, their assailants approaching them with choppers, sticks, picks and missiles equally effective in a melee. To be quite candid, the intruders - as the natives regarded them - got very much the worst of matters.... The boys seemed to have some grievance against Mr. James the Location superintendent, and it was he who suffered most." (126)

James said that he had acted on a report made to him about ownerless cattle in the location. As a result he arranged for the matter to be investigated on the 23rd of March. On the assigned day police arrived at 6 a.m. and met with the residents at the cattle kraal.

"Several came and were picking out their cattle. While doing so, a large number of natives collected, all armed with sticks. Whilst these men were in the kraal, numbers six and seven accused (Paul Motsoakae and Dunjwa) made a speech to the natives, the consequence of which was apparently that cattle were taken.

On account of their threatening attitude I decided to leave the matter in abeyance." (127)

The police returned at 11 a.m. and went to the local butcher (Shabalala) for an inspection visit. Three of the accused then entered the shop, one of them, spoke to Shabalala in Sesuto and Calder said to him, "This is not your business; go outside." Calder referring to the two others, said "These are the two who obstructed me this morning. They should be arrested." "When Calder told certain natives that they could consider themselves under arrest they took up a defiant attitude and walked on. Calder got hold of one of them and Clark of another. One showed fight and tackled Calder, yet another then came up armed with a stick. One of the boys clung to a verandah post and would not go with Clark. While witness was looking on three of the accused beat him on the head with heavy sticks.... witness heard the two accused say in Zulu "Kill him..." (128)

On the following day the location closed in on itself and nobody was allowed to leave. Those people who attempted to board trains were forcibly removed and brought back. The place resembled a very martial scene commented the Star (129) and was surrounded by police. By nightfall, however, the location had quieted down and people were allowed to enter and to leave. Once again the popular impression of 'Socialistic' agitators stirring up trouble was allowed to develop. The Star said that "in fact, it seem that the ringleaders of the revolutionary movement

inculcated some idea of 'the Bloshevik' movement, and in consequence adopted a defiant attitude." (130) They were, the newspaper claimed, harbouring the men the police wanted and from reports published appeared to be the leaders in the location. (It is not clear where these 'facts' came from).

In reality the contentious issue revolved immediately around the confiscation of cattle, the inadequate provision for keeping cattle and basic living conditions. One of the municipal by-laws stipulated that no cattle could be kept in the location, unless these were registered at the office of the Superintendent, and kept in the municipal kraal. The police acted on two counts, first, neighbouring farmers complained that their cattle had been stolen, and it was said that instead of cattle being slaughtered at the abbatoirs in the city, as per regulation, they were being slaughtered privately in the location. It was decided that a police deputation would enforce the second regulation and make enquiries about the first. The superintendent, James, then arranged for a number of 'white' detectives to check and indentify stock to check whether they were registered or not and to impound surplus cattle, over and above the number which was registered at the Superintendent's office.

By the 27th of March court proceedings were instituted against the 'ringleaders' and offenders of the Klipspruit

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disturbances. In the proceedings several illuminating facts were brought to light. The Magistrate Mr. MacFie said, after receiving a deputation from the location, that James and the police had acted wrongfully in taking possession of the cattle, yet in retaliating the people had acted indefensibly too. (131)

Immediately after the sentences of the charged offenders, the Nancefield (adjacent to Klipspruit) branch of the South African National Native Congress held a meeting at Klipspruit.

"In several other locations the people came together and prayer meetings were the order of the day, collecting of funds for those arrested by the police. Until a few days ago prayer-meetings commenced as early as four a.m. and at midnight the wails were still heard." (132)

Such was the scene in Klipspruit as well. On the fourth of May the Native Congress attracted 200 people from the location to its meeting. Three major resolutions were passed : (1) Against the treatment meted out to native prisoners in Johannesburg gaol. (2) That delegates at the Queenstown session of the Congress lay before the government details of the above complaints and (3) that Congress be moved to request the authorities to allow depositions to be taken from prisoners still undergoing sentence touching this same matter. (133)

It emerged that there were factions for and against James in the location. James said,

"There are about twelve native races represented

in the location. The majority are of Zulu offspring. The Xosa and the Hlubi are hostile to me. It was an open secret last April that that section were against me then. Numbers eight and twelve are Zulus. Number five is I think Msutu. Number twelve has a hobby of assaulting Europeans. Number eight is lazy..." (134)

Le Roux the rent collector in the location spoke of these factions

"I know Jeremiah Mqueba there. I don't know if James in July of 1917 appointed him a headman but I know he went about as a headman there. It was an unpopular appointment in the location. The natives were all against him. The superintendent appoints the municipal police. There are six of them. They are usually brought from outside.... There is an association in this location. The headman is a Zulu, the secretary a Fingu and the chairman a Morolong as I believe. It is this association which is against the Superintendent." (135)

A period existed in the location when relations between the superintendent and the residents were fluid. Le Roux revealed that during the past three or four years there had been considerable friction in the location and a deterioration of relationships. He averred that it was James' attitude which was responsible for the feeling of dissatisfaction in the location. Before the onset of friction, James and Sibiya (a prominent resident) were once good friends. They drank together, Sibiya allowed James the use of his horses and in return James once at Sibiya's wedding, bought all the liquor. (136) It appeared however, (to Le Roux) that an actual feud had started between these two. Since then grave reports were heard of James' administration of the location.

In the evidence heard by Mr. Hogge, who was appointed to enquire into the grievances at Klipspruit, several people from the location testified against James and the location conditions. Sibiya was one of the earliest witnesses. It is worthwhile presenting part of his evidence... "The first sore point is this we are sold like animals by the Government." Every single one of the twelve deputations sent to the government was told to address the grievances to the municipality.

"If they had a good superintendent they lived well, otherwise not. Their cattle were impounded. For one head of cattle they paid 7s (it is not clear whether this is actually the purchase price or the registration fee). Their cattle had no right to graze or water anywhere..... we work for five or six years....to get £100. Sometimes we build a house on municipal ground, which, without a magistrate's order is taken away for £5. We have come to work and we wish to pay for the stand, so as to leave it to our children."

The municipal houses, he said, were too small, there were no wash houses and no street lights. "The main thing was their mode of living, which allowed police to attend the location and Mr. James was only fair to his friends, and took their pigs as in the days of Chaka." (137) He also claimed that James' favoured friends did not have to pay for stands and were allowed to slaughter cattle in spite of Dr. Porter's (MOH) statement against the practice.

When James had gone to England, a Mr. Robson had taken his place. During this time (1918 April to August) there was relative calm in the location. "James' appointed

headman Jeremiah, said that Robson allowed new members to be considered for the location committee and the old members somehow (were) not (considered). Then Mr. James came back, and the people said these members (old members) were Mr. James' detectives. In consequence, the natives broke into their houses and people were stabbed in the location." (138) Furthermore, on his return, James vetoed certain applications made for stands which caused considerable dissatisfaction.

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He also rounded up native women who occupied themselves in liquor selling. The natives resented this." (140)

No doubt, James' actions did cause a great deal of unhappiness in the location. Moreover, it appeared that he had acted arbitrarily on occasion. Perhaps these claims were exaggerated, but people said that James went about the location at night with a loaded revolver and that on two occasions he used it to clear a hut. In addition he was reported to have assaulted an old man in September of 1918. The former allegations were denied strenuously. "He knew of no criticism of his conduct," he said. (141)

With so much criticism aired in the court and at the Enquiry, it was inevitable that James was removed from the office of superintendent. (He was moved to the Compound section and made General Manager there. In 1921 and 1922 certain town councillors thought it wise that he actually be returned to his former post.) The result of the investigations into Klipspruit was that the town council was impelled to play a stronger hand in its dealings with its urban African population.

Within a year, funds were ear-marked for expansion and development of new and improved housing facilities. In addition, certain people called for the abolition of Klipspruit altogether, while as an interim measure, a certain degree of local government, it was suggested, be

invested in the location.

"The Parks and Estates Committee recommend the Town Council that the natives at Klipspruit location be permitted to elect an advisory board of eight members: that the voters at such election be registered renters, that such Advisory Board have no executive powers whatsoever.... that the officer in charge of the location act as chairman at all meetings of the Advisory Board; that the native members of the Advisory Board be paid £6 per annum." (142)

The authorities also attempted to compensate the owners of huts in the location who may have been unduly harmed by the arrangements of previous auction sales. These actions were the precedents for the setting up of advisory committees throughout several locations and in a sense the Annual Native Conference and Advisory Committee set up by General Smuts in 1920. The objective of such institutions was clear, the inauguration of a state supported incipient leadership class (beginnings of the urban petit-bourgeoisie) which could act as a buffer against the natural growth of discontentment. With the phenomenon of a rising African working-class, it was necessary to sponsor a deflective agency within the population which could divert and play off potential popular militancy. Even such a group did not constitute a simple coterie of government lackeys though. (143)

The group's orientation may have been towards the broadening of the status quo, but it pleaded for the enrichment of the status quo by the liberal opening of its ranks. As products of colonial ideology, they assumed that

'British justice' would not succumb to prejudice and racism. Sibiya and Kosinkula, who were respectively headman at Klipspruit and the Congress branch chairman, welcomed the Governor-General, Lord Buxton to Klipspruit on the sixth of February 1920. The welcoming address read thus, in part

"We welcome your Lordship not only as our Paramount chief, but also as our friend, and one whom we know solicits earnestly for the welfare of all our native people.... In the midst of the base and contemptible atmosphere of South African politics.... in the midst of our great sufferings and wrongs, we always look upon your Lordship and your high imperial connection" as our great rock of refuge and strength.... May it give your Lordship.... increased resolution to fight for us in our battles for freedom.... or in the words of your great predecessor, Lord Milner, 'to fight for the British rights and damn the consequences...'"

They repeated their loyalty and pleaded for the pardon of the seven people arrested in the previous years' disturbances. (144)

As an attempt to stem further public unrest, the authorities (the joint connivance of the Secretary for Native Affairs and the Director of Prisons) recommended that the Klipspruit prisoners be shown clemency and be allowed to go free. (145) He (Secretary of Native Affairs) acknowledged mismanagement of Klipspruit Location and "the general disregard by the authorities of the wishes of the people," which action amounted

"to provocation but not justification... while I do not say that the term of imprisonment actually served necessarily represents adequate punishment for the offence committed I feel strongly that the exercise of further clemency would produce an excellent effect

on the somewhat perturbed native population, particularly on the Reef and I recommend therefore, not pardon, but release of the prisoners by remission of the unexpired portion of the various sentences imposed.... If anything in the nature of a pretext is desired it might be found in the approaching relinquishment of office by his excellency." (146)

Remedial action in this regard had been prompted by others as well (Protector of Natives in Kimberley), so that the final result was expected to produce satisfactory consequences. Within the African population the reprieve caused a division of faith.

On the 19th of December, 1920, the Congress held a meeting at Klipspruit to celebrate the release of the prisoners. The meeting generated its bold talk (147) Sibiya claimed that the imprisonment of the young men was analogous to the Bambata Rebellion, "when in despair they fought, which we must all do when we can get nothing done for us and we are in despair." Mabaso greeted the news of the day,

"... by your actions you have covered yourselves with glory having made sacrifices for your nation and for freedom. The white man says we, the Congress, encourage you to be rebellious and agitate, that is true and we continue to do it. The white man will not put bread in your mouth when you are asleep, you must fight for it... Klipspruit Location is an example of the effect of the Congress policy, we fought and now are a free and undisturbed location, while in other locations on the Reef, the people are still being persecuted by the police, to reap benefits you heroes may have again to fight." (148)

One old man, Rev Dhlepu, felt unhappy about the tenor of the speeches, "I regret some of the words used by Mabaso,

who is kindling a fire and exciting the minds of irresponsible people. I urge you to be cool and calm when dealing with a difficult situation." Mvabuza felt annoyed that the Reverend was standing in the way. "The Rev Dhlepu must be careful and not interfere with our leaders by standing in front of them because he will be knocked over...." Dinwja, the teacher and one of the released 'heroes', perhaps described the situation most truthfully, "put all your faith in Governor-Generals. I am pleased that the Native Affairs Department have at last recognised that we have grievances and are helping in many ways." (149) Not long thereafter Makgatho felt compelled to resign his presidency of the Congress. It was felt that he could no longer identify with the militancy of Mvabaza and Mabaso.

Despite the fact that the Native Congress served as the middle-class voice of the African people, they played this role with a degree of unpredictability. There were times when the Congress bordered on the seditious and therefore could not be trusted altogether.

In this role the Congress had appropriated the Klipspruit heroes, even though the disturbance there originally had nothing to do with Congress policy. The attempt was to unify all protest under the Congress banner.

THE MINERS' STRIKE 1920

Up to the Miners' Strike in February of 1920, sporadic outbursts and confrontations occurred in Johannesburg as well as in the rest of the country. (Note the events in Bloemfontein, Cape Town, East London, Port Elizabeth and Durban.) These, as expressed initially, represented high points of protest. The most advanced form of this protest was the organisational recourse. Invariably people instrumental in organisation and 'agitation' were brought before the Magistrate's courts on charges ranging from contravention of the Master and Servants' Laws to Riotous Assembling. The most significant index of this period, especially during 1919 and 1920, was the large growth of umbrella-type organisations. There came into being several organisations with varying degrees of militancy which attempted to take leadership of the demands of the workers. These organisations all paid some form of lip service to the struggle for equal rights. (Within the twelve month period from January 1919 to January 1920 the Bantu Union, ICU, Msimang's Union, Masabalala's Organisation had all come into being. In addition there also existed the Native Congress which actively campaigned on workers' issues.)

The Transvaal Congress had held meetings in the Village Main Hall in January of 1920. It had also sent deputations to the Chambers of Commerce repeating the call for higher

wages of the past two years. The deputation alleged that hardships were driving the "native women who used to work in the kitchens into the illicit liquor traffic."(150) The African no longer had the ways of ten years ago, he had experienced a thorough overhauling through 'European' ideas, claimed the delegation. An open breach between the Congress and the Chiefs then occurred. The Congress claimed that the people would lynch the chiefs if they knew what evidence they were putting forward to the Pass Committee. At this stage, led by Mvabaza and Mabaso, the Congress was at the pinnacle of its popularity. The Organisation, chiefly through the Transvaal leadership, had taken on a more progressive urban complexion and moved away from its traditional, stolid orientation with which it had come into being. This was, in some measure, a prelude to the radical leanings of the national leader, Gumede, in the later twenties.

On the mines a feeling of unrest had become apparent in the closing weeks of 1919 already. It is unlikely that the unrest was due to direct Congress encouragement. At the Rose Deep and Simmer and Jack Mines over four hundred miners had walked through the gates of the compounds, without permission, with the intention of marching on Johannesburg. This had happened in December of 1919. Within a few weeks the workers at Knight Central Gold Mines attempted to do exactly the same thing. (151) There was a good deal of excited talk, "but the natives

would not declare the nature of their grievances," complained the Daily Mail. Elsewhere in Johannesburg, at the Railways and Harbours Depot, the workers had come out and demanded a 6d per day increase on their wages.(152)

It is in this atmosphere that the spate of strikes took place on the mine in February of 1920. The striking was preceded by a boycott of the concession stores. The African workers believed, when the price of cigarettes went up from 3d to 4d per pack along with price increases of other products that they were being fleeced. In the vicinity of the Simmer and Jack Mine they threatened to burn one shop down, claimed the Rand Daily Mail. (153) Similar trouble broke out at the Rose Deep Mines two days later. (154)

The first signs of striking appeared at the Wits Deep Mines where "a number of boys struck for an extra 3d per day and got it....." (155) The example was followed at Cason Mine when the African miners refused to go on shift on the 17th of Febaury. It was also said that similar friction existed at other mines. "On the Nourse Mine... it was stated that there was uneasiness among the native labourers and that they had made representations to the management urging that they could not come out on present pay and suggested an increase of 3d per day." (156) A careful enquiry, the newspaper said, revealed the existence of widespread ferment along the East Rand,

"partly caused, it is believed by native agitators, who are believed to be Transvaal Basutos." (157) The workers at the Cason Mine were made an offer of a 2d per day increase which they accepted and thereafter returned to their posts. Meanwhile workers at Geldenhuis Deep, and the New Heriot Mine had created 'disturbances', all demanding increases of their wages.

These demands came in the wake of wage increases which the gold mines were said to have made in January. The Gold Mines said that it had "authorised a bonus of 5s per month to all underground natives who had completed 180 shifts on a mine." Wages were also increased by 2-3d per shift underground and 2s per shift above ground. "In addition to the above, sums of money were set aside on each mine to reward especially efficient natives... It must be remembered that a large proportion of the natives are employed on piece work, and consequently it rests with the natives themselves as to the amount of wages which they can earn." (158)

Despite this, and it bears a reflection on the improved measures of the Chamber of Mines, 30,000 African workers were on strike on the 20th. Seven mines were affected, among them, The East Rand Propriety Mines (Cason, Comet, Hercules), Nourse Mines, City Deep, Consolidated Langlaagte, Durban-Roodepoort Deep, Langlaagte Estates and Knights Deep. (159) According to a Chamber of Mines

statement in the press, there were 40,000 workers out on the 21st of February. The position on the East Rand had deteriorated; the workers at the Princess Estate, the Angelo Deep refused to come out. In other areas the Wits Deep workers, Block-B Langlaagte and the Village Deep workers joined the strike.

The police kept a wary eye on the developments and acted as a deterrent to any violence, claimed the Rand Daily Mail. (160) At the Knights Deep East Compound, it was claimed that 1800 workers had broken away from the compound and had taken up "positions on the adjacent Dumps and other points of vantage....They were anxious to frustrate the desires of the non-strikers."(161) A number of arrests were made of aggressive workers. At the City Deep the workers broke down the compound fence and congregated on the dumps. Colonel Pritchard threatened to call the South African Mine Regiment to make them return inside the compound. At this intimidation the workers then returned without causing any trouble.

As Diamond says, the situation was taken very seriously by the Government. (162) General Smuts himself had come up to the Rand and held conferences with Colonel Pritchard, Sir Evelyn Wallers, Mr Buckle and others.

In Johannesburg the Native Congress held a large rally where 'houseboys' and 'shopboys' expressed sympathy with the mineworkers and in turn demanded an increase of their

own wages. The meeting passed resolutions encouraging the strikers to be firm in their demands, and that they should avoid violence. (163) The meeting also agreed to hold a ballot to decide whether there should be a general strike or not. The 2500 large crowd was excited by the presence of the SAMR, however, as the Daily Mail put it, the responsible element prevented any trouble.

In the second week of the strike, the 'see-saw' tendency of the disturbances emerged. (164) The Rand Daily Mail reported that workers at 4 mines resumed work while 4 and a part of another had joined the strike. The whole of the ERPM estate had gone back to work and at City Deep "with police.... providing strong moral effect 3000 out of 4500 went back." (165) Colonel Pritchard received a letter from the Native Congress stating that some workers had already died because they had been forced to return to work. The Congress feared that the workers would retaliate and sought assurances that measures would be taken to prevent any provocation. It was claimed in the newspaper that the trouble had its origin in the evidence presented to the Low Grade Mines Commission "where it was said that they (the African workers) could do a great deal more than they did - could do much of the work of the white man." (166)

With the resumption of work at the ERPM properties, the trouble spread to other mines in the Far East Rand, in the areas of Benoni and Springs. The Modder B and the

State Mines were soon affected and it was anticipated that Geduld, Modder East and Randfontein would follow suit. In Johannesburg the sanitary workers at the municipal compound refused to come out. Even though they soon returned to work, there appeared to be a general state of tension in the municipal compounds. (167) Later in the week the trouble took root in the West Rand. However, almost the whole of the Near East Rand had returned to work. In the Central Rand only City Deep was still out and in the Far East Rand all the mines were back to normal apart from the Modder B mines where the 'white' miners were keeping the mine in operation. (168) The situation was less alarming for the authorities by the 24th of February. The number of strikers had fallen to 34,000.

In Johannesburg the Native Congress attempted to hold the Government to ransom. They threatened that if the Government did not make a response to their request for the formation of a board to consider the whole question of the African and his condition on the Rand, they would not be able to contain the pressure for a strike. (169) In reaction to the Congress' demands, the Manufacturers' Association recommended an increase of 25 per cent in their members' workers wages, the builders recommended that a minimum of 18s per week be paid to workers; on the other hand the motor industry bluntly refused to consider a wage increase and the municipality made no response to

the demand at all.

Officials of the Native Administration department were led to think : "little matters or organisation suggest that the International Socialists" were behind the strike. They, in addition, felt that the 'houseboys' could not be pulled out since they had no organisation which catered for them. (170) However, it was true that the Congress had a huge following in Johannesburg and the large gathering of so called househoys and shopworkers held under the control of the Congress was evidence of this. It was revealed in the Daily Mail that the Congress was by no means a negligible body. "It was well organised and knew within half an hour what was happening. During the trouble in the Newtown Municipal Compound at Newtown on Monday a native horseman was seen to dah up and depart with information as to what was taking place." (171) Furthermore as regards 'tribal' distinctions a representative of the Congress told the Daily Mail that "there is not much difference between them (Tribes).... The tribal differences are roused by chiefs, but I doubt if the average native thinks very much about them. The barriers have been broken down by intercourse and education. It is a common thing to find a Msutu speak... fluent Zulu. The Native Congress has on its executive a Zulu, a Msutu and a Fingo." (172)

By the end of February the situation had calmed down considerably. The threatened strike of the Congress had

failed to come about. In Johannesburg it was reported that the municipal workers went to work as usual. A number of people were tried for 'geweld' in the magistrate's court, including some from the Newtown Compound who were charged with refusing to obey their masters and conspiring with others to disturb the peace. At Langlaagte 3 Africans from the Block B Compound were charged with geweld. "They drove James Gray Miller, the compound manager and his boys outside the camp." (173) A flare-up had occurred at the Village Deep Mine where the police and the miners had clashed on the 25th of February. Notwithstanding the several pleas to keep the demands peaceful, the workers were probably exasperated by the non-progress of their strike and the failure to achieve any success. "A pitched battle lasting twenty minutes between police and SAMR and natives at Village Deep Compound disturbed the decorum of the native strike early" yesterday morning." It was claimed that the police found the doors of the compound barricaded and when they finally had made their way into the compound were beaten up. "Firing ensued when things became too rough for the police... When the boys had all been driven into the rooms a systematic search of the compound yielded four wagon loads of weaponry." (174) It appeared that the mine compounds at Turf Mine and Modder B had similarly prepared themselves for a struggle with the police. At both camps a certain amount of military preparation complete with drilling exercises was carried out. (175) However, police interference,

before they could make any headway, ensured that the workers were both immobilized as well as disarmed.

This signalled the end of the largest African mineworkers strike yet to hit South Africa. Although the largest number of men out at any one time was 42,000 a total of 71,000 workers had taken part in the strike. (176) The cause of the strike was clearly the wage issue. The level of wages paid and the high prices of the concession stores were sufficient reason for the workers to demand an improvement of their wages. There are two important indices which came out of the strike; (i) there had to exist a rudimentary level of organisation for the workers so that they could communicate their decisions and ideas, (ii) the mineworkers showed that they were not impervious or insensitive to the idea of a strike, they were able to make use of co-operative action.

The strike itself was a failure, however, in its flowering, there emerged the potential for an association of urban workers with mining workers. The events in the city were not independent of the Miners Strike. The nexus had not been developed. No doubt a good communication system existed between compounders and the outside world. The compounders had come to know of the shilling strike and the pass disturbances. Johnstone says that African political activists visited the compound and also that it had been reported that "at present there are 24 educated natives visiting the Reef compounds who deliver leaflets

and preach the socialist propoganda to the natives."(177)
This relationship was never consummated because it was found later on that the control of compounds had become much more stringent and any repeat of the 1920 strike was made impossible by the mine authorities.

The response of the Chamber of Mines was to increase the armed control of the workers. Johnstone quoted that the 'Chamber warned the Government, "that the native is advancing more rapidly than we had anticipated, and that we should take measures accordingly." Fearing "that at no distant date further attempts will be made to organise strikes among the natives". The Chamber recommended that the force of mounted police stationed on the Rand be strengthened, to guard against the "considerable loss of life and damage to property among the Europeans" that would be likely "in the event of the natives taking the" law into their own hands". (178)

The only positive effect of the strike was the revision of the price scale at the concession stores. "mine trading was put on a sounder and more equitable basis which served to alleviate the rising cost of living...." (179)

CONCLUSION :

It is clear that the years between 1917 and 1920 contained the potential for developing a strong workers' base on the Witwatersrand. The actions of the people in the location setting showed that they would not simply tolerate their

alienated existences. And similarly the sustained call for higher wages and the strikes which took place during these years indicated a proletariat in the process of moving beyond a rudimentary labour consciousness. There thus existed all the raw material for building a vigorous worker orientated movement.

Instead, the worker stirrings were taken over by the direction of the Congress movement. We have seen how the Congress on numerous occasions not only failed to harness the consciousness of the workers properly, but even encouraged the adoption of petty-bourgeois ideas. There were.. certainly individuals inside the Congress organisation who rebelled against conservatism. However, the dominant thrust was that of securing the broadening of the society's social and economic base and the incorporation of the aspirant bourgeois class into its ranks.

This was seen most sharply during the Concession Stores Boycott where the Congress indicated its wish to enter the business arena on the same footing as the 'whites'. This also emerged in the Shilling and Pass disturbances, where the objects of attack were quickly able to be found, and thereafter legitimated, in the oppressive symbols of colour, race and things such as the Pass Laws. It is not unexpected that objects such as these would be blamed.. for the condition of the African, but it was the Congress which prevented the workers from seeing or attaining a

vision broader than the simple demolition of the restrictive laws of the society.

Once the Congress had imposed its definition of the struggle, the strategy to be adopted and the projected end-point on the workers, the vibrant consciousness of the workers was subdued. In fact, it was shown on several occasions that the interference of the Congress was resented; and indeed the workers also showed that they had no need of the guidance of the congress. After Congress' failure to lead the African people and more specifically the workers of Johannesburg towards an improved deal, there remained very little material for them to work with, their support base had wilted. It was only in 1925 that the imagination of the people of Johannesburg was aroused again, this time with the ICU. In the intervening period, the petty-bourgeois types were in the ascendant, except that they did not have a large following which they could rely on.

The undefined class nature and the overlap between the working-class and the aspirant petty-bourgeois class, as represented in the Congress movement, allowed the struggle to be defined in the terms of its most politically dominant section which was the petty-bourgeois Congress movement. This served, in the first instance to present the struggle as the struggle of the Congress, and secondly to subordinate the specific struggle of the working-class.

NOTES

1. It is difficult to evaluate the policy of government to the urban African. No clear statement of policy was made until the 1920s
2. See The Rand Daily Mail 25/3/24; also chapter 4 C van Onselen 1976
3. The proletariat and the lumpen-proletariat, subjected to the same law enforcement measures of the government, were forced to "rub shoulders to a greater extent than they otherwise might have done." (Van Onselen Op Cit p8) It is difficult to separate categorically the marginal lumpen-proletariat from the working class in this time period. This problem, of being able to prise open the early African community into classes, is partly a function of the very nature of early Johannesburg. The sprawling slums contained, hodge-podge, most of the city's labouring population and other 'illegal' visitors. A Town Councillor, Mr CV Becker contended that "there were 17,000 natives uncontrolled, unprovided for, hovering about in slums, yards and back-streets in Johannesburg." (Rand Daily Mail 11/9/17). It was estimated that the Town Council was receiving £6000 annually in fines from Africans living in unauthorised premises. (Star 25/7/17)
4. SNA Box 85 Deputation of Transvaal Native Congress to the Minister. Pretoria 7/4/19
5. Ibid 527/16/F164 Transvaal Missionary Association 9/4/1919
6. Van der Horst Native Labour in South Africa p237
7. SNA Box 215 Meeting between the Mayor of Johannesburg and a deputation from the SANNC
8. The workers employed by the Town Council received from £2.1s9d to £2.10s4d as their wage. Star 21/10/18
9. UG No. 4 - 1920 Report of the Housing Committee

10. Howard Pim, one of the patrons of liberalism, commented as far back as 1896 that "Drink is having a deleterious effect and injuring the labour supply." He felt that even beer-drinking ought to be prohibited "and to this (beer) I attribute mostly the crimes of theft and assault and, in a measure, the indifference of the native to seeking employment." (Pim Papers 5a16) These slum areas were seen as factories of crime. Indeed the possibility of establishing beer-houses such as operated in Durban evoked the strong protest of the church, the mines and so on. The Wesleyan Synod sitting in Pretoria felt that such institutions would not lessen drunkenness or illicit traffic. The Rev Rob Mashaba claimed that should the Town Council of Johannesburg ask the opinion of the natives it "would be very unanimous (against beerhouses) among preachers, teachers and church members, who after all represent the best of native character and conduct." Rand Daily Mail 14/2/1917

Even with regard to Eating Houses much opposition was evinced. The George Goch Mining Co.Ltd., was represented at a Municipal Court considering the granting of licences to applicants for 'Kaffir Eating Houses'. The Company objected to the issue of licences. It called Detective Rafter, an inspector of Mine Police to give evidence. "He said he knew a number of native criminals and was familiar with the conditions of eating houses. He deposed to the conduct of particular establishments in the George Goch neighbourhood, saying that they were frequented by drunken natives and prostitutes." Star 3/12/1917

11. Pim Papers Fa 95
12. It is hardly true that compounds administered by mining and industry were satisfactory. The work of Sean Moroney, in a study of African workers, describes the totally unsatisfactory condition of these compounds.
13. Ibid
14. Ibid

15. Star 20/4/1920
16. Rand Daily Mail 11/9/1917
17. Rand Daily Mail 5/12/1919
18. Ibid
19. Ibid
20. SNA Box 86 338/19/F64 Major Cooke to Commission of Enquiry into Grievances at Klipspruit Location
21. Star 4/9/1919
22. Pim Papers. Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives, Report by Subcommittee on Housing.
23. Pim Papers. Memorandum by Dr H L Bernstein, Medical Officer, Native Affairs Department, Johannesburg
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. Pim Papers. Housing Report Op Cit
27. Star 26/10/1922
- 28.. Ibid
29. Pim Papers. Housing Report Op Cit
30. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Rand Daily Mail 4/4/1928
33. See Engels' work, The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844, also The Housing Question. The parallel of the South African experience with the rest of the capitalist world is instructive. However, the analogy is of significance in the outer characteristics of the two situations only. It would appear that the pace of industrialisation in

Johannesburg and Birmingham and London was very different for each situation. This factor alone possibly produced entirely different conditions in each situation. The Idea of the City in 19th Century Britain, edited by B I Coleman, p106 passim

- 33(i). SNA Box 51 86 19/12/F63 Department of Native Affairs to Secretary of Native Affairs 6/5/1916
- 33(ii) Ibid
- 33(iii) SNA Box 338 1318/19/F1089 Bell's evidence to Local Government Commission 12/7/1920
- 33(iv) Ibid
- 33(v) Ibid. Memorandum of Conclusions at Conference between Native Affairs Commission and Local Government Commission, the Native Affairs Department also being present. Johannesburg 10th, 11th 12th August, 1921
34. See Sean Moroney Op Cit
35. For history see Walshe, not always satisfactory.
36. The International 7/1/1916
37. Ibid 9/2/1917
38. SNA Box 213 983/1917/f 473 Detective Jali 19/7/1917. A warning is in order here. In all the quotations from these files, especially from Detectives Jali and Moorosi's reports, I make no attempt to correct the language. Furthermore, there is a need to be on one's guard when construing these reports. As with Luke Messina's reports and affidavits in the Public Violence Trial of the ISL, IWA and SANNC leaders of 1918, one does not know to what extent reports have been tempered to make them appear more sensational and thereby justify punitive action.
39. Cope, Comrade Bill p 194.
40. SNA Op Cit Jali 27/9/1917
41. Ibid Moorosi 11/10/1917
42. Ibid Jali 27/9/1917
43. Ibid Jali 11/10/1917

44. Ibid Moorosi 18/10/1917
45. Ibid Translation by Jali see appendix two
Jali 22/11/1917
46. Ibid Secretary of Native Affairs to Secretary
for Justice 1/11/1917.
47. Ibid Jali 22/11/1917
48. Ibid Taberer to Secretary for Native Affairs
6/11/1917
49. Ibid Jali 22/11/1917
50. Ibid Abantu Batho 22/11/1917
51. Ibid Moorosi 28/12/1917
52. Ibid Jali 21/12/1917
53. Ibid Jali 31/3/1918
54. Ibid Jali 15/4/1918
55. Ibid James King. Maraisburg SAP to the
Commanding officer of Rooderpoort 8/3/1918
56. Ibid Moorosi 13/12/1917
57. Ibid Jali 28/5/1918
58. Rand Daily Mail 13/2/1918
59. Ibid
60. The Star 12/2/1918
61. The Rand Daily Mail 13/2/1918
62. Ibid 14/2/1918
63. Star 25/2/1918
64. Rand Daily Mail 12/2/1918
65. Secretary for Mines and Industries Box
471 FMM 1483/18
66. Ibid Hamel, Mining Commissioner to Secretary
for Mines and Industries 13/2/1918.
67. Ibid

68. Ibid
69. Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce 21/2/1918
70. Starfield et alia of Government Areas Trading Stores to Minister of Mines and Industries 19/2/1918
71. Ibid
72. Ibid
73. Star 23/12/1918
74. Secretary of Mines and Industries Box 471 Trading on Mine Ground.
75. Ibid
76. Ibid
77. Ibid
78. Ibid
79. Ibid
80. Ibid
81. Ibid
82. Cope Op Cit p 196
83. The Star 28/5/1918
84. Ibid 8/6/1918
85. Ibid
86. The Star 12/6/1918
87. Ibid 10/6/1918
88. Roux, Time Longer than Rope pp 130-131
89. The Star 12/6/1918
90. Ibid
91. SNA Op Cit Juli 10/6/1918
92. Ibid Juli 19/6/1918

93. Ibid
94. International 21/6/1918
95. The Star 29/6/1918
96. Cope Op Cit p197
97. SNA Op Cit Moorosi 27/6/1918
98. The International 7/6/1918
99. Ibid 14/6/1918
100. Cope Op Cit p 197
101. The Star 1/7/1918
102. Rand Daily Mail 2/7/1918
103. Ibid
104. The Star 3/7/1918
105. Rand Daily Mail 4/7/1918
106. The Star 8/7/1918
107. International 28/2/1919
108. Rand Daily Mail 8/7/1918
109. The Star 12/7/1918
110. Ibid 24/7/1918
111. Ibid 30/10/1918
112. Ibid 31/3/1919
113. The Star 1/4/1919
114. Rand Daily Mail 31/3/1919
115. SNA Box 85. Meeting between Minister of Justice and a deputation from the Transvaal Native Congress. Pretoria 7/4/1919
116. Rand Daily Mail 2/4/1918

117. The Star 3/4/1919
118. Rand Daily Mail 4/4/1919
119. Sna Box 85 Op Cit ^Minister of Justice...
120. Ibid
121. Ibid
122. SNA Box 215. Minutes of meeting between Chiefs and Evelyn Wallers 26/3/1919
123. Ibid
124. Ibid
125. Ibid
126. The Star 24/3/1919
127. SNA Boxes 85 and 86. Sworn statement by James Clark CID Detective Head Constable Marshall Square.
128. Ibid
129. Ibid
130. Ibid
131. The Star 4/4/1919
132. Rand Daily Mail 2/5/1919
133. The Star 5/5/1919
134. SNA Op Cit
135. Ibid Le Roux's sworn statement
136. Rand Daily Mail 23/9/1919
137. The Star 1/9/1919
138. The Star 3/9/1919
139. Ibid 25/9/1919
140. SNA Box 186 Op Cit

141. Ibid
142. The Star 27/3/1920
143. This action, in its most complex developments, took on a more clear form during the 1920s.
144. SNA Box 86. Address to the Governor-General on his visit to Klipspruit 6/2/1920
145. Ibid. Secretary of Native Affairs to Director of Prisons 27/3/1920
146. Ibid
147. Ibid
148. Ibid
149. Ibid
150. Rand Daily Mail 16/1/1920
151. Ibid 6/1/20
152. Ibid 15/1/20
153. Ibid 12/2/1920
154. Ibid 14/2/1920
155. Ibid 18/2/1920
156. Ibid
157. Ibid
158. Ibid 20/2/1920
159. Ibid
160. Ibid 21/2/1920
161. Ibid
162. Diamond, African Labour Problems. p 43
163. Rand Daily Mail 23/2/1920

164. Diamond Op Cit p44
165. Rand Daily Mail 24/2/1920
166. Ibid
167. Ibid
168. Ibid 25/2/1920
169. Ibid
170. Ibid
171. Ibid
172. Ibid
173. Ibid
174. Rand Daily Mail 26/2/1920
175. Ibid
176. Diamond Op Cit p47
177. Johnstone, Race, Class and Gold p 180
178. Ibid p 183
179. Diamond Op Cit p 53
180. See Wolpe; The changing class structure of South Africa: The African Petit-Bourgeoisie.

CHAPTER THREE :THE BEGINNINGS OF FORMAL WORKER ORGANISATION :THE ICU 1919-1920

1

During the closing years of the Great War and in the years which followed, the unfranchised people of South Africa felt the effects of rising prices in the wake of the Wartime boom. The price index for wholesale goods (South African) rose from 1000 in 1910 to 2,249 in 1920. (1) It is not unlikely that the rest of South Africa experiences similar hardships to those of the people of Johannesburg, perhaps in less attenuated form, but existent nonetheless. And like the African people of Johannesburg they did not accept their immiseration without protest. During the period 1917 to 1920, innumerable cases of demands for higher wages and/or decreased prices were recorded from Cape Town to Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal, from Durban to Taungs in the Northern Cape. These reactions could not have occurred in a normal situation. However, they served to show that a simmering dissatisfaction had the potential to be converted into actual conflict. There appeared to be the seeds of intense conflict consciousness in the towns and urban areas, where it is significant that few, if any, of the major centres escaped unrest of some form or other.

In the rural areas and agricultural towns varying degrees of dissatisfaction were displayed. In some of the areas the South African Native Congress took a leading hand in

negotiations which occurred between workers and the authorities. In Pietersburg the chairman of the branch wrote to the Mayor that "...we have always endeavoured to advise... native workers despite their inclinations to resort to acts of violence, to keep within the four corners of the law. As there is a seeming indifference to our pleadings we regret to say the only effective course we are minded to adopt is to advise our people to cease working." (2) The Native Congress was present at Standerton and Volksrust too.(3) However, at other places such as Aliwal North, Taungs, Lake Mentz and Graaf Reinet, action was taken by the local people without any organisational assistance. At Taungs and Barkly West a thorough boycott of the shops and stores was under way. The women of Taungs wrote to their magistrate saying that if there were no reduction in the price of foodstuffs "... no native man or woman would go to the stores from that day, that they would prevent it by all means, even if they died for it or were sent to goal..." (4)

Reaction from the authorities varied from place to place. At Volksrust the Chamber of Commerce resolved to ignore the demand for higher wages. "We ask the authorities to keep the natives in their place with firmness and justice to seek out the agitators, and if possible to get rid of them." (5) At other places minor concessions were arranged, and where no agreement was secured workers were simply paid off and sent home. (6)

In the towns the nature of the protest was more explosive, and likewise more high-handed treatment followed on by the authorities. When the Togat labourers of Durban asked for an increase of their wages, their demand was rejected. The Mayor of Durban is said to have remarked "that natives alike with the Europeans, must starve if they did not work." (7) The shilling strike in Johannesburg prompted workers in other areas to take up the same demand. The first echo was at East London where Mjo wrote to the town magistrate on behalf of the 'native and coloured' workers of East London to communicate resolutions which were passed at a workers meeting on the 6th. July, 1918. The workers asked for an increase of one shilling a day and "that if this demand is not complied with before the end of this month the labourers will take such steps as will ensure of their getting this increase." (8) Not long thereafter, the African workers of Cape Town came together at N'dabeni and held a mass meeting under the auspices of the South African National Native Congress. The meeting was held to consider "the question of urgent need of asking for an increase in the wages generally paid to native labourers..." A resolution was carried declaring that an increase of one shilling a day to all South Africa's African labourers "could not be reasonably considered to be exorbitant. It was decided to forward the resolution to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of Native Affairs." (9)

In September the workers of Port Elizabeth were negotiating with their town council for the shilling increase. These negotiations were led by Samuel Msabalala who had somewhat plaintively put his case to the Mayor and the Chambers of Commerce. He said "Gentlemen how could a native exist under the said circumstances? Today a native is engaged in the warfare of existence as to whether he is going to survive or be extinct as people who are badly fed, are subject to all kinds of diseases." (10) The shilling demand had in fact become a national call. Not only had it been adopted in the towns, but the rural towns too had taken up the demand.

Underlying the obsequious tone which some of the leaders adopted in their negotiations, there was a deeper awareness of the nature of their condition in the South African situation. However, this schizophrenia was symptomatic of the very consciousness of the new breed of African leaders. They berated in one context and cringed and bowed in another. In fact there existed a strong faith in the ability of the society to reform itself. This was evidenced immediately at the close of the Great War. As Johnstone says, with the appointment of the Moffat Commission into the shilling disturbances and the decision of the Congress to send a delegation to the Peace Conference, the issue of wages receded into the background. (11) A Congress leader found occasion to explain the situation:

"Some of you have wondered what became of the shilling we have been asking for. We have not given up the shilling increase of pay business yet. While we are still engaged in asking for this shilling, the news of Peace came. Then President Wilson of America

announced that now was the chance for every person to get his rights. We are now going overseas to get your rights." (12)

This faith in the system, in its ability to make reforms, reflected itself in one form or another throughout the history of the large organisations with a popular base, such as the African National Congress and the ICU. There existed a strong control of popular based organisations by leaders who were clearly uninterested in thorough transformations of the society and the economy. If the leaders were not bourgeois or middle-class, their thinking certainly placed them within range of that sort of description.

In the early months of 1919 Bloemfontein was racked by serious wage demand disturbances. The Rand Daily Mail spoke of the emergence of a 'native movement' in Bloemfontein for higher wages. (13) The movement, it was reported, hoped to come to some arrangement whereby their reasonable requests would be met. The town's employers, in view of the festering atmosphere, came together where workers were represented as well. The meeting consisted of representatives from the South African Railways, the Public Works Department, and the Bloemfontein Corporation. A decision was made at the meeting to introduce a uniform scale of wages. (14) It was agreed, instead of meeting the demand for the 4s6d a day wage, to seek to lay down a minimum of 2s3d per day for beginners, 2s6d per day for those workers who had given six months of satisfactory service and

finally a wage of 2s9d per day for workers after eighteen months service. (15) In addition, under special circumstances employers were allowed to make special terms with their workers. (16)

The workers held a meeting in the location of Waaihoek after the employers had made their decision. A committee was formed at the meeting. "The editor of the local native newspaper, who is one of the mens leaders, states that it is not the intention of the natives to strike at present, but to use all other means first." (17) The followers of the committee were urged to maintain their demand for the 4s6d a day wage.

The South African National Native Congress also held its annual conference in Bloemfontein at the same time. The conference possibly helped to fan the murmurs of dissatisfaction which existed in the town and the province. During the period in which the employers were considering the wage increases, the largest gathering Waaihoek ever experienced took place. The meeting was called to consider the question of sending a delegation to the Imperial Government and the Peace Conference and "lay before them the special disabilities which the natives of the Orange Free State have to labour under." (18) WZ Fenyang, the provincial president of the Native Congress, was the dominating figure. He spoke of the evictions under the 1913 Land Act and the subsequent homelessness of many people.

He mentioned other disabilities, such as Africans being unable to buy or lease land, being debarred from trading in industrial centres and the difficulties which workers on the mines faced as regards visits from their wives and families. (19) A delegation should be sent to remind

"His Majesty of what his grandmother, Queen Victoria, had said when this country was annexed, and they could even try at the Peace Conference to find the remedy of a subject race when the successors of an illustrious ruler like her late Majesty, had trampled underfoot her letters patent, in which were laid down solemn assurances for the protection and good government of the subject races." (20)

Notwithstanding the offer of the employers, Msimang and his followers resumed their call for the payment of 4s6d a day. After the meeting with the authorities, Msimang is reputed to have told the employers that should the demand not be met, they "would make labour scarce". (21) The authorities second 'concession' was to offer a daily wage of 2s9d per day after 12 months service. (22) This apparently did not succeed either. Soon thereafter, the authorities being convinced that the unrest was due to Msimang's agitation, Msimang was arrested on the 28th of February for incitement to public violence.

This had the effect of bringing about the very violence which the authorities attempted to impute to Msimang. A demonstration took place outside the police station where Msimang was held. "The authorities took precautions

to meet any possible emergencies, but after a considerable time, the natives gradually dispersed, without any untoward incident. The arrest of their leader, however, is undoubtedly agitating the natives to an unusual degree." (23)

The workers then withdrew to the location "where they attacked a shop." When the police came it was reported that they were subjected to taunts and jeers from the crowd. The police fired a volley over the crowd's heads which had the desired result of making them retreat. Thereafter the ringleaders were arrested. "It is expected that the natives will declare a general strike tomorrow and there may be trouble as the result of the efforts to picket the location and prevent boys coming into work." (24)

Msimang was charged in the Bloemfontein Court for inciting public violence. (25) As Wickins says, the evidence against him was flimsy. The nature of his speeches was considered to be inflammatory however, and the magistrate held that a prima facie case existed. Msimang was ordered to pay bail of £500 which was raised in the form of security on the bonds of property owners in the location. (26) Additional money also came from the South African Labour Party. (27)

At a meeting some days later the workers bravely persisted with their campaign. The meeting was attended by the Mayor and the Resident Magistrate. There was a considerable gulf of understanding between the authorities and the workers.

An address was read to the Mayor and the chief Magistrate which firmly but respectfully outlined the situation as they understood it. They said that the clamour for higher wages was not a "matter that has been thought of on the

spur of the moment, or brought into the minds of the people by outside influences, it is a movement which is spontaneous among the people, only it has been lying dormant in their minds on account of their obedience to the order of General Botha that people should refrain from making any agitations during hostilities and by their obedience to this order they have materially helped to accelerate the termination of the war.

The people are sincere in their demand for a minimum wage of 4s6d a day, and to say it is absurdly high is to show glaring ignorance of the conditions under which our poor people have lived ever since the coming into force of the Natives Land Act."

They emphasized the difficulties caused by the cost of living and apologised for the incidents which had taken place, but blamed the police for inflaming alarmist attitudes. (28)

According to Wickins the Magistrate and the Mayor revealed a particularly gauche streak. The former held forth on the impartial judiciary in South Africa, while the Mayor is reputed to have said that

"the object of the location... was to supply labour and to carry out the industrial concerns of the town. It had been said that the wages which natives received were not sufficient to keep the wives and families of the natives, but he could say that they expected the women to work just as the men." (29)

It is remarkable that this kind of brow-beating by the authorities was not taken offensively. Perhaps the action of the crowd in jubilantly hoisting Msimang shoulder high after the meeting reflected their real feelings. (30)

When Msimang's case came up in May the indictment was set aside on the grounds that the charge was too vague. (31) At a meeting in the same month the workers came together again to discuss the wage issue and the happenings on the Rand. Msimang moved a resolution of sympathy with Africans on the Reef "for the amelioration of present economic conditions." He condemned lawlessness in certain parts of the Transvaal amongst both 'Europeans and natives'. The action of the Harrismith authorities in intimidating the constitutional efforts of its African people for seeking improved wages was also condemned. Despite the very moderate tone of Msimang's address, certain newsmen suggested that his wording smacked of 'European' influence. (32)

In June Msimang and other Africans were involved in an effort to set up a 'Natives Advisory Board' for the location of Waaihoek in liaison with the Town Council of Bloemfontein. Msimang, it appeared, wanted the creation of a Joint Board of Control. The Councillors rejected the demand to sit with a Native Affairs Committee. Despite the differences of opinion, it was reported that the discussions were conducted in an amicable manner. The Rand Daily Mail reported that "as the councillors left the natives gave three rousing cheers for the council." (33)

2.

In the meanwhile Cape Town was experiencing the same intensity of activity. Apart from the ICU which had come

into existence in January of 1919, the SANNC and Dr. Abdurahman of the APO were holding meetings in protest against the treatment of unfranchised workers throughout the Union. In the African community, particularly at N'dabeni, the Native Congress seemed very much to be the dominant organisation. Meetings in early March in the location protested against the arrest of Msimang in Bloemfontein. The meetings were very much in the nature of 'worker' meetings, in the sense that issues of worker organisation were discussed. (34)

Similarly in the APO, where the audience would have been predominantly 'coloured', the same suggestions were being voiced;

"There were some of them who were of the opinion that the time had arrived when the coloured people ought to start their own unions - and have not only industrial unions but an organisation that would embrace everyone whether he was skilled or unskilled worker, and to protect what they might call the inherent rights of man. They were certainly strong enough in the Peninsula to have not only a political organisation but an industrial organisation. He (Abdurahman) did not advocate that they should come into conflict with the white worker, but rather that in industrial matters they might work with them." (35)

The Native Congress made its stake in the field of industrial relations in the Peninsula. A resolution with regard to the wages question was sent to the Mayor of Cape Town :

"That this meeting desires to convey to his Worship the Mayor of Cape Town (Councillor WJ Thorne) the sense of gratification to him for his kindness in arranging for a meeting of representatives of employers of native labour in the Peninsula with a deputation of natives, to enable the latter to make representations for an increase of wages paid to all native labourers in the Peninsula.

Further this meeting views with great satisfaction, the action of the committees of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Cape Province Manufacturers' Association in recommending the employers they represent to meet the natives request for a daily minimum wage of 4s or 3s6d plus a war bonus of 6d per day." (36)

The Cape branch of the Congress expressed its sympathy with the workers on the Rand, protesting against the brutality of the police. It asked the Government to institute a commission of enquiry into the grievances of the African and Coloured people. (37)

The ICU had come into being sometime in January of that year. (Wickins has given an adequate description of the controversy which surrounds the origin of the ICU. He records at least three different versions of the origin of the organisation.) (38) Not unlike the other organisations, such as the Native Congress and the APO, the ICU in its formative months entered the workers' scene with a legacy of reformism in its character. As indicated earlier, the worker organisations and those political organisations which championed the workers' cause, were ambivalently straddled between the real nature of oppression and hardship and the resulting conflict consciousness which emerged from this alienation of the worker, and, on the other hand, a belief in the correctability of the

social system. This separation of reality and approach was perhaps a result of the dominant political ideology of the time, which, through organisations such as the 'white' Industrial Federation in the Cape, would not see a more progressive role for the working class.

The ICU thus initially, and perhaps waveringly thereafter, presented an economistic front. This is hardly surprising when one singles out the role of the men and their political attitudes who were then in the forefront of the ICU. Amongst the early patrons of the ICU were AF Batty, JH Dean and F Rayner. According to Kadalie, the ICU owed its origin directly to Batty. Batty clearly repudiated the possibilities of making the ICU a 'revolutionary' organisation. Batty, as recorded in the Cape Times, is reputed to have said;

"Bolshevism ... may have been necessary in Russia to overthrow the ruling classes there... He considered that to talk of Bolshevism under the British flag was only the talk of lunatics and fools....In South Africa they had a different problem. They had millions of uncivilized people who had never realised the vote or ever had it to exercise, and any attempt to bring about such a thing as a revolution in this country was courting disaster to civilisation." (39)

In the next year, after the establishment of the ICU, he made a speech at the congress of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions;

"I am proud... that the first citizen of the mother city should be willing to open a congress intending to deal with such momentous questions. As trade unionists, they believed in getting their grievances redressed by constitutional methods. If the employers here and elsewhere had given a little more patience and thoughtful consideration to the trade union move-

ment there would not have been the disaster and chaos they had in other countries." (40)

Even Dean, although somewhat differently, had reservations about trade unions entering into the struggle on revolutionary grounds;

"Mr. Dean was pleased to find that the new organisations of the Cape had something revolutionary about them. Strange and amusing as it may seem, he was against revolution. Though he was anxious to bring about change, he had no desire to be put on a barricade or to be shot at (laughter). But there was no question that a revolution of the working class was threatening. They must not let the employing class make the charge against the workers that they were unconstitutional. Rather let the charge be made against the employing class for not moving fast enough. The revolution would not be brought about by the revolutionary socialists who were British. (Hear,hear). The only way of getting out of the threatened trouble was for the Capitalist class to get a move on; and that they were getting a move on was illustrated by the Whitley Reports." (41)

Both Batty and Dean were members of the splinter Labour Party group, the Democratic Labour Party. They had broken away from the Labour Party because of the Labour Party's "reluctance to give a genuine welcome to Coloured people in the Labour movement, both political and industrial,....." (42)

In Kadalie one sees the inheritance of some of the reformism of his early mentors. His attitude was not always a clear one, although he did not fail to seek to ingratiate himself with those people who could be useful to him. In the event, Kadalie's early missionary upbringing made

him more susceptible to the values which were epitomised in the 'colour-blind' wing of the labour movement in the Cape. His alliance with the Batty faction of the Labour Party allowed him to gain the services of those who could be immediately of use to him. Batty was not unknown to the local 'coloured' community. He had unsuccessfully contested seats in the elections of 1915 and 1918 and had a certain degree of popularity amongst the 'coloured' people. (43)

It appeared that the ICU had eclipsed the other contestants for workers' support in the Cape, and had secured the recognition of the 'white' worker organisations when the other organisations, such as the Native Congress and the APO, were still considering forming their own unions. This recognition was gained through the influence of Batty and Dean. At the Congress of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, there is no doubt that the ICU was represented.(44)

"On behalf of the delegates, Mr. Batty (engineers) moved a hearty vote of thanks to the Mayor for coming along that evening and opening a congress of that kind, the first of its sort held in the country... His action in coming there today was particularly important, because it was the first time in the history of South Africa that a congress of Trades Unionists was held, which was truly national, in as much as every class of worker, whatever his colour, creed or race was represented." (45)

(It is of some interest to compare this event with the failure of the IWA in Johannesburg to secure representation at the Northern version of the labour movement at their conferences.) (46)

The ability of the ICU to gain ascendancy over the other organisations was due to its attempts to represent a more radical front than the other organisations, and also, one is led to think, to the charismatic influence of Kadalie who did not compartmentalise his proselytisation to either Africans or 'coloureds' in particular. The focus of ^{the} early ICU was the docks in Cape Town where both 'coloured' and African workers were employed. As Wickins correctly observes, "these workers had in common... (a) profound and long standing discontent over wages," (47) In common with workers all over the country, there was an amenability to be organised, and the ICU, more successfully than the other organisations, made tangible efforts to incorporate these workers into a visible structure. The workers' discontent over the wages issue came to a head in November of 1919. Despite indications that efforts had been made on the part of the employers to meet the demand for higher wages, (see the comment on the Native Congress above) it was patent that dissatisfaction was still rife. Alike with the rest of the country's unfranchised labouring population, the urban workers in the Western Cape also struggled to make ends meet. However, the situation of the workers and the growing urban African population was more favourable than that which held for the rest of the country. As reported in the previous chapter, N'dabeni Location was a more attractive place to live than the ghettos of the Reef for instance. (48)

In addition the wages paid to unskilled labourers in the Cape were generally far more attractive than those paid on the Rand. This meant that migrant workers preferred the Cape Peninsula as an area of employment. (49)

Before the promulgation of the Urban Areas Act in 1923, the urban authorities in Cape Town had begun efforts to improve the standard of their African workers' housing and accommodation conditions. Indeed, the 'liberal' environment of Cape Town was less restrictive as far as the worker was concerned. He had more freedom of movement and could sell his labour power more profitably than on the repressive job market on the Rand. The African workers showed a sensitivity to their working conditions and often evaded the scheming of the labour recruiters to make their way independently to the Cape. Attempts were made by the authorities in the closing years of the twenties to prevent workers going to the Peninsula to find work. Officials in the Transkeian Territories were asked not to grant passes to Africans wanting to come to Cape Town to look for work.

"...but it was found that they soon learnt to ask for passes to other districts, and once they were within the Cape Province proper their movements were no longer subject to control." (50)

The comparative wage scale in Cape Town with the rest of the country was an important pull factor drawing workers to the Peninsula. In the 1924-1925 period the wage for unskilled labour was £53, whereas the Southern Transvaal

was only £44. (51) In all respects the situation for the worker in Cape Town was a great deal more satisfactory than Johannesburg. This does not mean, however, that the workers in Cape Town had little reason to seek an improvement in their living conditions.

In October the attention of the newspapers was drawn to the new ICU. It appeared that a great number of very interesting facts (and also half-facts) were accumulated by a zealous correspondent of the newspaper, the Cape Times. The article in question carried an extract from the rules and regulations of the new Union:

"The objects of this Union shall be to protect and regulate the conditions of work in the trades, to promote the general and material welfare of the members of the Union; to co-operate with the workers of other callings for the advancement of the whole working class." (52)

The Union, it was reported, would be open to all persons employed in commerce or industry, but that for practical purposes was confined to the "native labourers in the docks, on the railways and in the stores and so on." A membership of 1000 was claimed for the Union, including a few whites who acted as guides or counsellors.

"It is claimed for the Union that its aims are purely industrial, and that it has no political significance whatever. In that respect it differs from the IWA, which has a very large membership in the north, is mainly political in aspirations and totally excludes whites from membership or even attendance at meetings." (53)

The report continued to say that the ICU and the IWA had held a joint conference where a basis for the amalgamation

of the two organisations was arrived at. It also spoke of the meetings which were held between ICU officials and "several native organisations from the North (who) visited Cape Town, and held a number of meetings all of which were very largely attended. Among the visitors was Selby H. Msimang (editor of Moromioa-Inansa)"

(We shall return to this meeting of labour leaders below.)(54)

The predominant grievances of the ICU at this stage were reported to be the following ;

"It appears that apart from the affairs of the N'dabeni Location, where many of the men live (despite the fact that the location, as expressed above, enjoyed superior facilities to comparable townships elsewhere in the country, there was indeed much dissatisfaction with conditions.) there is a heavy grievance over the question of the War Bonus, which has never been paid.... In what way there has been mishandling was not understood. In the Docks and private employ as storemen (the native strongly objects to being spoken of as a 'boy'.) and cart-drivers, the usual rate of pay is 4s6d or 5s per day. When there are few vessels in dock there is little work for the men. Lately with very small supplies of bunker coal and hardly any ships at all, work has been very slack. The men do not complain on that score, but they do complain that while other workers have had increases or been granted the war bonus, their pay has remained the same, practically as in pre-war days, while the cost of living has increased enormously. They have therefore through the Union, proffered a request to their employers for an increase in the rate of pay to 7s or 7s6d per day. As far as could be learned the request was made in moderate terms. Nothing has been done in the matter.

It is being claimed on behalf of the native workers of the Union that, as they have failed to obtain redress of their alleged grievances by political means, they will endeavour to do so by industrial organisation." (55)

The report also stated that the ICU had sent a request to the Government to be told the reason why it had not been invited to send delegates to a recent labour conference. It said that the Cape labour unions did not draw the colour-line, and implied, it seems, that the colourline should be removed elsewhere. (56)

These were the formative months of the ICU. There had been established, as was indicated above, the groundwork for the construction of a larger national union. The correspondent of the Cape Times article quoted above, said: "It has been stated to the writer that the work of organisation has advanced very much further than any white man in the Union has any conception of." (57) Wickins states that Msimang had come down to the Cape in August of that year at Kadalie's invitation. (58) From a report in Ilanga lase Natal, Wickins gathered that an interchange of messages had taken place between Kadalie and Msimang. Kadalie sent Msimang a copy of the ICU's constitution and he (Msimang) proceeded with the formation of a general union called the Native and Coloured Workers' Association. He came to Cape Town in August and addressed a meeting in the City Hall on the 9th. (59)

"While...the ICU will exercise its own function as a purely local organisation, information was given to the effect that the native is being successfully organised throughout the whole of the Union. That has been the object of the tour of MR Msimang who has visited most, if not all, the big industrial centres of the Union. When organised the whole lot are to be brought into a federation through which individual organisations will act in much the same manner as individual unions of Europeans acting through the Federation of Trades". (60)

While Msimang was in Cape Town, it appeared ^{according} to the Cape Times, that he was able to allay the hostility of the IWA delegates and that "some basis for the amalgamation of the two unions was arrived at." (61) It was stated that the ICU and IWA differed on the race and colour issue and that it was the purpose of the ICU to "exercise a moderating influence, (whereas) the IWA has a tendency to be revolutionary...." (62) These exploratory talks laid the foundation for the establishment of a more clearly defined national organisation in the following year in Bloemfontein. (see below)

Despite the fact that the ICU contained both 'coloured' and African workers there did appear to be a degree of friction between the two groups which (if we are to accept the validity of the Cape Times article we have been quoting) the ICU had come to articulate. If it is true that such friction did exist, and it is highly plausible, this was the direct result of the differential incorporation of these two groups into the economic and social order. The Africans were complaining that the 'coloured' workers were antagonistic to them, that the 'coloured' workers employed in the docks and on the railways had an organisation of their own. They also implied that they (the African workers) would have had increases or even ceased work if it had not been for the 'coloured' workers. (63)

It is presumed that after the departure of Msimang the tension inside the ICU had been cleared up. The continued presence of people like Paulse and Fife on the executive

of the Union could otherwise not have been tolerated. In fact the meeting later in November was an early index of the many faces which we come to learn Kadalie possessed. It was here in fact that a vituperative attack on the 'white' workers was made and that divisions between 'Coloureds' and Africans were seen as a government ploy.

This meeting was held in the Banqueting Hall of the City Hall complex. (64) The meeting was held to discuss the position arising out of the high cost of living. J. Paulse occupied the chair and also on the platform were, inter alia, Dr. Abdurahman, Kadalie, Dean and Fife. Mr BS Schumber proposed that;

"This meeting of coloured and native citizens of Cape Town places on record an indignant protest against the inaction of the government in not dealing with the high cost of living as it effects the coloured and native worker, and calls upon the Government to take immediate steps to remedy same. It solemnly warns the Government that this law-abiding section of the community is being driven desperate by the continual rise in prices, and unless a living wage is quickly recommended, serious disturbances in industrial peace may result with detrimental effects to the whole state."

Schumber carried on to say that the 'whites' in South Africa knew that the 'coloured' people produced all the wealth of the country and yet were enjoying none of it. (66)

Kadalie seconded the speaker. He said that

"the true issue in this country... was not between coloured and black, but between white and black. (applause) Those white leaders who spoke of South Africa's higher status really meant its formation into a white man's country... Who were the real

enemies of the coloured worker in South Africa? Why, the capitalist and the white labourer. He urged that the government be defied. Constitutional means seemed to be useless." (67)

Abdurahman was not very impressed by this display of bravado. The object, he said, was not to attack 'whites' but injustice. Despite this attempt at caution, the rest of the meeting appeared to be conducted in a very impatient atmosphere. Fife continued the strain adopted by Kadalie and Schumber, and said that he could see the letter 'r' being added to the word 'evolutionary'. He put the blame for the present conditions on the 'white' workers. (68)

This early action of Kadalie indicated the ambivalence, even opportunism of policy which he passed onto the organisation. Although it may have simply been a case of good manners, the ICU sent a resolution of sympathy to the family of General Botha when the Prime Minister died. (69)

The following message was also addressed to the acting Prime Minister, the Honourable FS Malan:

"Sir, all true and loyal citizens of South Africa, both black and white, at this critical moment are shocked by the unspeakable loss sustained through the death of General Botha... General Botha was always ready when duty called and now after victory had been achieved could have devoted himself to the solution of the native problem. In his death all natives in the territories and the towns mourn the loss of a worthy father and peacemaker." (70)

Within a single year the ICU had experienced several moments of trial and excitement. Not long after the

big rally in November, where much dissatisfaction with the present cost of living and low wages was seen, serious thinking was taking place in the location of N'dabeni where the IWA, ICU and The Native Congress held meetings to discuss the wages question. In the meanwhile it was reported that Abdurahman had moved that the wages of City Council employees be increased. This move would serve the purpose of eliminating strikes, said Abdurahman. (71) However, this action was not followed by other employers, with the result that striking did take place within two months.

The Dock workers' strike was the major landmark of the early ICU. The strike, as Wickins reports, had a somewhat vague origin. The call was (soon) taken up by the Cape Federation and much discussed by the National Union of Railway and Harbour Servants (NURHS). On the 27th of November a meeting of the Federation's executive decided to ask its affiliated unions not to handle export of foodstuffs, as it was thought that bringing exports to a halt would in some way or other affect the cost of living. (72) It became clear to the Federation that its efforts would not succeed without the co-operation of the unfranchised workers in the docks. Towards this aim, the help of the ICU and the IWA was sought, and both organisations agreed to give their support. Kadalie informed Stuart of the Federation that his union had decided at a general meeting not to handle foodstuffs for export. (73)

On Dingaan's Day the IWA held a meeting consisting of the African workers in the Peninsula in N'dabeni. (74) The object of the meeting was stated to be "to consider the situation arising from the increased cost of living." Kraai presided over the meeting which had an attendance of over 800 people, including representatives of the Native Congress and Kadalie and others of the ICU. As far as Cetyiwe was concerned, he deplored the rising cost of living and condemned the export of foodstuffs. A further resolution was passed which urged the necessity of approaching the several employers of African and 'coloured' labour in the Peninsula with a view to demanding an increase on wages paid to African and 'coloured' workers. (75) This demand was made despite the fact that the Railway and Harbour Administration had made an offer of an increase of one shilling a day. (76)

On the very next day after the Dingaan's Day meeting at N'dabeni, between 1200 and 1300 workers in the docks came out on strike. (77) A wage increase of the administration was not accepted. An offer was made which meant that married men would receive 5s a day plus the war bonus of 7d, and single men would be paid 5s2d per day. The workers themselves then held a meeting where they demanded 8s6d per day for all African and 'coloured' workers employed in the Peninsula. (78) Members of the Commercial Employees Association and the Tramway men of the city expressed their sympathy with the dock strike and agreed to support the strikers financially and morally. (79)

The explanation for the participation in the strike by the workers who lived in the Dock's Location (which housed about 750 workers), according to the authorities, was that outside influences were at work. "I think the whole trouble is due to the mischief-making of natives and coloured men who live in Cape Town - outside the location", said one official of the location who would not accept that the inhabitants of his location could be dissatisfied with their wages. (80) With almost the whole of the unfranchised labour force out, it was found that only perishable goods could be handled. The assistance of 'loyal' serangs, sorters and labourers "who had been in the employ of the Docks administration for several years" was secured. With these men and 'white' workers the functioning of the Docks was maintained, even though at a low level of operation.

A mass meeting on the Parade was told that it was time the people found a new father, allegations having been made against their present 'father' - the government. The workers were urged to stay away from their work until matters were settled, but to keep order, and do nothing to endanger the success of their cause. (81)

On the second day of the strike, Stuart of the Federation and Jones of NURAHS were able to see Mr Burton the Minister of Railways and Harbours. (82) As Wickins says, the audience did not produce any agreement, but instead aroused some acrimony. (83) The unease was

brought about by the decision of the government to replace African and 'coloured' labour with 'white' scab labour.

On the 21st of December a large meeting was held where it was resolved,

"That this meeting of citizens of Cape Town hereby approve of the action taken in stopping the export of foodstuffs from this country until the surplus of such foodstuffs available for export is more clearly and definitely ascertained, and urge that a committee be nominated by workers and exporters to determine whether any permits for export be granted or not." (84)

This resolution was moved by Jones, who, as Wickins says, had no concern whatsoever for the strikers' wages. Stuart spoke after Jones, and was said to have rebuked Jones for leaving the dirty work to Africans. He also threatened to draw out every worker in the Peninsula if food exports did not cease. (85)

On the previous day the situation had shown no material change. In the morning the authorities notified the strikers that 'payout' would begin at 9 a.m. The men turned up very orderly. (86) At the Docks Location consignments of foodstuffs were sent to the strikers where it was reported to be very quiet. (87)

The Rev Mahabane wrote a letter to the Cape Times rejecting the Ministers statement that the workers were not dissatisfied with their wages :

"Ever since 1918 native labourers at the docks and throughout the whole length and breadth of the Union,

have been clamouring for an increase of wages. At the docks they moved for such an increase after the influenza epidemic, and repeated their application in December of that year when they were threatened... with instant dismissal and replacement by fresh recruits from the territories. They deterred them from making a fresh move in the same direction. They have again renewed their application this year, as the cost of living seems to be making rapid strides in an upward tendency. It may be noted that in every case they have made their request through the proper channels." (88)

On the 22nd December 1919 the representatives of the Railways and Harbours Administration made a direct effort to sort matters out. The strikers were addressed by Sir Walter Stanford, who was described in the papers as an "old and trusted friend of the natives". (89) The workers were told that unless work was resumed at the docks that day, the strikers would not be allowed to continue in occupation of their huts at the Docks Location. This decision was taken at a meeting of the General Manager of the Railway, Sir William Hoy, his assistant, Mr. Salmon and the Minister of Railways, Mr. Burton. Several stops were pulled out to try to convince the workers of the folly of their position. Salmon spoke of his interest in the welfare of the workers. "I come to you not only as the representative of the Railways and Harbours Administration, but as your friend... But now without reason you forsake your masters at the voice of somebody outside." Stanford in his turn spoke of the spirit of Nongqauswe and the folly of such thinking. An African man who claimed to have spoken to the strikers asked to speak. He said that "all the time they had

been working things had been very hard, but after six years of it, it had become too much." (90)

In the city a general condition of unrest was reported. Several firms had received threats that their workers would join the strike. The workers had ceased work at the Rail Goods yard and the work was carried on there by 'white' labour, although there were insufficient hands to cope with the work. Meetings on the Parade had become a regular feature where crowds over 1000 assembled daily to hear the strike leaders speak. (91)

On Thursday the 25th December 1919 it was reported that the strikers had been evicted from the Docks Location. Canvas shelters had been built for the evicted at Milnerton. In the meanwhile none of these workers was willing to sign up for work again. (92) The struggle for the strikers no matter how well they understood the mechanics of the situation, had taken on a serious and earnest tone. They were prompted on by people like Mr J Carver who told them "that in the Kingwilliams Town districts whence he had just returned the natives were starving although there were plenty of mealies in the colony. He urged the strikers not to give way, for then they would win!"(Carver had been a member of the Cape Town City Council) Kadalie addressed the workers at a later meeting on the same day. He explained the eviction situation to them and told them to think carefully about whether they wished to go to their homes or to stay in the location and keep their jobs.(93)

In the face of the challenge thrown out to them by the authorities, the strikers appeared to falter. There were some who decided to return to their jobs. On Saturday the 27th. December, 1919 it was reported that

"The labour outlook at the Docks has improved very considerably since the natives on strike were refused admission to the location... On Wednesday there were 180 boys engaged in delivery work. Yesterday two big gangs were at work on the coal. A good number of strikers, very nearly 100 together, returned to work yesterday." (94)

However, there were many workers who refused to accept any of the conditions or facilities provided by the authorities. Wickins says that most of the strikers wended their way into the city "where they listened to speeches... and spent the rest of their time waiting outside the offices of the Federation of Trades, walking the streets, or sitting on park benches." (95)

On Monday the 29th December 1919 it was reported that the trouble had come to an end. Dean, who was chairman of the strike Committee, told the paper that the Committee had decided on Saturday the 27th December to call off the strike because of the failure of NURAHs to support them in the event of them striking, and because the Federation of Trades had also been half-hearted in its support.(96)

Very few workers returned to work on the 29th December though, which caused officials to doubt the authenticity of the report that the strike had ended. It was speculated that the workers had not been informed of the decision to return to work. (97) In fact the workers

had held a meeting on Sunday the 28th December, which was supported by the Native Congress and the IWA, where the decision of the strike committee was called into question. " further meeting was held yesterday which ended without a unanimous decision to return to work being arrived at. From the tone of the speeches made they are beginning to see that they are playing a losing game...." (98)

This inconclusive ending to the strike resulted in the workers going back to work on Tuesday the 31st December. In addition several flare-ups emerged between the different organisations. The Native Congress and the IWA seized the opportunity of belittling the ICU. It seemed that they had made approaches to the authorities themselves and had come to some agreement that wages throughout the Peninsula would be reconsidered only on the condition that the workers on the Docks returned to their posts. (99) Furthermore, a big controversy opened up between Dean of the ICU and Jones of NURAHS over the question of the latter's support.

The most significant index of the strike was the attitude of the workers themselves. They had proved their ability to make use of the strike weapon. Moreover they had even rejected, albeit for a very brief while only, the decisions of their leaders to terminate the strike. In this action their conflict consciousness surpassed the preparedness of their rudimentary organisational machinery, which proved to stand more on the strength of rhetorical force. In this position the strike Committee had no other option but to admit defeat, as Dean said in a letter to the Cape Times. (100)

Not long thereafter Kadalie addressed a meeting of the APO in Claremont. Kadalie spoke of the failure of 'whites' to provide their promised support during the Docks Strike. He also complained that he had not received any support from the 'Coloured' leaders. "The non-European workers of the country did not yet realise their power. They wanted a proper share of what they produced." (101) With the example of the large strike behind him, Kadalie should have seen how great the workers' awareness of their power was. One can perhaps deduce from this that there was indeed a gulf between leadership and the workers themselves. In subsequent years the convention of most ICU branches was that policy and strategy had to be that of the executive, which left little room for the workers themselves to maneuver. Kadalie, in the very first year of the existence of the Union had shown that he did underestimate the consciousness of the workers. This failure, which must rank as one of his fatal mistakes, inhibited the potential of his organisation to move beyond its policy of reformism.

The ICU held its annual meeting on the 16th of January, 1920. This meeting was attended by 400 members and was presided over by Dean. Kadalie read the annual report which stated that the recent strike was not the failure the press made it out to be. He claimed that as a result of the strike the employers were extending greater

consideration to the workers. He said that the Bloemfontein branch of the organisation had a membership of over 1000 workers and claimed that other branches had been formed in the Free State and Natal. He finally commended the members for their good conduct during the strike. Officials were elected; Kadalie was given the job of Organising Secretary, J King was elected President, Paulse as Treasurer, and on the executive were people like George Gumbs, Fife, Johnstone and Schumber. (102)

As Wickins says, the Union did not stop its 'agitation' with the end of the Docks strike. Meetings between the ICU and the IWA continued into the year. (103) Attention was given first to the wages of the 'coloured' workers and then subsequently to the African workers. The shipping and stevedoring firms responded quickest to these demands. Certain concessions were made to Africans for accommodation allowances, otherwise hardly any spectacular developments came forth from the worker unrest. In the intervening months between the end of the strike and the closing months of the year calls were made numerous times for a general strike but nothing came of this talk.

In October the Commissioner of Police suggested to the immigration authorities that Kadalie's residence status be investigated with a view to his deportation. (104) Kadalie's activities had brought him into the public glare and showed him up as being involved with 'white'

agitators who were spreading 'pernicious' doctrines amongst the 'coloured' people in the Cape. In November he was issued with a deportation order. Kadalie appealed to the Immigration Appeal Board and had secured the help of the Democratic Labour Party. His case came up before the Board in December and the Board, confused about the finality of the Minister's order, allowed the appeal to go to the Supreme Court. Before the matter could reach the Supreme Court, the Department of Interior instructed the Immigration authorities to stay the proceedings. Subsequently, in January of the next year, the Minister of the Interior gave Kadalie permission to remain in South Africa unconditionally. (105)

The order had been put aside, it appears, because of the unrest and the disturbances at Port Elizabeth and because of the impending election. Despite the fact that the ICU had registered as a threat to the authorities, its bluster was still able to be contained. Had Kadalie been a more definitive threat to the status quo he would doubtless have been removed. Yet his potential support for the SAP at the pending election, contingent on a favourable decision being given to his appeal against repatriation, was an advantage to be secured. And thus began, in small measure perhaps, the courtship of a man who by then had come to invest himself with considerable importance. The economic approaches

of the ICU (and other kindred organisations) were able to be absorbed successfully through tame concessions such as these. False victories, such as these, served to fuel Kadalie's self-importance.

3

In July 1920 the first African workers summit was held at Bloemfontein where the leading figure, much to Kadalie's chagrin, was undoubtedly Selby Msimang. This gathering was the result of the meetings which Kadalie and Msimang had had in August of the previous year. At the 1919 July meeting it had probably been decided to form a national union under the name of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of South Africa. Between this time and the opening of the summit in 1920, Msimang had been instrumental in forming the nucleus of an Organisation based in the Free State. It is doubtful that his organisational efforts had reaped much success. It did appear, though, that branches of worker organisations had been established in places such as Bloemfontein, Kimberley and the surrounding areas.

The conference was opened on the 13th of July in the St. John's Hall in Bloemfontein. (106) Msimang was the chairman and delegates included Kadalie, Paulse, Gumbs, Nyombolo, Cetyiwe from Cape Town (representing the ICU and the IWA), and several people coming from places as far afield as Johannesburg, Mafateng in Basutoland, Aliwal North, Kimberley, and numerous other smaller towns. As Wickins says, there were few representatives

from Johannesburg and none from Durban. (107)

Msimang, in opening the conference, said that the idea was to form one strong organisation of non-European workers in South Africa,"

"We have foes... in this country. The white worker has only the capitalist as his foe, while we have the capitalist and the Trade Unions to fight against. It is then our duty to organise our forces and to break through these foes." (108)

The first item on the agenda was the formation of one organisation of all the 'non-European' workers of Africa south of the Zambesi. The conference unanimously resolved to form such a union

"of skilled and unskilled workers... and that it be an instruction to all unions represented in this conference to carry out this great principle and recommend or approach all other unions not represented with a view thereto, based on the following, among other, objects : -

- (a) That the objects of this union shall be to bring together all classes of skilled and unskilled, in every sphere of life whatsoever, to promote the social, moral and intellectual interests of its members, to obtain and maintain for them equitable rates of wages, and reasonable conditions of labour, to regulate the relations between employer and employed and to endeavour to settle differences between them by amicable and conciliatory means...
- (b) To promote and regulate the conditions of work in the farms and to promote the general and material welfare of the members engaged in agricultural pursuits and to help them obtain a living wage, and reasonable contracts and to do all possible to afford members evicted from farms protection.
- (c) To see that all females in industries and domestic services are protected by the organisation, by encouraging them to enrol in all branches of the Union and to help them to obtain a living wage.

- (d) To promote co-operation, insurance, sick and out-of-work benefits, old age pensions and such other objects as the Union may from time to time determine." (109)

The Conference stated that it was 'deadly' opposed to the recruiting system "for it is detrimental to the progress of all native races in the sub-continent..." It was agreed to accept the Messenger, of which Msimang was the editor, as the official organ of the Union. With regard to the Pass question, as it affected the labour contract, it was resolved :

- (1) "That in view of the fact that the feeling generally of the black people of the Union is averse to the pass system, this conference heartily endorses the opinion to the effect that the Pass laws are affecting labour contracts and should be totally abolished. This conference condemns the system as unjust and degrading and a direct encouragement to the increase of criminal practices amongst the natives, and so recommends its abolition.
- (2) That the Pass laws operating in native locations in municipal and other areas are in direct conflict with the principles of liberty and citizenship which the natives justly lay claim to, by reason of their birthright, and the time has arrived when such a system should be abolished..." (110)

It appeared that the subject which gained most accord was the recruiting issue. Apart from that, the conference was not all glamour and success. A constitutional committee was elected which was given three months to submit a report. The conference and the newly formed organisation, called the Industrial and Commercial Workers of Africa, thus had no constitution at this stage. Provision was

made for provincial Councils which were to have special powers. There was intense and protracted discussion on the recruiting issue. It appeared that agreement was reached that everyone present would see that recruiting would be discouraged. Suggestions were made to send this resolution to the Prime Minister. "Henry Selby Msimang...was most emphatic in pointing out that these resolutions would not have any effect. He stated that "he would never go on his knees to Smuts or anyone else;" their only salvation lay in organising through the Union..." (111) (This statement appears to be out of character with Msimang.) (112)

It seemed that there was considerable dissatisfaction amongst the Cape delegates to the conference. This feeling arose out of the election of Msimang to the Presidency of the organisation. Kadalie felt rather strongly on this question. "From beginning to end the conference was a failure", said Kadalie. (113) He felt that the conference was led by self-centred intellectuals, in turn led by a political opportunist who "objected to my having been appointed General Secretary of the movement on the grounds that I could not speak any of the South African Native languages." (114) He complained that the conference was a plot contrived by Msimang for Msimang's personal self-aggrandizement. Furthermore, he also said that Msimang had misled them about the size of the organisation in the Free State.

Statistics showed only 700 members in the area, who were not even content with Msimang as a leader.

By itself this failure to include Kadalie in the executive was certainly short-sighted, since Kadalie was one of the more illustrious figures present at the conference, and had a backing with some creditable standing to support him. Yet the action of the man in withdrawing his and his delegates support for the conference, an action which followed long after the conference, was an early indication of the reactionary aspect of Kadalie's nature which he was not averse to using in moments of contratempus. It was in actions such as these that Bonner's assertion is borne out, that he "saw the standing of the Union as being synonymous with his own." (115) (The inability of Kadalie to accept a subordinate position can be seen as an early signal of the kind of leadership which the ICU was to be saddled with.)

However, there were other important scenes which occurred which are worthy of looking at. There is evidence that a company was formed at the conference which had Kadalie, Fife and Bennet-Ncwana as its chief promoters. It was alleged by the police that Msimang had been given a sum of £30 out of the company's funds as a donation towards the expenses he had incurred with his arrest in the previous year. (116) The Police managed to acquire a copy of this company's prospectus. The company was called 'The Black Man' Company Limited and was to be registered under the Companies law of the Cape of Good Hope. The company had a Cape Town address (Kadalie's)

where its promoters were in residence. The objects of the company were to publish a weekly journal known as the "Black Man" (This journal later came under the editorship of Ncwana. Whether Kadalie had any subsequent stake in the newspaper is doubtful,) to purchase the equipment such as a printing plant. The company had the further aim of introducing "the principle of establishing co-operative stores to meet the requirements of the industrial workers." (117) There was one further aim which had as its goal the advocating of "the organisation of industrial workers throughout the African continent, by means of establishing a branch or branches, an Agency or agencies of the company in various centres deemed necessary by the Directors." (118) (How the directors understood this aim is not clear.)

The conference thus, in most respects, was a failure. The failure to sustain the umbrella or even a federal formation of the organisation was foreshadowed by Kadalie's unenthusiastic attitude to the whole matter. A question could be posed whether the conference was even in tune with the demands of the workers themselves. In fact the scope of the formation was cast in very reformist terms. There was hardly the kind of exciting talk which was seen when the ICU originally came into existence. Wages were hardly mentioned, far less the idea of the Union taking a stand of some sort on a political approach to the government. In this sense the conference was implicitly committed to good employer-employee relations only and

and no cogniscence was taken of the muted expressions, which already existed amongst workers, whereby a conscious dissatisfaction with the economic system was expressed. (119)

It was only some months after the conference that the real break between Kadalie and his supporters in the Cape and Msimang in Bloemfontein occurred. According to Wickins, from an article in Ilanga lase Natal(27/1/22), it was Bennet Ncwana who suggested at a meeting of the ICU's executive that the ICU maintain its separate indentivity. An occasion for the split was afforded by the action taken by the ICU in August and September in Cape Town. Wickins says that it was felt by some, who were more committed to Msimang, that Kadalie and the ICU were acting with too much independence and militancy. (120) The ICU had issued a letter to employers in Cape Town requesting a minimum wage of 8s a day for all 'black' workers.

A meeting was held in September where over 900 members of the Union attended. The meeting heard reports of the requests made earlier to the employers. (121) It emerged that satisfaction was felt with the wages and conditions of the workers in the dock areas, but that some town employers had not even made an effort to acknowledge the existence of the ICU. Kadalie threatened that if these employers did not recognize his Union, as they recognized the Federation, he would be forced to

take drastic action. "If everything is not fixed up satisfactorily by Monday (this afternoon) it may, nay, probably will necessitate recourse to very drastic action by the executive.. That is, it may be considered necessary to pull out all native and coloured labour." He even threatened that the Dock workers in Cape Town as well as in all the other ports would join in sympathy. (122) Kadalie's bluster, for all it was worth, came to nothing. He offered employers an extension within which time they could make a favourable reply. It was reported that the employers were in fact considering the request. (123)

Later events in the years ahead indicate that Kadalie had had some measure of co-operation from the employers of labour in the Docks, among them the shipping companies. The Union Castle Company and other firms had agreed to increase their wages. His relationship with them must have been an easy-going one. He claimed in his book that "I was well-known by the two managing directors of the company." (124)

This period marked the close of the Bloemfontein formulated version of the ICU, although Msimang still concerned himself as President with some peripheral affairs until the Port Elizabeth disturbances later in the year.

4

Before the following conference of the already dying Bloemfontein IWCU in N'dabeni Cape Town in July of 1921,

there occurred the disastrous debacle of Msabalala and his organisation in Port Elizabeth.

It has been seen that Masabalala had begun making approaches to the Port Elizabeth Town Council in 1918 already. After the big Bloemfontein gathering Masabalala had returned to his home ground and resumed his agitations for higher wages. In January, after discussions between the towns employers and a deputation of workers, it was agreed that workers receiving less than 30s per week would receive an increase of 6d per day, excluding those workers in the building trade. (125)

Conditions in the township of Korsten were deplorable and a source of discontent for the workers of Port Elizabeth. The groundswell existed for organising an enthusiastic workers organisation in the area. The conditions in Port Elizabeth, apart from the better organised location of New Brighton, served to inflame the already gloomy situation of the worker, as it did throughout the country. The workers thus reacted no differently to their predicament than their fellow men in the other urban complexes growing up throughout the country.

Masabalala had begun negotiations with the council when he returned, and, dissatisfied with an offer of an additional 6d to the workers' wages, threatened to bring the workers out in a strike. Mass meetings were held and considerable excitement was roused. "Such excitement was roused that

on Sunday 17th October, at a Korsten meeting, Dr. Rubusana, who, being in Port Elizabeth for a church meeting, had been asked by the conservatives to throw his influence on to the side of moderation, was assaulted". (126) Rubusana, not the most popular figure in the Eastern Province, had chosen a most inopportune moment to test his influence. As Wickins says, this gave the authorities the opportunity to arrest Masabalala, especially since his union had declared that a strike would take place on the 3rd of November. This announcement had been made a day after the assault on Rubusana. When the arrested Masabalala was refused bail, the large crowd gathered outside the police station threatened to release him by force if he were not released by five o'clock. The congregation grew larger, supplemented by curious spectators until there were as many as 3000 people.

The police sent in forces to attempt to disperse the crowd. At first the arrival of the police was treated as a joke, but then it seems that stones were thrown at police. In retaliation, either by the police or spectators, a number of shots were fired and thereafter, when the crowd started stampeding, "a sustained fusillade was directed on the retreating crowd from the police for 60 seconds....." (127) The tragic result was that 23 African and 'coloured' people were killed and 45 people had incurred various degrees of wounds. At least one 'white' was killed and several were wounded. (128)

Other events of a disturbing nature occurred in the city which caused a general sense of panic.

A Commission of Enquiry was appointed (which included Abdurahman, as a political and election ploy it seems) which aroused as much controversy as the event itself. (129)

A further result of the disturbance was the call of the Mayor of the town to employers to pay their workers a living wage. While Masabalala had been removed to Grahamstown by the authorities the local Africans decided to call Msimang to Port Elizabeth. (130) As soon as he arrived he managed to persuade the workers to forgo their intentions of striking. He then participated in a conference with the town's employers on the 9th of November. The conference was characterised by Msimang's lack of familiarity with the situation and the sometimes contradictory utterances of the employers and their firm belief that the disturbances were due to agitation alone. However, a committee was established to investigate the wage structure which proposed that a wage of 4s6d per day be paid to all African and 'coloured' workers, with the exception of those workers in the building trade. (131) Masabalala was later released and it emerged that the workers had rejected the settlement reached for them. However, as Wickins says, the cost of living index was in the process of falling and soon thereafter the whole impetus for higher wages had subsided. (132)

Masabalala then allowed himself to be caught up in the electoral machinery of the Nationalist Party. This

action angered many people, not least of all the established labour leaders who, in searching for a place in the political and industrial hierarchy, could not understand the workings of a mind such as Masabalala's.

5

The first few years of the ICU and the African labour movements were turbulent and confused ones. Apart from the severely divided and disorganised form it had taken, there were sown the seeds of more fundamental ills which would plague these movements and their descendants. The major criticism which one can lay at their door was their inability to make more constructive use of the consciousness of their basic material - the workers themselves. It is not unexpected that the men in the forefront of worker movements were the better educated people. This was in keeping with the general trend in the society where the dominant figures in the unfranchised community were invariably those who had the benefit of superior exposure to the ways and values of the 'white' society. It is possible that these people in fact were sufficiently removed from the tenuous existence of the workers to fail to understand the extent of their awareness. This meant that the values which had become dominant, despite the fact that they occasionally looked subversive, were those of the men who led and commandeered the early movements.

If one can talk of an opportunity being forgone in the struggle of the South African oppressed groups, it is in the sense that the workers were incorporated into a reformist trade-union conscious struggle. The important time-juncture was not the apex of the labour movement, where it is presumed that the labour struggle was diluted and turned into a petty-bourgeois platform, but the very beginning when the direction of the movement was taken over by people who had not appreciated the extent and commitment of worker-consciousness. This consciousness was by no means revolutionary, but it had the elements of progressiveness which made it amenable to even further development. The widespread dissatisfaction which had grown organically showed that it had a strong conflict potential which was never properly utilised. The overall situation of the unfranchised working class was such that conditions were generally favourable for radical organisation.

NOTES

1. S Van der Horst Native Labour p240
2. SNA Box 215 Tvl Native Congress District Branch Soutpansberg. 14/6/20
3. RDM 6/5/19
4. Ibid Taung women to Magistrate of Taung 17/11/20
5. Rand Daily Mail 6/5/19

6. SNA Box 215 South African Police Deputy Commissioner Cape Eastern Division 10/2/1920
7. Rand Daily Mail 28/6/1918
8. SNA Box 215 Mjo to Magistrate of East London 8/7/1918
9. Rand Daily Mail 19/7/1918
10. SNA Op Cit SM Masabalala to CW Chabaud Esq and CC & RM 30/9/1918
11. Johnstone, Race, Class & Gold p176
12. Ibid
13. Rand Daily Mail 7/2/1919
14. Star 17/2/1919
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. Rand Daily Mail 19/2/1919
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Rand Daily Mail 28/2/1919
22. Wickins The ICU p101 and Rand Daily Mail 28/2/1919
23. Cape Times 1/3/1919
24. Ibid 3/3/1919
25. Rand Daily Mail 4/3/1919
26. Ibid
27. Wickins Op, Cit p102
28. Star 7/3/1919 and SMA Box 215 768/18/F473
29. Wickins Op.Cit p103 quoting from the Friend 7/3/1919
30. Star 7/3/1919
31. Wickins Op.Cit p104
32. Rand Daily Mail 5/4/1919
33. Ibid 7/6/1919
34. Cape Times 10/3/1919
35. Ibid 13/3/1919
36. Cape Argus 24/3/1919
37. Ibid 2/4/1919
38. Wickins Op.Cit pp 1-5
39. Ibid p10 quoting from the Cape Times 11/12/1918
40. Cape Argus 19/4/1919
41. Ibid 21/4/1919
42. Wickins Op.Cit p9
43. Ibid p11
44. Ibid p54
45. Cape Argus 19/4/1919
46. Rand Daily Mail 10/5/1919
47. Wickins Op.Cit p57
48. See Chapter two
49. Sean Moroney Industrial Conflict in a labour repressive economy
50. Van der Horst. Native Labour in South Africa p275
51. Ibid p263
52. Cape Times 9/10/1919

53. This information about the IWA was obviously incorrect. See Chapter two. The information about the speculated size of the IWA bore no truth whatsoever. The organisation may have changed its outlook after the events of July 1918, although documentary evidence seems to indicate that a liaison with the ISL persisted into the early months of 1919. However, if the organisation had adopted an anti-white stance, and militantly so, one would find it strange that the IWA leaders in mention, Kraai and Cetyiwe, would be party to such a move. Kraai and Cetyiwe had in fact been indicted along with Bunting, Tinker and others after the Bucket Strike. There is a gap in the information we know about the IWA between January 1919 and the emergence of the organisation in the Cape later in the year. In the intervening period it is possible that such a volte-face had occurred.
54. Cape Times 9/10/1919
55. Ibid
56. Ibid -
57. Ibid
58. Wickins Op.Cit p106
59. Ibid
60. Cape Times 9/10/1919
61. Ibid
62. Ibid
63. Ibid
64. Cape Times 22/11/1919
65. Ibid
66. Ibid
67. Ibid
68. Ibid
69. Cape Times 30/8/1919
70. Cape Times 2/9/1919
71. Cape Times 1/10/1919
72. Wickins Op.Cit p62
73. Kadalie to Stuart 6/12/1919. TUCSA Papers, cited in Wickins Op.Cit p64
74. Cape Times 18/12/1919
75. Ibid
76. Wickins Op.Cit p66
77. Cape Times 18/12/1919
78. Ibid
79. Ibid
80. Cape Times 19/12/1919
81. Ibid
82. Cape Times 20/12/1919
83. Wickins Op.Cit p72
84. Ibid quoting from Cape Times 22nd and 30th December 1919

85. Ibid
86. Cape Times 22/12/1919
87. Ibid
88. Ibid
89. Cape Times 23/12/1919
90. Ibid
91. Ibid
92. Cape Times 25/12/1919
93. Ibid. One senses a wavering in the resolve of Kadalie to persist with the strike.
94. Cape Times 27/12/1919
95. Wickins Op.Cit p78
96. Cape Times 29/12/1919
97. Cape Times 30/12/1919
98. Ibid
99. Wickins Op.Cit p79
100. Cape Times 10/1/1920
101. Cape Times 13/1/1920
102. Cape Times 21/1/1920
103. Wickins Op.Cit p85 passim
104. Ibid p90
105. Ibid p92.-This information has been carefully researched by Dr. Wickins.
106. The Friend 14/7/1920. From SNA Box 217
107. Wickins Op.Cit pl11
108. SNA Op.Cit.
109. Ibid
110. Ibid
111. SNA Box 217. From a letter written by the District Commandant of Bloemfontein to the Deputy Commissioner SAP Bloemfontein 21/7/1920
112. This statement appears to be out of character with Msimang
113. Ilanga lase Natal 20/1/1922 quoted in Wickins Op.Cit p150
114. C. Kadalie : Manifesto to the members of the ICU 9/7/1928 B/UCT quoted in Wickins Op.Cit p150
115. P Bonner Labour Bulletin September/October 1974 vol 1 no 6 p41
116. SNA Op Cit
117. SNA Box 217. Copy of the Abridged prospectus of The Black Man Company
118. Ibid
119. The strategems of workers in rejecting their work conditions in various expressions is the dissatisfaction referred to here. See Van Onselen's work
120. Wickins Op.Cit p154
121. Cape Times 20/9/1920
122. Ibid

123. Cape Times 22/9/1920
124. Kadalie, My Life
125. Cape Times 19/1/1920
126. Wickins Op.Cit p155
127. The Eastern Province Herald 25/10/1920 quoted in
Wickins p159
128. Ibid
129. Kadalie, My Life p51
130. Wickins Op.Cit p165
131. Ibid p167
132. Ibid p168

CHAPTER FOURJOHANNESBURG 1921-1924

1.

This chapter links up with chapter two and resumes the discussion on Johannesburg. It also provides a brief description of the condition and protest of the urban African before the coming of the ICU. The intention is to look at the way in which the Africans responded to their situation. Worker protest was conspicuously absent during this period. There were 2 reasons for this; the economy (as is discussed immediately below) had gone into an upswing by 1924 easing the cost of living pressure, and the memory of the SANNC failure was still fresh in the minds of the people. Instead workers' attention was centred on those informal activities (incorporated into the urban sub-culture) which would at least guarantee the procuring of additional income or goods of consumption (see discussion below on the liquor trade). In this trough of protest, the non-worker organisations in Johannesburg such as the Joint Council, were allowed to gain ascendancy. In the absence of a worker-based organisation the growth and viability of these organisation was facilitated. (The discussion on the economy which precedes the body of this chapter seeks to throw into relief the ordering, articulation and activity of the social formation, especially the African working class section of that formation. (Note the discussion in Chapter one.)

With the end of the war certain structural changes occurred in the South African economy. These changes were the result of political re-formations at the level of the political bloc. These changes had direct repercussions on the articulation and relationships of groups within the social formation. Although these changes are not explicitly elaborated in this chapter, it ought to be remembered that important shifts and developments occurred in the African community, and also in the political groups which came to represent them. (1) In 1924-1925 the output value of the three main production sectors in the economy were the following : Agriculture contributed 19,9 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, Mining - 17,4 per cent and Manufacturing 12,4 per cent. In 1911-1912 the dominant sector was Mining (27,1) followed by Agriculture (17,4pc) and Manufacturing (6,7pc) (2) (See chapter 1) The decline of the value of the Gold Mining sector was also due to the return of the gold-price on the international market to its pre-war standard.

After 1920, South Africa, along with the rest of the world, experienced the post-war depression. Because of the greater competition on the world market demand for South African products fell. It was in this time-period that local industry first gained protection through tariff and custom rates imposed on foreign products. After 1924 domestic industries' output increased very

markedly, growing from £98 million in 1920/1921 to £150 million in 1935/;936. It was also thereafter most significant for us, that the index of wholesale prices began to fall, from its high-point of 2,249 in 1920 to 1085 in 1936. (3) The total number of employees in industry during the period 1920-1936 also doubled.

In Johannesburg the workers in industry and on the mines were subjected to less stringent hardships. It is true that the material conditions in their workplaces had not altered significantly, but the critical pressure of the high cost of living had been taken away. Yet, at the same time, their living conditions had hardly altered; they were still exposed to the boisterous bullying of landlords and the continual threat of disease outbreak amidst conditions which had grown indescribably bad.

Whereas the previous five-years were significant for their preponderantly heavy emphasis on wage and living-cost issues, the focus of the urban African workers' attention was moved to the issues of accommodation and housing. No doubt the informal market in Johannesburg still flourished amongst African artisans and peddlers who were unable to secure a legal entry into the competitive market. The 'white' cobblers complained

"that the overwhelming number of native shoe-repairers work in back yards and hovels, the rent of which is infinitesimal as compared with that which has to be paid by the average European shoe-repairer in any part of the town. The domestic expenditures of the

native workers too, are exceedingly small... (this) evil is said to be generally everywhere in Johannesburg, and is aggravated by the fact that natives have become accustomed to the practice of canvassing for work by going from door to door....." (4)

The cost of living issue had not been solved by the decline of the price index, it had only removed the crisis element which had characterised it during the war years. Evidence which emerges from interviews seems to indicate the presence of an extensive informal market network which persisted and intensified after the Great War. This network did not stand independently of the structured market; it seemed that it served the function of supplementing the income of workers and their families chiefly. (5) (6) The effect of this trade is impossible to evaluate. However, it serves to provide some insight into the conditions which motivated the functioning of such a working-class.

After the events of 1920 on the mines and in the town of Johannesburg, little more was heard of the Transvaal Native Congress. The Congress continued to exist, except that it became more an organisation of leaders than members. The signal failure of the Congress during the war years and its inability to provide solutions, had caused widespread dissatisfaction. The organisation had proved itself to be a 'crisis' organisation only; it had no grass roots following at all. In

contrast to the ICU's condemnation of the Bulhoek/Israelites massacre (which denounced the capitalists), the Congress' annual conference, through Makgatho the chairman, expressed a wish for the return to the old days of Kruger and Steyn. "President Kruger trusted the natives and the natives trusted him.... We know we are children, and as such we have respect for you. If you hit at the dog without ceasing, it will in the end turn and bite you... (there is) no question of disloyalty to His Majesty the King." (7) Statements such as these could do little to win the support of the people.

2.

Between 1920 and the end of 1924 Johannesburg's working-class had no organisational machinery to articulate its views. Organisationally a vacuum existed in the city until the ICU entered the scene in late 1924. A number of other organisations had come into being in the period, the most important of which was the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. However, this body made no conspicuous effort to incorporate into its ranks the workers of the city. Instead, the Council attracted the more attractive aspirant-bourgeois types amongst the unfranchised and with this small group began making a very marked impact on the city.

The Joint Councils were the result of the famed Dr Aggrey of Achimota College in Nigeria. He had mooted the idea of establishing conciliation groups, consisting of 'black'

and 'white' leaders, such as existed in the Southern States of America. His talks and speeches were impressive and served to feed the middle-class ethos which was present in inchoate form among the respectable and growing professional groups of African leaders. At his meetings he lambasted extremism such as Garveyism. (8) This and subsequent visits under the Rockefeller Foundation did much to enhance the idea of establishing buffer groups between 'whites' and 'blacks'.

As early as 1919 Dr James Henderson of Lovedale College felt that the best solution to avoid the African becoming a parasite was to help him to become an 'industrialist' himself. He saw two alternatives ahead,

"....one is to keep (the African) sullen and dissatisfied in subjection by arms, the other is to meet these people as fellow human beings to draw them into mutually advantageous co-operation with us, to let them develop, and to help them to develop." (9)

The Joint Council in Johannesburg was started in 1921. It had influential people such as Rheinallt-Jones, Howard Pim on its committee. From the very beginning the Council championed the cause of the educated and trained Africans. "It is these two sections of 'educated' and 'trained' natives who feel the injustice of the so-called 'colour-bar', and their feelings towards the European population and the Government of South Africa will certainly have great influence in deciding

the future attitude of the huge untrained and uneducated mass of the population. At no previous time have these masses, who differ widely among themselves in customs and language and whose knowledge of one another in earlier times was extremely limited, had grievances common to them all, and in English a common speech."(10) The memorandum continued to say that the immigration of African families to the towns ought to be discouraged since these people would not know how to live away from their territories. However, exceptions, they felt, could be given to those Africans who were trained.

The Council implied that the influx of 'untrained' Africans into the towns had the effect of depressing the general rate of wages and that these people could manage to live on the wages they received, whereas the town Africans could not. They also made reference to the plight of women and children who knew only the freedom of the territories, and thus could hardly be expected to lead healthy lives in the towns. "When we consider the educated native and not the general mass of his countrymen different arguments apply. The first difference is the colour bar which prevents the employment of natives on much skilled and semi-skilled work although they are competent to perform it; and it is impossible to estimate the loss that South Africa has sustained throughout its development during the last fifty years owing to the non-selection of native labour,

and to the obstacles thereby placed in the way of the advancement of capable natives." (11)

This particular report, commenting on a circular put out by the Native Recruiting Corporation, paid particular attention to the wages of African mine clerks and indunas. It was felt that these men ought to be provided rent-free accommodation, and where they had their wives to accommodate, that they be given an allowance of £1 a month. The NRC pointed out that in recommending its member mines to accept the above suggestion, the "board wishes to assist the educated natives to maintain the status to which they are entitled by virtue of their education." (12)

The case of the 'native' teacher was also highlighted. The Council felt that their salaries were totally inadequate.

"The wages of other classes of educated natives are also insufficient for their needs, and if instances are brought to the notice of this Council by our native members we would recommend that efforts should be made to improve these wages by communicating with employers. It is, however, impossible to lay down any general principle according to which cases should be dealt with, but the action taken by the NRC, in the above mentioned case of indunas and compound clerks, and the rates of wages proposed by them are valuable indices as to what the wages of educated natives should be." (13)

(The scales for the various classes on the mines were: Indunas £7.10s - £10 per month with food and quarters; Chief Native Clerks £7.10 - £9 per month with food and quarters, 1st Class Mabalanas £6-£7 per month with food

and quarters and for 2nd and 3rd Class Mabalanas £4-£6 per month with food and quarters.) (14)

The Joint Council was able to provide a platform for the aspirant-bourgeois African in Johannesburg. The objective factors which distinguished the aspirant-bourgeois from the working class were the former's educational qualifications which had a self-perpetuating power. The division of recognition meant that the aspirant-bourgeois had superior access to institutions or channels which would enable his 'progress' in the society. Building on this superior access, the aspirant-bourgeois class was able to increase the gulf between his class and that of the workers.

The Joint Council sought to remove the disabilities and inconveniences which the 'educated' African suffered, especially those created by the Pass Laws. The Council's Pass Law Committee recommended that the Pass Laws be repealed and that registration certificates be substituted for the Pass Laws.(15) The report recommended that the following groups be granted exemption from the law: (a) those bearing letters of exemption (b) registered voters in the Cape Province (c) Natives who have passed standard five or the equivalent (d) chiefs and headmen (e) skilled artisans and persons exercising such business or trades as may be prescribed (f) Africans who have tendered long and faithful service in any employment. (16)

Under these circumstances it was clear that the Joint Councils were sponsoring an African elite class. In the majority of the Council's areas of investigation the emphasis was laid on the particular position of the 'educated' as distinct from the real workers.

3.

One of the most important pieces of legislation introduced in the early years of the twenties was the Urban Areas Act of 1923. Indeed too little attention has been given in historical accounts to the multiple effects and consequences on the urban masses which the Act brought about. The importance of this act has been missed in the light of more industrially motivated legislation such as the Apprenticeship Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Wages Act.

The housing situation in the urban areas of South Africa had come under the scrutiny of the authorities after the widespread outbreaks of plague and influenza. SM Pritchard, the Director of Native Labour told the Local Government Commission in 1920 "I am bound to say that, in many instances the conditions which natives are living in Johannesburg are a disgrace to civilization and a menace to public health." He complained that the problem of housing had been "grievously mishandled or neglected by successive Municipal Councils." (17) There was indeed much confusion about the jurisdiction of the 'native locations'. A District Commandant commented in 1919 that "The government is largely to blame in the matter

for permitting the native to be imposed upon in many ways, the principal being the state of the municipal locations. They are charged exorbitant rents, which they cannot afford, causing them to look around for unlawful ways of augmenting their incomes." (18)

Pritchard felt, without any doubt, that the way the Parks and Estates Committee of Johannesburg (which controlled urban locations) was constituted was inadequate to deal with the housing problem in the city. The municipality had to create, he felt, a special department of Native Administration with equal status to other existing departments. Only in this way could the execution of a solution be ensured. (19)

There was a disagreement between the Town Council and the Department of Native Affairs. The Government Department said that the existence of a "Malay Location under the control of your council does not indicate any laxity on the part of this department." It invoked the Public Health Act of 1919 and Municipal statutes to put the onus on the council of seeing that "the admission of new arrivals is prevented in an area which is admittedly and conspicuously insanitary and a danger to public health." (20) The Council replied that "the continued influx of hordes of natives is beyond the direction of the council, and the Director of Native Affairs can alone control their movements by

restricting the issue of passes to those undesirable additions to the overcrowded population of Johannesburg." The council denied that the Native Affairs Department had assisted in securing the removal of Africans from the Malay Location. (21)

Discussion between these two sources of government followed soon after. A Commission of Enquiry had been appointed by the Town Council. ".....into the advisability of securing municipal control of the influx of natives into the municipality, establishing a labour bureau, and securing suitable housing provision and general betterment conditions for the natives, if possible without imposing financial burdens on the rate-payers." (22)

In April the Council invited tenders for the construction of further dwellings. The location, Western Native Township, had come into being late in 1919 and in the beginning of 1920. The Council was not too optimistic about its efforts to get above the problem. It felt that the situation since the opening up of Western Native Township was being tackled on sound lines;

"But the problem in Johannesburg will not be satisfactorily solved merely by providing improved accommodation, which may indeed tend to attract to the towns still larger numbers of natives and lead to the formation of new slums.... If Johannesburg is to give shelter to an unlimited number of natives it is obvious that the task of providing better conditions for coloureds and whites alike must be made much heavier....." (23)

The Natives Urban Areas Bill came up for parliamentary review in 1921. The Bill only became law in 1923 after going through a very exposed gestation period. However it was clear that the Bill was an attempt to clear up the confusion which existed between the Government and the Local Authorities. The Bill, in addition, had come in the wake of intense criticism of urban conditions, and thus, in some measure sought to bring relief and improvement.

The Joint Council appointed an African Committee to report on the Urban Areas Bill. The chairman was RM Tladi, and among others, H Selby Msimang was there as well. (He had left the Free State permanently it seems, to settle in Johannesburg. His version of the workers' organisation, the ICWU, had passed into the hands of people like Bennet Ncwana. Msimang became an active member of the Joint Council in Johannesburg. He also appears to have had some attachment with the newspaper *Umteteli wa Bantu*.) The committee met in Western Native Township on the 22nd February 1922.(24)

The committee accepted that the principle of the Bill was a fair one "and a reasonable attempt to improve conditions obtaining in locations." (25) However, it became clear that the committee was not happy about those measures which impeded the development of the African middle-class or ^{aspirant} bourgeoisie. They complained

that the clause dealing with the Native Advisory Boards did not constitute a definite medium of consultation between the African and the Local Authorities. They suggested the establishment of a Board of Arbitration to settle differences between Africans and the urban Local Authorities. In this way they sought to ensure that the powers of the Advisory Boards would be strictly defined.

As regards the extremely contentious indigenous beer issue, the committee opposed the suggestion that the sale and manufacture of the brew be under the control of the municipality. They felt that local option ought to be given to locations to decide for themselves. There were two more suggestions in this regard; one was that old people ought to be allowed to brew the beer under licence to allow them to have access to an income, and secondly it was felt that each family allowed to brew a fixed maximum for household consumption. The effects of these measures, the committee felt, would be to assist families to save income which would have gone to the beer canteen, would make the traffic of illicit liquor impracticable, would give the Local authorities a fair profit turnover while at the same time allowing the elderly to make a living.(26)

The committee, though, was far more vehemently opposed to the municipalisation of trades and businesses in the locations, as was recommended under section 16 of the Bill.

It (the committee)

"recommends that every endeavour be made to get subsections a,c, and d struck off, ... it is felt that the natives should be at liberty to buy, lease or hire the trading sites and that they alone should have the right to trade within their own areas in any manner whatsoever.... and should the trading sites thus set aside be insufficient, people should be allowed to trade on their own stands, provided the house built thereon complies with the regulations regulating the nature and dimension of house built for trading purposes." (27)

The committee also complained against the one-sided construction of the bill in section 19.

"If it exempted those natives who at the commencement of this Act are carrying on business in European areas in the same way as non-natives are exempted in native areas, there would be no reason for complaint. And it is felt that the object of this section is to suffer or encourage persons other than natives to trade in an area set aside for natives or on the boundaries of such areas, whilst the natives will be restricted from doing so in or near non-native areas." (28)

The committee objected to the principle of segregation enunciated in the bill.

"Your committee submits that no development can be achieved unless it is effected on economic lines. The attempt to create artificial differences as laid down in this section (section 16) will have the effect of defeating the noble object of the bill and arrest the progress of the natives." (29)

There were two additional reports submitted by the Joint Council. One was an addendum to that of the

committee which was written by Msimang and the other was a joint report written by Msimang and Howard Pim. Msimang claimed that the congregations of natives on urban boundaries, as mentioned in the Bill, were the result of the Land Act of 1913. The evicted people had nowhere to go and were forced to submit to the demands of the new 'white' farmers who imposed severe requirements on the Africans who frequently had to provide the livestock capital for destitute 'white' farmers. (30).

The Msimang/Pim report claimed that the view of the Joint Council apropos section 15 of the Bill was,

"that in view of the low rates of wages received by natives, few of these native urban areas will pay their way. Urban local authorities therefore should not be called upon to provide housing for natives other than those who form part of their community, either as working for European members or as supplying native wants." (31)

How the authorities were to determine which people formed part of the community was not made clear. It was reported in the newspapers in 1921 that

"Every dweller in the suburbs knows that a great many natives wander about looking for work, and indeed it is established that there are in the municipal area literally thousands for whom there is no employment." (32)

When the Act was passed in 1923 provision was made for the control of the ingress of Africans into the urban areas. Under section 12 of the Act it was defined

what the powers of the local authority were. Employers had to register their workers' contracts and to report the termination or violation of contracts. Furthermore Africans entering the urban area had to report their arrival "to obtain a document certifying that he has so reported and to produce such document on demand to an authorised officer during such period as may be prescribed." (33) Further regulations under this section were promulgated regulating and controlling the entry and return of outside Africans into the area, and also the conditions for such people's residence in the urban area. (34)

These measures served to meet the requirements of the Johannesburg Town Council. Once again the Transvaal Native Congress tried to take advantage of the feelings of the people and threatened unrest if the Urban Areas Bill were to be passed. They protested against the removal of the ownership clause in the bill and the restriction of the African right to hold meetings in urban areas. (35) However, the Congress had very little support in the urban areas and their protest was allowed to pass. The Act however, only came into operation long after its promulgation. In the meanwhile the attention of the town's Africans had been arrested by issues such as the imposition of Poll Tax and the large Strike of Johannesburg's franchised workers in 1922. (We shall look at this below)

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These measures served to meet the requirements of the Johannesburg Town Council. Once again the Transvaal Native Congress tried to take advantage of the feelings of the people and threatened unrest if the Urban Areas Bill were to be passed. They protested against the removal of the ownership clause in the bill and the restriction of the African right to hold meetings in urban areas. (35) However, the Congress had very little support in the urban areas and their protest was allowed to pass. The Act however, only came into operation long after its promulgation. In the meanwhile the attention of the town's Africans had been arrested by issues such as the imposition of Poll Tax and the large Strike of Johannesburg's franchised workers in 1922. (We shall look at this below)

4.

In November of 1921 the Africans protested against the Poll Tax. (36) It was reported that some of them felt that they were in fact paying this tax twice over, since the definition of where their domicile was, was vaguely understood by the authorities. (37) The Joint Council did not fail to make an appeal on behalf of the people. Howard Pim spoke of the necessity of bringing test cases before the Courts quickly so that the legal position could be clarified. (38) The matter was partly settled when the Provincial authorities allowed several months of grace to the African people to pay their tax. (39)

A major event in the history of the city was the Rand Revolt of 1922. The strike began on the coalmines on the 10th. January and carried on into the month of March. When the strike had ended almost 50,000 African workers had to be repatriated to their homes. (40) The African and the 'coloured' communities kept a distinctly reserved attitude to the 'revolt' The place of this discussion is to show how the Africans responded to this political and social crisis : in keeping with the tenor of the rest of the discussion, Africans did not fail to respond positively to attempts aimed at weakening their position any further. They demonstrated their ability to counteract in situations of contratempus.

A striker awaiting trial was reputed to have said

"the Chamber of Mines evidently intends to turn us into a body of supervisors to cheap labour. It is only by being workmen that we shall prevent ourselves from being degerate. The Kaffir, the man we are raising up, is going to be the dominant race, that's why I'm fighting. Those who work in the country will in a few decades be the dominant race. They are going to possess the country."

Another said, "We did'nt want to upset the government, but were fighting for a white South Africa." (41)

The franchised workers, despite protestations to the contrary, were in the revolt because of the threat of the status quo agreement being broken by the Chamber of Mines. Their anger was directed at the possibility of their jobs being taken away by cheaper African labour. The first armed revolt against the government, which the strike ultimately became, was motivated by a militant 'white' worker consciousness directed at other sections of the working class.

It was in this light that the African workers remained aloof. It was said that they realised what the cause of the strike was and deliberately stayed out of it. The authorities commended the African people for being law-abiding. However, it was unrealistic to hope that such a traumatic stage in the life of the city, especially in view of the issue in question, would pass the African people by without managing to involve them directly. It appeared that, in self-defence, certain compounds had taken on a tense atmosphere, where the compounders were

preparing themselves for hostilities. In the event, the 'white' workers, or certain sections of the revolt-ers, were stirring up trouble with Africans indiscriminately. A church in Sophiatown was slightly sabotaged and a number of African people in the city were killed. A riot took place in Vrededorp when 'whites' interfered with African people who were entertaining themselves. Serious overtones were read into the riot, but its origin and development seemed to be a simple case of misunderstanding. (42) In certain parts of the city the African workers raised commandoes themselves for the purpose of protection against hostile 'white' commandoes. (43)

There were people who were scared that, unless the wages of workers on the mines and in the city improved, a severe strike of the African workers would take place in the aftermath of the 'white' workers revolt. (44) There, in reality, seemed to be little possibility of such drastic action on the part of the workers. However, it was noticed that the unemployment number of Africans was high and growing. Concomitant with the rise of unemployment, it appeared that the figure for assault cases, housebreaking and thieving had grown noticeably. (45)

Another observation was that the incidence of illicit liquor trafficking had also taken on a greater tempo. This development was propelled by the same impetus as thieving and mugging. It reflected directly on the

problem of income incapacities, and served as a way of supplementing wages. (The question becomes less simple when one begins to consider which classes or sub-classes controlled this particular trade. As is suggested below, some of the leaders in locations were deeply involved in the liquor traffic. The implications complicate attempts to see a neat concurrence of the interests of workers and those who were involved in the control of the trade.) In Alexandra Township the Vigilance Committee there had been given certain powers in regard to the control of the liquor trade. This authority was issued by the Native Commissioner as an attempt to avoid the complaints made by the residents that they were being harrassed by the police. The experiment, as an attempt to obliterate the trade, was singularly unsuccessful. It was found that drunkenness was on the increase in Johannesburg and that much of the liquor actually emanated from the Alexandra complex. Furthermore, much to the disillusionment of the authorities, it was found that the Vigilance Committee members were actively involved in the operation of the trade. (46)

It was said that the slum of Malay Camp, the landlord's harvest, was another centre for the illicit liquor trade. "Illicit liquor traffic flourishes. Degenerate Europeans make this possible. It is a well-known fact that thousands of pounds worth of liquor are consumed every month in the slums." (47) In a liquor raid in September,

after it was announced that 'kaffer-beer' could not be brewed, 47 people were arrested in the city for either brewing or trading in illicit liquor. The police seized 924 gallons of skokiaan. Fines amounting to £300 were imposed which were paid without any difficulty. (48) It was alleged that of the total number of 2915 women prisoners in 1921, 1964 were punished under the liquor laws. (49)

The liquor trade was, it seems, a fairly popular source of earning additional income. It had become part of the 'ghetto-culture'. The attitude of the people to the trade varied. There were some who were of the opinion that "In all locations we have well-to-do natives, and a considerable number of them, hard though this may be to believe, are quite respectable, and men to whom the municipality might well entrust the privilege of conducting such canteens ('kaffer-beer' canteens)." It was complained that the municipality proposed to sell beer and "presumably make a profit out of the sale. What is a crime for a native, is apparently not one for a European." If 'whites' wanted to impress 'blacks' with some degree of respect for the law, LJ Ncayo said, they should let 'blacks' be subject to the same regulations and penalties as whites. (50) Henry Tyamzashe felt that the sale of beer would have a demoralizing effect on the labour force. He said that all "decent and broad-minded

Africans were against the use of alcoholic beverages, but notwithstanding this fact all and one condemn the one-sided prohibition system. As it now stands it is simply a cunning trap to tempt the native into crime. (51)

Societies such as the Temperance Alliance complained against clauses in the Urban Areas Bill which allowed householders to brew certain stipulated quantities of indigenous brew. (52) Rheinallt-Jones regularly contributed articles to newspapers which emphasized the danger of permitting the establishment of municipal canteens.

Illicit liquor trafficking was a firmly established part of the lifestyle of the city's 'depressed' inhabitants. The several righteous fulminations on the subject failed to acknowledge how integrally the trade was tied up with the very struggle of people to survive in the slums and the ghettos. In a certain, perhaps perverted, sense, the participation in the trade was a relief measure for many people from the ravages of intensely arduous and badly-rewarded job situations.

5.

The period between 1920 and 1924 yielded no organisation for workers entirely peculiar to Johannesburg. While other non-worker organisations were flourishing, the workers voice was stilled. It was strange that

Johannesburg had in fact lagged behind Cape Town and the other industrial centres in this regard. During the War and immediately after, the prospects for establishing a workers' organisation were particularly bright. With the failure of the Congress movement to make proper use of this potential and the non-viability of the IWA, the chances for establishing and rooting a workers organisation in the city were lessened.

Furthermore, the rise of the bourgeois bodies, such as the Joint Councils, had the effect of diverting the grievances of the workers. These bodies had the effect of subordinating workers issues and thereby allowing workers awareness and their reaction (taking cognisance of the peculiar stratagems they used to overcome the hardships of urban life) to be neglected. The middle-class voice in the respectable Joint Councils had succeeded to appropriate the African struggle and remove it from its more proletarian context. Herein the struggle was able to be presented as a struggle for the privileges of the educated minority chiefly.

The ascendancy of the bourgeois organisations came at a time period when it was essential to funnel off the building pressure in the urban areas. After the tense developments amongst the workers during and after the war, it was crucially important to ensure that a resurgence of the dominantly workers' inspired type of

organisation would not be repeated. It is in this light that there arose developments in the city aimed chiefly at the diminition of such a possibility. The growth of the Joint Councils, the attempts to improve the housing problem and efforts to bring the labour force within the control of the authorities, were all attempts to achieve the total control of workers as well as to avoid situations conducive to the eruption of the conflict consciousness of the workers.

The Communist interest in the African community in this period was possibly at its lowest level since the end of the Great War. The CP (which had been founded in 1920) certainly did not have any truck with the liberals in the Joint Councils, however, it failed to counter the ascendancy of these bodies. The attention of the communists was being rivetted on the 'white' workers at this stage. After the outbreak of hostilities between 'white' workers and the authorities in 1922, they tried to justify the actions of the franchised workers. They were intent on securing an alliance with the Labour Party with whom they had consistently been feuding for ten years. In 1924 the Young Communist League was founded, which was largely the effort of Eddie Roux. (53) The League had as its explicit goal the destruction of race prejudice. It also sought to highlight the economic, political and educational demands of the African youth. (54)

This was the first time since 1920 that the communists began taking an interest in the African community again. In 1924 the Communist Party had not yet been able to fully assimilate the policy directives of the Comintern. As a result the Party was still very much influenced by the precedents set by the British Communist Party. It was only in 1925 that a strong interest in African workers as in the years between 1917 and 1920, was able to grow again. (55)

There were two major conferences of 'blacks' and 'whites' in the Transvaal in 1923. The Dutch Reformed Church had convened a conference in Johannesburg and the Government another in Pretoria. The tenor of these conferences was remarkably similar. The Johannesburg Conference confirmed the presence of an attempt to shift attention away from workers issues as well as to seek some palliative to the burgeoning urban consciousness of the African population in general. The conference recommended, with regard to the Urban Areas Act, the adoption of leasehold tenure "to meet the legitimate aspirations of the native for security of tenure." It commended the policy of segregation embraced in the Act, but said that total segregation was neither possible nor desirable. It strongly recommended that a special place in African education be found for Biblical and doctrinal knowledge. There is "no force like religion for raising the native." (56)

The conference in Johannesburg was well supported by the Joint Councils. In the short time in which the Joint Council in Johannesburg had come to establish itself, it had played a leading role in the activities of the African people in Johannesburg. One of the earliest projects of the Joint Council was the building of a social centre for Africans in Johannesburg. This centre was called the Bantu Men's Social Centre and served for many years as the hub of Johannesburg's cultural and recreational activities for the African population. In addition the Council also promoted schemes in the community parallel to the scouts movement and the Girls guides.

The Council also served as an important intermediary between the Town Council, the Government and the African population. In 1923 the Town Council had issued a notice informing the African community that accommodation was available for 500 single Africans at various compounds in the city. The notice also warned that any African not staying in a compound or on his 'European' employer's residence was liable to prosecution. There was absolutely no reaction to the notice from the African community. A deputation from the African community met with some members of the Town Council accompanied by Howard Pim and Phillips of the Joint Council. The deputation said that the single accommodation offered for the "blanket native is quite

unsuitable for a considerable class of natives who have, to some extent, adopted European modes of living, possess their own furniture, value privacy and are prepared to pay for more acceptable housing." The deputation complained of the lack of discrimination as regards the various African classes which were to be housed in Johannesburg. (57)

During the few years before the operation of the Urban Areas Act was introduced, there was a general absence of crisis conditions in the city. When the Act was brought into operation in 1925 there was severe dislocation in the city. Major changes occurred which were accompanied by a reawakening of the mood of dissatisfaction. In the climate before the oncoming of this fresh wave of unrest, the Joint Council was able to stamp itself as the dominant vehicle of expression of the urban African voice.

N O T E S

1. See chapter five
2. Hobart-Houghton The South African Economy p43
3. Van der Horst Native Labour p240
4. Rand Daily Mail 25/3/1924
5. No.doubt there were many people who "cashed in" on the network. In that many people had become traders and small merchants within this structure, it is possible that they gravitated closer to a petty-bourgeois way of thinking than a workers consciousness
6. This information needs to be researched more thoroughly before one can make any conclusive remarks about the extent and precise definition of its character and implications. It does appear though, that coupled with the thriving liquor trade in the locations and back-streets of Johannesburg, there existed a wide mechanism for the procuring and distribution of commodities which were either in scarce supply or beyond the purchasing power of many people. This information is derived from extensive conversations with people who used to live in the Malay Location, Doornfontein etc. The trade was not the monopoly of any particular group. It seems that the 'back-door' business network was shared by several people of very different origin.
7. Rand Daily Mail 27/5/1921
8. Rand Daily Mail 6/4/1921
9. Pim Papers. Wits A881/Fa 9/7-9. Henderson in the Concert Room of the JHB YMCA 19/4/1919
10. Pim Papers Joint Council Memorandum, undated but probably during 1922. On the Mining Industry Board. Fa 9/7
11. Pim Papers Report of the Wages Committee 19/8/1921 Fa 95
12. Ibid

13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. Pim Papers Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. Report of the Pass Law Committee on Native Registration and Protection Bill 1923
16. Ibid
17. SNA Box 338. Pritchards evidence before the Local Government Commission
18. SNA Box 216 Fulford, District Commandant SAP East Rand Boksburg to Deputy Commissioner Pretoria 29/4/1919
19. SNA Box 338 Op Cit
20. Rand Daily Mail 18/2/1921
21. Ibid
22. Rand Daily Mail 8/6/1921
23. Rand Daily Mail 29/4/1921
24. Pim Papers 27/5/1921 Johannesburg Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. Report and Recommendations of a select committee.... to consider and report on the Native Urban Areas Bill
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Ibid
28. Ibid
- 29.. Ibid
30. Ibid. Addendum by SH Msimang
31. Ibid H Pim and Selby H Msimang. Report on Native (Urban Areas) Bill 1923
32. Rand Daily Mail 29/4/1921. Statement by RL Weir Chairman of the Finance Committee of the JHB Town Council

33. Statutes of the Union of South Africa Act
No. 21 of 1923
34. Ibid
35. Umteteli wa Bantu 26/5/1923
36. Rand Daily Mail 10 and 11/11/1921
37. Rand Daily Mail 29/11/1921
38. Ibid
39. Star 16/9/1922
40. Rand Daily Mail 28/2/1922
41. Cope Collection University of the Witwatersrand.
A paper titled 'The Rand Revolt; Causes and Effects'
42. Rand Daily Mail 13/2/1922
43. Rand Daily Mail 9/3/1922
44. Rand Daily Mail 3/5/1922
45. Rand Daily Mail 1/8/1922 and 28/8/1922
46. Rand Daily Mail 31/8/1922
47. Rand Daily Mail 30/11/1922
48. Rand Daily Mail 16/9/1922
49. Rand Daily Mail 14/11/1922
50. Rand Daily Mail 21/5/1922
51. Star 22/5/1922
52. Star 19/10/1922
53. The International 4/1/1924
54. Ibid
55. Roux, Time Longer than Rope p202
56. Umteteli wa Bantu 6/10/1923
57. Pim Papers. Municipal Council of Johannesburg.
Housing of Natives 26/1/1923 File 955

CHAPTER FIVE :THE ICU IN THE WILDERNESS : 1921 - 1924

During the years 1921 to the beginning of 1925, worker leaders displayed not only a political ineptness, but allowed the labour movement to degenerate into a disparate formation where even the elementary trade union function of their organisations was permitted to lapse. This period witnessed the complete control of the leaders over their organisations, and saw the diminishing of direct worker participation, in the labour movement. Another outstanding feature of this period was the inconsistent direction in which leaders, especially Kadalie, led the labour organisations. One is led to conclude that the unprincipled behaviour of people such as Kadalie, gave (them) the opportunity of making (and destroying) alliances as such alliances generated (or failed to generate) certain advantages. In the case of the ICU, such advantages were mainly those of recognition and acceptability by the authorities. (This chapter chronologically links with chapter three.)

In 1921 the break between Kadalie and Msimang cemented and resulted in the splintering of the movement into two separate divisions. The ICU, with Msimang at the helm, sought to maintain the impression that it was the official representative of the unfranchised workers.

In July of 1921, the ICU held its second annual conference

in the heart of ICU territory in N'dabeni in Cape Town. The conference had a strong contingent of representatives from Cape Town, although Kadalie himself did not attend. Bennet Ncwana, who was still a member of the ICU, and Nyombolo were present and spoke of the need for co-operation between the two organisations. (1) (It must be remembered that it was Ncwana who suggested the ICU retain its own identity.) The conference was certainly not an impressive affair. As Imvo Zabantsundu reported: "All the stock grievances were ransacked..." (2) The grievances were the pass question, the cost of living, low wages and farm labour conditions. Msimang proposed a system of voluntary influx control and intensified exploitation of the wealth of the rural areas as an effort to improve the condition of the economy.

The conference was significant for its emphasis on the need for moderation. It was claimed that moderation would find for the workers a more secure place in the political and industrial hierarchy. The anti-militant tone of the conference, even though routinely condemning the several strictures on the African people, was powered through by Msimang who perhaps blanketly berated Kadalie and Masabalala: "We have been often tempted..... to force the issues when peaceful negotiations might have produced better and more lasting results... There had been too many temptations to strike, and such strikes had been organised by people who were ignorant of the

doctrines of trade unionism. These people were ignorant in regard to the great secrets of passive resistance. It will be failing in my duty if I do not warn you against the wild talk which serves merely to rouse the passion of the people...." (3)

Masabalala had in the meanwhile severed his relationship with Msimang, and along with five other delegates from the Eastern Province, went over to the ICU. They were received enthusiastically by the ICU and it was agreed that the ICU would convene a conference in Port Elizabeth. Kadalie claimed that he did not attend the ICWU conference because the "ICU stood for constitutionalism." (4)

The ICU then absorbed Masabalala's fraction of the ICWU and the 'grass fire' was set alight. The competing conference of the ICU was held in October of 1921. Essentially, the tone of the Cape Town ICWU conference was repeated. Demands and tactical approaches were marked by the same degree of reformism. President Gumbs said, with regard to the 'White' man's methods : " in organising they did not aim at inflammatory propoganda, or conspiracy against the government, but merely to combine with a view of alleviating the working conditions of the people who contributed most to production." (5)

The conference was a weaving and compromising affair with much disagreement over which of the 'white' political parties to support. In large, potential division existed on the grounds of finding a bourgeois fraction which

could provide a most profitable alliance. In the end, the 'black' middle-class organisations were acknowledged as the most useful bridge. At the same time the Union attempted to assert its strictly industrial nature.

"This organisation resolves unreservedly to dissociate itself from any political body whatever, but declares that its objectives are solely to propagate the industrial, economic and social advancement of all the African workers through industrial action on constitutional lines; and it is further resolved that this organisation does not foster antagonism towards other established bodies, political or otherwise of the African people, and that this resolution be inserted in the constitution of the organisation." (6)

Amongst the resolutions accepted at the conference were the following : the call for African representation at the International Labour Conference; the demand for improved living conditions for African and 'coloured' farm labourers; the call for the appointment of a commission of enquiry into the conditions of labour on the mines; the conference expressed the demand that a sanatorium be built for phthisis victims and that the pass regulations in the Transvaal and Free State be repealed. Finally, La Guma, who had just returned from South West Africa, encouraged the adoption of a resolution empowering the conference to send a delegate to the territory to report on the conditions there. The conference also despatched telegrams of protest to the government with regard to the conditions of compensation to be paid to the victims of the 1920 riot in the town. (7)

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The conference of 1921 offered the ICU an opportunity to organise workers according to well programmed principles. Yet few political lessons were learnt. Kadalie, in assuming leadership of an expanded ICU, played on the disturbances at Port Elizabeth to win over the workers there. Once the numbers were expanded, however, he offered only feeble protests against the contract labour system and the Pass laws. Furthermore, no clear guidance was given as to what action the workers could undertake. It appeared that he was too scared to alienate the more respectable political organisations such as the African National Congress and the APO. In this way a route to rapprochement with the older organisations was kept clear. At the same time the terrain of wages and industry could be safeguarded as an ICU preserve.

However, it was necessary to establish this political link, since the ICU's economistic terrain was cut from under its feet (if only temporarily though), because the economy was on the way to recovery. Under these conditions the workers were less impelled to sustain protracted labour disputes and strikes. If the economic sore-point was losing attention, there then still existed the more blatant political disabilities of the workers and here the ICU, despite the presence of the ANC, was able to provide a platform for the workers.

Kadalie spent a great deal of time in the Eastern Province in 1922. He claimed to have re-organised the Port

Elizabeth branch of the ICU. (8) The branch was brought onto a proper trade-union footing, according to Kadalie, and one of the ICU's most able organisers, La Guma, was installed as the secretary there. (9) Kadalie spent some time in East London where the workers there were also brought within the fold of the ICU.

The ICU did not have the customary annual conference in 1922. It was only in 1923 that another conference was summoned. In a certain sense, the ICU could be said to have spent the year in relative calm, consolidating the branches in the Cape Province, especially those in the large centres of Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town.

The major event of 1922 was the Rand Revolt. It was seen in Chapter four that the African workers in Johannesburg had maintained a deliberate distance from the events. This could have given the ICU a direct cue for the analysis of the political and social situation in South Africa. The 'white' workers were resisting the metropolitan fraction of the bourgeoisie because that fraction was endangering its privileged status. ('White' workers did not put this specific construction on their struggle. They saw their revolt as being against capitalists at large.) By suggesting the enhanced usage of 'black' labour and rationalising

this labour force, the metropolitan fraction of capital would have had to dismiss a large proportion of its 'white' labour component. The ICU failed to recognize that the intention was to exploit the African labour supply more thoroughly, and instead fastened its attention on the racial aspects of the unrest only. It condemned "the murderous onslaught on defenceless, peaceful non-Europeans" and requested the government to protect the lives of the African people. The ICU blamed the colour bar for the trouble, which they felt ought to have been abolished. The Union called on the African and 'coloured' people to assist the authorities "while giving unswerving loyalty to the Government, King and country." A Communist motion calling for support for the strike on the grounds that "defeat would mean defeat for all classes, both black and white" was rejected. (10)

The event did allow a simmering hostility to the 'white' workers to develop more clearly. The predominant effect of the strike was to cause a real polarization between the two fractions of the working class to come about. As Roux says, there was a grim logic in the stances taken by both sections of the working class. (11) Be this as it may, the colour and race definition of the South African problem was strengthened by this happening. Both sections of the working class were hereby provided with conditions wherein each side saw the other as the

main impediment to their progress. Kadalie, presuming that the 'white' workers were now in disfavour with the government, led a delegation to the Minister of Mines and Industry pleading for the legitimate recognition of his own union as the most representative of all workers in the country. (12)

The remaining two years before 1925 saw little development in the ICU's political sophistication. There were two important conferences, in Cape Town in 1923 and in East London in 1924. Altogether the ICU proceeded with very muddled ideas and conceptions. It embroiled itself in discussion with everybody and issued statements which frequently were contradictory and specious. The innumerable occasions on which the Union recrafted its image and its stance were perhaps symptomatic of the malaise in which Kadalie had landed the Union. The direction of the organisation was perhaps chiefly Kadalie's portfolio. In that it appeared to be whimsical, this was entirely due to the inconsistent character of Kadalie himself.

The third conference of the ICU was held in Cape Town from the 17th to the 25th of January in 1923. Once again the conference was remarkable for its tameness. Despite the events of Bulhoek and Port Elizabeth, and the Revolt on the Rand, the ICU stolidly sat in a political limbo.

The conference, however, was attended by the illustrious Tom Mann. Also present were Thomas Boydell, later to become the Minister of Labour in the Pact Government, Robert Stuart of the Cape Federation of Labour Unions, and other important figures. (13) Even though, as Johns says, the invitation to Mann indicated an interest in socialism by the ICU the connection with communism was sharply repudiated. (14) Tom Mann's speeches did not dilate on the importance of communism, instead he congratulated the ICU on its achievements and called on the ICU to maintain close ties with the Cape Federation. (15)

The ICU claimed that the press was making capital of Mann's presence at the conference. Kadalie said that this suspicion was fuelled by the appearance of the African Voice, the newspaper edited by Bennet Ncwana and Nyembolo, "which kept up its vicious attack on the ICU and me." (16) Indeed Kadalie took great effort to deny the charge. He reaffirmed the resolution of political non-alignment made at the Port Elizabeth conference of 1921.

Some weeks after the conference he was still holding forth on the non-alignment of the ICU with political organisations. However, he decried the proliferation of organisations, viz, the Bantu Union, the SANNC, the APO which catered for political needs, and the ICU and the ICWU for industrial needs, "...all of us aiming at

one goal." He spoke of the negotiations which were underway for the reunion of the ICU and the ICWU and the alliances which the ICU was encouraging with the other political organisations. "We (all these organisations) propose to petition parliament for the removal of the colour bar in the name of seven million Africans, and white labour and employers of labour will then recognise and more freely respond to the demands of the African workers." (17)

At the conference, the 'white' workers rather than the government, were made the principal objects of attack and made to carry the blame for the increasing displacement of African workers on the Railway and in other fields of employment. (18) As, Wickins says, the government did not come in for the vicious attacks which characterised later conferences. (19) Other results of the conference were that it was decided to erect a memorial for the victims of the Port Elizabeth shootings in 1920. (20) A proposal was also made to send a delegation to the government to secure better compensation for the victims of the riots. Furthermore, the questions of unemployment, wages and working conditions were aired once again. A resolution for a minimum wage was also proposed, which, as Wickins suggests, "appears to accept wage differentials based on race." The preamble spoke of "the right of every workman, whatever he may be, to an income sufficient

to enable him to maintain his family in civilised comfort, in Christian decency and citizenship, in physical efficiency and material comfort and social amenity of his respective class or community..." (Wickins' emphasis)(21)
 (It is not necessarily true that the inference is the ordering of wages according to race lines, why cannot it be according to class lines?)

Other issues broached at the conference included the question of education, African representation at the International Labour Conference, and, inter alia, the need for building a headquarters in Cape Town for the ICU and the establishment of a printing press for the Union. As Kadalie says, the building programme did not materialize, "but the newspaper for the Union was inaugurated and was christened by me as its editor, the Workers' Herald." (22)

Kadalie had expressed the hope that the ICU would win the support of the mineworkers on the Rand. He had gone as far as extending an invitation to the Transvaal Mines' Clerks' Association to attend the ICU conference. (The Association had lost the favour of the Chamber of Mines in October of 1922.) As a result the Association withdrew its membership of the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives in Johannesburg. Gajana, the general secretary, said, "I may mention that the only reasons that had been made by Mr Taberer to the deputation that had interviewed him prior to the withdrawal of the recognition,

was that myself and the President of the Association had written certain letters calculated to be bad."(23) The Association in disarray, the invitation of the ICU came to nought. Instead the ICU concentrated its organising thrust on the Free State. At the beginning of the conference the Union claimed to have seventeen branches which were registered in Cape Town. (24) The northward move of the organisation was consolidated in 1923. In August Kadalie went to Bloemfontein where he set up a branch of the organisation. (25)

Branches were certainly flourishing in the Cape Province. The direction and attitude which these branches adopted is significant. The De Aar branch took pains to correct the image which the ICU had gained. It was reported that the secretary of the branch had said that because the ICU had not been widely known, people "therefore think of it very badly or think that it is a political movement that will stir the people against the government. That is wrong... What the ICU wants is a civilized African all round, not a troublesome people or strikes and the like futile means.... it must be a non-rebellious movement... We are solely responsible for our position at present, it is not the employer who is much to blame... The ICU has made more Christians than the churches have made all these years in De Aar..." (26) There were certainly branches where the ICU had simply come to replace the Congress and what it stood for, and

despite the emphasis of the Union's non-political nature, the Union had come to represent an all embracing African organisation representing general grievances.

In the middle of April Kadalie was warning the "African races" of the attempt to turn South Africa into a 'white' country. He said that the future of the African people depended on unity and drew an analogy with the British working class. "In our review of history we gain also this knowledge that the British workers first centred action to secure a proper standard of working and better conditions of labour. Today we find that they are able to shape the political, industrial and social destinies of the British people." He sought the unification of all the organisations in South Africa into one big union. He claimed that the first fruit of this policy was the reuniting of the ICU and the ICWU. (27)

However, the other organisations were too intent on pursuing their own goals, or were not people who would easily work with Kadalie. Bennet Ncwana was in the process of setting up his Griqualand West Native Voters' Association, to support the South African Party, which was causing a great stir in the columns of the Umteteli wa Bantu. Msimang and Tyamzashe entered into a debate on the question, the former contending that the blatant support of one political party was incorrect and Tyamzashe claiming that the SA Party was the only party

which was providing any hope for the African people.(28)
The Congress itself was at one of its lowest points.
It felt anger against the British for failing to
protect 'aboriginal interests'. "The time has come
when Bantu people should consider the advisability of
supporting a republican form of government for this
country." (29)

The International could not help but remark on the
inconsistent character of the ICU. It said that in
one article it could affirm its non-political character,
and then in yet another be able to say that "Not until
the Africans become thoroughly alive and informed in
modern thought and the march of events, sociologically,
industrially, educationally and politically, in both
their local and international aspects and their true
meaning and significance for the race and oppressed
class in general, are they capable of any leadership
worth the name." The International further remarked
that the ICU repudiated the 3rd International and
regretted that the South African Labour Party did not
scrap its socialist objectives. The International
hinted that the attacks of the ICU on the 3rd Inter-
national, the colour bar and the 'white' workers suggested
influence behind the ICU not unlike that of the Unteteli
wa Bantu. (30)

It commented further that the Workers' Herald voiced
the demand for lower pay to Africans as compared to

'whites', on the ground that with equal pay the employer would always prefer a 'white' employee." Indeed it is worth noting that the Herald recognizes distinctions among non-Europeans too when it claims "equal rights for all civilized men and just and fair treatment for all others", which seems to unmask its propoganda as a championship of 'civilised' natives only. " (31)

The International was probably reacting to the ICU's communist antipathy. However its comment on the ICU's inconsistency was well justified.

Well into the year the ICU was still playing up the colour bar issue. In October the Workers' Herald said

"Will the white workers of South Africa, particularly those of the Rand, take a leaf out of the book of the Government and the Dutch Reformed Church and convene a conference of both black and white workers to discuss the abolition of the colour bar in our industries." (32)

" These varied stances of the ICU indicated the floundering condition in which the Union was, both politically and ideologically. While it was able to lambast the 'white' workers, it could, not long afterwards, make conciliatory gestures with them. It is possible that the Union's efforts at creating one big all-in organisation were unsuccessful. Indeed, the reunion with the ICWU never materialised, nor did any tangible rapprochement with either the APO or the SANNC come about.

At a mass meeting in Cape Town on the 9th December Kadalie, not at his most eloquent, indicated that the attempt to repair the breach between the ICU and the ICWU had not succeeded. The ICWU, under Nyombolo and Ncwana, had consistently been flinging the accusation at the ICU that it was a tool for the communists. At the meeting Kadalie said, "I accept...the challenge issued by the enemies of the ICU who are misleading the workers when they insist that we are the emissaries of the Bolsheviks, which is far from the truth..."(33) In the Workers' Herald he condemned the 'capitalist' press.

"You keep on making noises... about Bolshevism as a dangerous doctrine, frightening the African native... No African leader will join any political movement purporting to upset any constitution... In no time in the history of the African people of this vast continent is it recorded of rebellion against constituted authority (sic), whereas we read of Cromwellian revolution in Great Britain... Give us what we desire, economic freedom, we must have a say in the affairs of our country, and for God's sake do not make Bolshevism as an excuse."(34)

The rest of the article carried some of Kadalie's more forceful rhetoric.

"Workers of this land...how long shall you halt between two ways? Your bosses have a nice time of your labour...Through it it was possible to build these great cities in South Africa. You were forced to dig the earth, you brought from hell gold, diamonds, copper and coal, some piled in the bank of England... Your wives and children, yourselves included, are continually sweating making the white man and women's life so easy, practically living in a paradise, while you are condemned to live in hell. The reason why the

white man's press is against the ICU today is because we have directed you to eat of the forbidden fruit in the centre of the garden." (35)

This prelude to the 1924 Conference in East London prompted Unteteli to say "We fear that some of them will be unable to resist the temptation to play to the gallery, and that their speeches will be virulent merely because virulence usually evokes applause..." (36) However, the more important index of the December performance was Kadalie's attack on Bolshevism and his subsequent utilisation of a socialist analysis to explain the hostility which the ICU had incurred.

When the conference did finally come about in January of 1924, a more distinct picture emerged of the direction in which Kadalie wished the ICU to move. The conference was opened by James Stuart, a member of the Legislative Assembly, who claimed "that he was one of those whites who believed that it was a crime to keep the African race down." (37) A more significant addition to the conference was the enlistment of the support of Professor DDT Jabavu.

Professor Jabavu's speech contained a mixture of admiration and advice.

"The speaker said that he came to the conference as an outsider, yet an admirer of the work performed by the organisation...He was a staunch supporter of the work and believed in the cause of Africa which the movement advocated... It was through the combined effort of the African

labourer that the ultimate victory of the race could be accomplished. It had been very often said by the opponents of their movements that they stood for strikes. He was there to tell them that an industrial strike was not a crime nor a sin against any government: a strike was a protest. They were on the right road building an African civilisation...What was desired was the bringing together of all other rival unions into one organised whole. They should sink all their racial differences... He was once told by a respectable white man that the coloured people were the enemies of the blacks...This was not true, and they should concentrate their minds to bring together the two sections of the African people, coloured and native, with a view to building up a new strong united race...."

He also spoke of the need for the leaders to use moderate language and to take the example of the American negro who "while they had many educated men among them, yet they were bound to respect their chosen leaders."(38)

Dr Rubusana also attended the conference, and claimed to have assisted the organisation in the locality. Tengo Jabavu's other son, AM Jabavu also solidly gave the Union his support. (He was the editor of Imvo.) Herein a precedent was set for incorporating a distinct non-worker element into the organisation. Although the ICU gained more respectability from the support of these gentlemen, the Union also edged closer to the orbit of influence of the 'educated' African and hereby made available a stronger plank for the conciliatory middle-class voice amongst the African people.

The rest of the conference revealed a desire for winning

the support of the British trade unions and the Labour Party who were distinctly bourgeois in flavour. A resolution was proposed by Kadalie

"That this conference of the ICU watched with great interest and satisfaction the steady ascendance of Labour in the Imperial Parliament, and hopes that the increased representation will be used to secure better conditions for the workers in the United Kingdom and ultimately for all workers in their several homelands, including the worst paid toilers, the African workers of the Union of South Africa."

A similar resolution of congratulation was sent to Margaret Bondfield who had gained election into the House of Commons. (39)

La Guma and Thaele moved a resolution expressing the disappointment of the conference "

" with that portion of Colonel Creswell's recent Pretoria speech which justified the Nationalist-Labour Pact on the ground of combined opposition of the two parties thereto to what the labour leader described as the Government's policy of employing non-Europeans in spheres of labour hitherto preserved for Europeans. Such attitude irreparably injures many reasonable prospects of co-operation between European and non-European workers and delays the triumph of the ideals of trade unionism and the consummation of labour rule in this land...." (40)

The year of 1924 was a high level mark of political naiveté stretching across the representatives of 'black' opinion, be it from the workers' quarters or that of the aspirant bourgeois. In the ICU, and possibly in the ANC as well, there were at least the indications of an infant nationalism, and to this extent it represented

one face of the reformist direction the ideology of these movements was taking. It is naive to expect that they would become radical, since their pre-consciousness in establishing their organisations was decidedly one which emphasized the procuring of equal rights. The ICU although, not as much of a *manque-bourgeoisie* as the ANC, certainly had all the potential to become this way. In the ICU's history up to the point of the 1924 conference, there always lurked the wish for gaining recognition, respectability and acceptability by the bourgeoisie.

It is perhaps with this insight that we can understand how the ICU expressed a call to the British labour movement. It was from a movement which did not have the racial prejudices, which the Labour Party of South Africa had in abundance, that perhaps some solution would be forthcoming. This approach saw the British Labour Party as being close to the Imperial nerve centres (which still had some sway over the South African Union) and thereby potentially very powerful in influencing the determination of the South African question. This desire was also supplemented by that of regret at the failure of unity to come about with the 'white' labour movement in South Africa. This desire for rapport was consonant with the overall thrust of the Union to wend its way into associations with several less than radical organisations.

This reformism was expressed at another level. At the conference much discussion arose about the possibility of putting up representatives of the organisation at Provincial and municipal elections. The International commented that there was far more important work for the ICU to do. It quoted the examples of the need for organising workers in big industries, the instruction of the workers in the history and meaning of the labour movement. (41) The International questioned the ability of the ICU to carry out such a task, yet felt that there was no other organisation vaguely capable of fulfilling that function. In fact it seemed that Kadalie did not appreciate the elementary trade union functions of the ICU, such criticism was thus wasted.

A high point of the ICU's reformist and opportunistic ideology was the event of the 1924 national elections. Even after the conference in January, when the Union had made moves to establish an alliance with the British Labour movement and the local aspirant-bourgeois African, the ICU was still politically uncommitted to any South African 'white' political party. To resolve this shortcoming, Kadalie set about organising the All African Convention.

Kadalie, with Ncwana and Masabala, issued an invitation to leaders of organisations representing the 'non-Europeans'

to attend a meeting where it would be decided which party to support at the pending election. Amongst the organisations invited were the ANC, the APO, the Cape Native Voters' Association, the ICU, the Inter-Racial Association, the South African Indian Congress, the Federation of Native Teachers and the Cape Province Farmers' Association. (42) In Cape Town the United non-European Congress was formed, which had as its purpose the "protecting and furthering of the educational, commercial, political and industrial rights of the non-European of South Africa." The organisations which were claimed to be affiliates were the APO, the ANC, the ICU, the Cape British Indian Council, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the South African Inter-Racial Association. The International commented that "This is the inevitable result of the anti-Asiatic and anti-native policy of the government and of a large proportion of the white people of South Africa." (43)

Kadalie's Convention failed to materialise though. The reason for its failure was largely the boycott stance which the ICU had adopted in May of that year. At a meeting at the Parade in Cape Town, presided over by Thaele, the audience was moved to support the main speaker, Johnson Dilwati, when he said that he was forced to come to the conclusion "that a black man should never cast a vote in favour of a white man."

A resolution was taken at the meeting that

"This meeting... resolves that in view of the fact that the SAP has no constructive policy for the non-European races and that the Hertzog-Creswell Pact comes with no clearly defined policy other than that of 'divide and rule' the Cape African National Congress is now adopting the slogan of 'no policy no vote'." (44)

This performance ruled out the possibility of co-operation with the APO and Ncwana's Native Voters' Association, both these organisations being firmly committed to the SAP.

Furious canvassing of the 'non-European' vote was carrying on in May by both the Nationalists and the SAP. Dr Abdurahman was the SAP's chief drawcard. He made an extensive tour of the Cape Province to rally support for the SAP. Hertzog, on the other hand was not allowing the 'black' vote to be stolen from him. He made a point of visiting important constituencies where the 'black' vote was potentially decisive. At Upington he put the choice to the 'coloured' electorate there as being between 'Nasiona-lisme en Kapitalisme.' (45) "Hy het verklaar dat hy nie kan sien waarom arm Kleurlinge nie dieselfde reg as arm blankes sal he om by die Regering om hulp aan te klop nie... en waarom hul kleur hulle moet belet om hulp van die Landbank te verkry nie." (46) However, he had not yet been able to convince the leaders of the ANC and the ICU to support him.

Support did come soon though, and there occurred a dramatic about-face of the policy of the ICU and the ANC. These two organisations, under the stewardship of Kadalie and Thaele in the Cape, moved that all efforts be made to assist the removal of the SAP from Government. This move in effect amounted to a vote of support for the Pact. With this fresh conviction Kadalie, Msabalala, Dlwati and Thaele went to Bloemfontein where the ANC was holding its national conference.

At the conference the chief issue was the election question. A resolution in favour of the Smuts' Government was moved by the Reverend ZR Mahabane. The ICU on the other hand, tendered a resolution "That a change of Government was necessary and would be in the best interests of South Africa." Kadalie said that he "reminded the conference about the sins of the Government in power...When the vote was taken and declared by the 'Speaker', the ICU counter-motion was carried by a large majority..." (47)

Sol Plaatje was not slow in reacting to this development.

"I am reliably informed that SM Makgatho, Selope-Thema, President and Secretary... were not at Bloemfontein last week. Mr JT Gumede and the National Executive were not there. Reverend E Mdolomba, president of the Cape Province Executive was not there. Last week I saw nearly all of the executive members of the Transvaal

Native Congress. They did not go to Bloemfontein. Mr JL Dube, the ex-president and all the past secretaries of the SANC were absent...who the dickens was there? And on whose authority do they bind us to the Pact...some people must be "nicely fixed" in these hard times to be able to go to Bloemfontein, talk up and formulate so much mischief at one meeting." (48)

Kadalie was certainly there. He described the result as "My first major political victory." (49) His motives for pushing through the resolution emerged in the actual motion which was proposed and accepted.

"That whereas the policy of the Union Government since the inauguration of the Union in 1910 has been inimical to the best interests of the black population and other non-European communities of this land; and whereas this Congress in July 1923 passed a vote of no confidence in General Smuts as Minister of Native Affairs, the Congress therefore feels convinced that the interests of the people of South Africa will be served if the non-European voters of the Cape Province should vote solidly for a change of government." (50)

It is strange that Kadalie took so long to express his opposition to the SAP. Clearly the point at issue was not simply that hostility to one party would automatically count as support for the other. Sylvia Neame suggests that a financial link existed between the ICU and the Nationalists. It is true that not long after the Bloemfontein resolution the Workers' Herald had an election issue printed gratis by the Nationalists. However, there is no clear documentary evidence that a more visible money link existed. (51) Obviously the

Nationalists did jump at the opportunity afforded by the Bloemfontein resolution, and, apart from their offer to print the Workers' Herald, they made arrangements for the printing of 10,000 copies of the Bloemfontein resolution.

Hertzog, thereafter, was visited by Kadalie and others. It was here that a more secure alliance was arranged between Kadalie and Hertzog. Kadalie and Masabalala then proceeded to Kingwilliam's Town, at the expense of Arthur Barlow, the Labour Assembly representative for Bloemfontein, where the All African Convention was held. (52) The chief purpose of the Convention was to decide which political party should be given African support at the polls.

The Convention had issued a manifesto. Jabavu referred to points in the manifesto pledging the convention's support to any party or candidate which was willing to subscribe to it. The articles in the manifesto were entirely bourgeois in nature. They revolved around the African's access to the Land Bank, the amendment of the Urban Areas Act to allow for freehold tenure, the extension of franchise rights to Africans of other provinces, the amendment of the Native Affairs Act of 1920, a national system of African education and so on. The manifesto also called for the repeal of the colour bar and the Pass Laws. (53)

Kadalie claimed another victory at this conference. "We urged the conference to follow the lead given by the African National Congress in Bloemfontein, and to be guided by the European electors who desired a change of government. In the early hours of the morning we challenged a division on two motions. Our motion for a change of government, as adopted at Bloemfontein, won the day." (54)

Wickins is sceptical of Kadalie's claim to a second victory. Indeed there is no clear picture of the stance taken by the Convention as a whole. The victory which Kadalie claimed was to persuade the Convention to support the party which subscribed to the Manifesto. (55)

Kadalie then returned to Cape Town where he claimed to have received an enthusiastic reception. He said that he had become an important figure in Cape Town, "wherever a Pact speaker, generally a European, got a bad hearing or heckling, I was sent for and rushed to the scene." (56) His autobiography carries, what appears to be, a wholly exaggerated account of his effort toward the Nationalist/Labour Pact electoral machine.

A number of meetings were held in Cape Town under the auspices of the ICU and the ANC. These meetings did not all endorse the initiative taken by Kadalie and Thaele. It was seen above that the old guard of the Congress movement had taken exception to the Bloemfontein

resolution. In Cape Town a meeting of African voters resolved

".... that while this meeting deeply resents and strongly deploras the attitude adopted by certain misleaders, who generally pass wild resolutions on the Parade on behalf of the natives, this meeting pledges itself to support Mr. Allan Fraser in the Liesbeek Division, and all SAP candidates in the other constituencies...."

There were wild cheers for the SAP. (57)

On the other hand there appeared to be a dramatic switch of allegiance amongst the voters assembled on the Parade. On the 10th June a large gathering took place. "Die tyd het aangebreek dat ons moet kies, en spreker hoop dat hierdie vergadering vanaand 'n voorbeeld sal stel vir die ander kleurlinge in die land, deur teen Smuts te stem." (58) Gumbs, Kadalie and Fife, to tumultuous applause, harangued the audience and it emerged that the SAP no longer commanded the support of the so-called 'coloured' people in Cape Town. Fife closed the meeting by saying that the people had "'n Heilige plig om teen Smuts te stem". (59)

After the election and the victory of the Pact Government, the ICU and certain sections in the ANC had much cause to celebrate their victory, although, as Wickins says, their part in the Nationalist victory was a very small one. The Workers' Herald called Abdurahman a traitor to the race which ^{in turn} caused the International to say that a "Nationalist Party Organisation could hardly be more loyal to the new government." (60)

The ANC in Cape Town viewed the end result with satisfaction and asked its supporters to be patient in their criticism of General Hertzog. (61)

Thaele, who had been accorded an interview with Hertzog, came to the Parade to explain the segregation policy of the new government. Thaele commended segregation to the meeting "because it left the black man to govern himself." He explained that Hertzog would give the 'black' his own territory, his own schools and an educational system suited to his needs. (62) Even Kadalie said that "The natives are not scared of this bogey of segregation. Segregation was natural..." (63)

This period is significant for the insights we gain about the political approach of the oppressed groups and their ideology. The ICU introduced no clarity at all, either in its actions or in its statements, about the class nature of the conflict in South Africa. In fact the Union came to mystifying the role of the working class in South Africa. However, this action was hardly unpredictable. Trade unionism in South Africa partook of the politically reformist outlook of the worker and focused on the appearance of economic deprivation. It took its cue from the dominant bourgeois thinking in society and structured its responses in an ideology which itself was essentially bourgeois. In this sense, it was a wholly conservative approach, and was able to

be contained in the kinds of expressions it made, by the predetermined modes of responses contained within bourgeois ideology. (64)

Kadalie's involvement with politics was preceded by his reformist thinking, and "insofar as trade unionism involves politics, this is the politics of reformism." (65) Kadalie's, and other 'black' leaders, responses to the political were designed to obtain concessions, to gain for themselves rights in their specific fields. It was for this reason that Kadalie sought the recognition of the ICU by the bourgeois order. It was also this very reason which caused the ICU to move beyond the normal parameters prescribed by trade unionism and enter into the political sphere where he could negotiate directly with 'white' political parties who controlled the functioning of government. It is not unknown for trade unions to enter the political sphere. However, once the ICU entered into a political circumference its politics was defined by the same quality of consciousness which it possessed in the trade union environment. At the political front the Union acted as an intermediary between its own workers and the government; its function and approach was to secure a feeling of goodwill, so that the Union could receive such rake-offs and benefits which could accrue to it in this atmosphere. (For this reason, it could be argued that the ICU may have seen its approach as embracing

both the political and economic struggles - that its strategy was a total one. Yet, as is argued below, the interest of the ICU in the two areas was not defined by a common analysis applicable to both economics and politics. The economic struggle at the factory level and the political struggle at the political power level represented separate areas of address.) (66)

Once one is able to accept Kadalie's trade unionism and his reformist consciousness, even within the disparate union formation of the ICU, his place within the struggle becomes clearer. However, it is analytically correct to say that Kadalie's involvement with the ANC and other more overt political organisations, represented a search for a solution to his political incapacity (and that of the ICU). Despite the coolness between the ICU and the ANC, it does emerge that a functional relationship was established between them. In this period the ANC was experiencing a weakening of its political base and the ICU, to some extent, was substituting for it. In this manner the ICU then had to take on some of the ANC's roles and its membership, and negotiate the political issues itself. This was an indication of the necessity for the availability of a political vehicle in the African section of the society.

There were thus people and organisations seeking not

only the 'perfectability' of industrial relations in the society, but their own version of political 'perfectability' within the bourgeois order... The ICU, early in the 20s, was already beginning to express both these demands. In the years of 1923 and 1924 wage agitation was at its lowest peak. It was then that the political function of the ICU became dominant. Yet it is essential to grasp that the political front and the economistic front were, so to speak, independent areas of interest. The bosses represented a specific category of interest, and the politically dominant bourgeois fraction, whichever was in power, represented an independent area of address in itself. Thus the underlying reality of low wages, for example, was mystified by an isolation of that superficially economic fact "from the economic-political context of the capitalist mode within which alone it has its being." (67)

This represents, in embryo at least, a finer perception of the actions and ideology of the ICU in the early twenties. As we shall see, the developments of the 1925 period and after, reflected the increasingly subtle and complex actions and reactions of the ICU in its attempts to resolve and justify its position within the working class.

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What remains to be said here, is that the move from an

exclusively Cape based organisation to a more national organisation had a dynamism of its own which caused great dislocation and flux within the ICU. In the Cape the Union had a predominantly 'coloured' membership, yet beyond Cape Town the membership became increasingly African. In fact this goes some way to explaining the timid reaction of the ICU to the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, as well as the Urban Areas Act of 1923.

NOTES

1. Wickins The ICU p173
2. Imvo Zabantsundu 2/8/1921, cited by Wickins Op cit p173
3. Wickins Op cit p176
4. Ibid p178
5. Ibid p180 quoting from the Cape Times 26/10/1921
6. Sheridan Johns lll. The birth of Non-White Trade Unionism in South Africa in Race p186..
7. Rand Daily Mail 29/10/1921
8. Kadalie. My Life and the ICU p53
9. Ibid
10. Roux. Time Longer than Rope p151
11. Ibid
12. Sheridan Johns lll Op Cit p187. The shortage of jobs for 'black' labour may have been another reason for this visit to the minister
13. Kadalie. My Life p55
14. Johns. Op Cit p188
15. Wickins Op Cit p218
16. Kadalie Op Cit p55
17. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/4/1923
18. Wickins Op Cit p218
19. Ibid
20. The International lauded this move and felt impelled to comment that African worker organisation was progressing. International 2/2/1923
21. Wickins Op Cit p220 quoting from Cape Times 23/1/1923
22. Kadalie Op Cit p57
23. Pim Papers B1 2/19. General Secretary of Tvl Mine Clerks' Association to Howard Pim 4/10/1922

24. Kadalie, Op Cit p55
25. Wickins Op Cit p197
26. Umteteli wa Bantu 17/3/1923
27. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/4/1923
28. See Umteteli wa Bantu 14/4/1923, 21/4/1923, 12/5/1923
29. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/7/1923
30. International 18/5/1923
31. Ibid
32. The International 26/10/1923
33. The International 4/1/1924
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
36. Umteteli wa Bantu 19/1/1924
37. Umteteli wa Bantu 2/2/1924
38. Umteteli wa Bantu 2/2/1924
39. Ibid
40. Ibid
41. The International 11/1/1924
42. Wickins Op Cit p228
43. The International 18/4/1924
44. Umteteli wa Bantu 3/5/1924
45. Die Burger 14/5/1924
46. Ibid
47. Kadalie, My Life p58
48. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/6/1924
49. Kadalie Op Cit p58
50. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/6/1924
51. Sylvia Neame p140

52. Kadalie Op Cit p59
53. Umteteli wa Bantu 24/5/1924
54. Kadalie, My Life p60
55. Wickins Op Cit p234
56. Kadalie Op Cit p60
57. Rand Daily Mail 17/6/1924
58. Die Burger 11/6/1924
59. Ibid
60. The International 11/7/1924
61. Die Burger 1/7/1924
62. Umteteli wa Bantu 5/7/1924
63. Wickins Op Cit p239 quoting from the Cape Times 11/6/1924
64. See J Grossman Trade Unionism and Revolution, UCT p40
65. Ibid p44
66. The amorphous shape which the ICU had taken on introduces an element of confusion into an analysis of the ICU. It is essential to realise, no matter how much the political function of the Union obfuscated its definition and categorization, that the ICU was first and foremost a trade Union. And because of this trade union definition it could not play a revolutionary political role. Trade unions generally have a stake in the preservation of the capitalist system. In the instance of the ICU a development beyond the trade union framework was impossible because of the absence of a revolutionary party with which the Union could have coalesced.
67. Ibid p49

CHAPTER SIX :THE ICU ON THE RAND; THE ICU AND THE COMMUNISTS - 1925

1.

When Kadalie and the ICU came to Johannesburg, they entered a more rarified political climate. The responses Kadalie would encounter were not to be those of indifference, people were passionately either for or against him. The CP was an organization which viewed the ICU's arrival on the Rand with favour. This chapter deals with the relationship between the ICU and the CP, and the implications of this relationship. It will be suggested that there was a great deal of opportunism on the parts of both the ICU and the CP in contracting such a relationship.

In July of 1924 Kadalie was sent on a national organizing tour by the ICU. He reached Durban in the middle of July. The local authorities in Durban rejected Kadalie's applications to address public meetings. This permission was withheld for six weeks until Kadalie managed to secure the help of JT Gumede of the ANC, and Mabel Palmer, a sympathetic writer. (1) While waiting for permission to be granted, Kadalie apparently had set about establishing a branch of the ICU. "Every evening, workers engaged at the Point, Durban Harbour, particularly wagon drivers, came to see me at my temporary headquarters and were enrolled as members of the ICU." (2)

It was through Mabel Palmer that Kadalie was finally allowed to talk at a public meeting. The meeting appeared to be a great success. With the co-operation of Gumede he installed AP Maduna as the secretary of the ICU in Natal.

From Natal Kadalie went to Johannesburg in September. It had been reported that an ICU branch in Johannesburg had been founded in June already. (3) This branch had been formed by Silwana and Mbeki, who, if they were not communists themselves yet, were assisted by members of the Young Communists. (4) The Young Communist League had as their objective the capturing of the 'native youth'. (5) Kadalie was also assisted by Selope-Thema of the local ANC. "I expected some kind of welcome from Congress leaders in Johannesburg. But the contrary was the case. Thema introduced me only to young men." (6)

Officially, through Makgatho, the ANC resented the invasion of the Transvaal by the ICU. However, the ANC itself was not entirely uniform in this feeling. As was seen during the post war disturbances, Mabaso and Mvabaza were considerably more progressive than the rest of the Congress executive. These men were well disposed to Kadalie's attempts to put the ICU on a sound footing in Johannesburg. (7) It is not surprising that the ANC feared the intrusion of the ICU into their base territory. The ANC was in decline

and was by no means strong enough to resist the challenge of a younger body with more popular appeal.

Thus, while the ANC was divided amongst themselves with regard "to the ICU's uninvited intrusion into the Rand, I gathered together my young band consisting of dynamic Thomas Mbeki, Stanley Silwana, Tantsi and Mazingi... With these young men we staged meetings at the various locations during workdays". The ICU appeared to have caused quite a stir in Johannesburg. Meetings were also held in the centre of Johannesburg, if not by Kadalie, then certainly by his new adherents.

"Exciting scenes followed the arrest of two natives on the Market Square, Johannesburg, yesterday afternoon. A crowd of about 500 followed the arrested natives to Marshall Square and thronged the entrance to the charge office for over an hour and a half. The crowd cheered when the men were released on warning to appear in Court this morning.

At about 5 o'clock, for the third evening this week, a large crowd of natives gathered round a group of 4 or 5 smartly dressed compatriots on Market Square yesterday. The chief spokesman... addressed the crowd for some considerable time. He declared himself to be the leader of a movement that had as its aim the organisation of black labour throughout the Union." (8)

The speakers were informed that unless they had the permission of the Town Clerk they were not permitted to hold public meetings.

It was because the pace of the campaign was going too slowly that Kadalie decided to hold meetings in the centre of Johannesburg and distribute handbills.

Kadalie spent two months in Johannesburg where it is not surprising that he incurred the resentment of the ANC. He ostensibly operated in the industrial field, but his sphere of activity took on a political tone which had the predictable effect of drawing Johannesburg's workers (who had been without an organisation of any creditable standing for some years) into the organisation. It is clear that in the few months of the ICU's existence on the Rand it had awakened the aspirations of the working class onto an almost messianic level, where the future was provided with promise for the 'Black Man', a direction which the ANC could not then provide. Thus it is not incredible that within two months over 1000 people had joined the ICU.

During Kadalie's absence from Cape Town, reaction to the Pact Government and 'whites' was growing. The very people who not many months earlier had jubilantly welcomed the change of government, found themselves thoroughly disillusioned by its attitude. Thaele said, in a meeting on the Parade, "We will approach the chiefs to withdraw our people from Johannesburg mines and other industrial centres as much as they can... The only way to make the white man listen to you is to withdraw your industrial and other support."(9)

At N'dabeni an ICU meeting was held where disappointment with the government's policy was expressed.

".....It is evident that the government is not prepared to embark on its policy of complete segregation with the object of governing himself and developing his own civilization without any connecting link with the Parliament of the Union, and whereas the introduction of partial segregation has as its object to create a huge reservoir of cheap labour.... The meeting therefore implores the Union Government, in the best interests of white civilization and of the future of this country, to embark on a policy of equality of opportunity to all men within the circle of its government." (10)

By the time the 1925 ICU annual conference was held the tone of the organisation had changed very perceptibly. There was a feeling that the challenge to the 'black' man had to be taken up. Kadalie's tendencies to overlook the Pact Government's failure to play 'ball' was on the wane. The alliance with the Pact was hoped to be a productive one in terms of generating benefits for the 'blacks'. This failure of the Government nurtured a strong suspicion in the ICU. The feeling was tied with an infant nationalism, except that it looked to the workers to lead and actively use themselves as a vanguard in the resistance against the Government (which had become capitalist too, as far as the ICU was concerned.)

In addressing the Annual Conference in 1926 Kadalie said that "Depending upon the slogan of the Pact Government for a "civilized South Africa" all workers, both black and white, had pinned their faith on their

new bride who was to "deliver the goods" which were kept in store for the exclusive use by big finance. The goods were delivered but to our disappointment, instead of supplying the child with bread, our Pact bride gave the child stones in the form of the colour Bar Bill, enforcement of the Pass Laws upon our women in the Transvaal, the retrenchment of Natives from state undertakings such as the railways etc....."(11)

Earlier in the Workers' Herald, there had appeared a more illuminating leader article, presumably written by Kadalie.

"We could mention more things to prove that the white men in South Africa are determined to see that the nigger is kept in his place. The African race is now standing at the crossroads, it has to decide whether it is destined to survive as a nation or to be blotted out from the face of the earth....The time of compromise is gone, we live under a new age. They should be guided with Mosaic philosophy that an 'eye for an eye' and 'tooth for tooth'. And as we do not believe in brutal warfare we must resort to our industrial weapon, the only effective weapon too. Workers of this land, how long shall you halt between two ways? Your bosses have very nice time of your labour. It is cheap and abundant, through it, it was made possible to build these great cities in South Africa. Let all roads lead to Johannesburg in April next where the workers will be infused with new resolution to abolish the capitalistic exploitation by other human beings and therefrom create an extensive and constructive propoganda that must lead millions of the race to the goal of freedom." (12)

Indeed by the time the conference came, the ICU had

acquired a broad base wherein even a strong socialist presence was perceptible. The growing prevalence of a socialist analysis could be found in the letters written to the Workers' Herald.

"Capitalism pulled this country unchallenged to this day: thanks only to racial division among the workers to shift the dividing line a little by taking into "white" camp a few coloured trade unionists; leaving outside in the cold the native workers; it will not solve the problem, on the contrary it will make the matter worse by further entrenching the prejudice that prevent really class-consciousness from drawing on the South African Labour Party.

We should be aiming at the organisation of natives together with the white and coloured workers.... such an organisation would make the workers powerful enough to do away with the system altogether now in vogue, and institute a new society in which there will be place neither for race antagonism, nor mutiny for labour leaders with capitalism ideal." (13)

The class analysis which emerged was an extremely rudimentary one. Of great significance was the view which saw the ICU as the vanguard of the workers. In addition, a caricature of a petty-bourgeois type was also under scrutiny; that 'good boy' of 'black skin' was isolated as the silent murderer attempting to split the solidarity of the workers. This analysis remained part of the consciousness of 'radicals' within the ICU for a long time. However, this was not the only, nor the dominant strain of thought in the ICU. (We shall discuss the ICU's relations with the Joint Councils etc., below)

The Union had also absorbed "African intellectuals, who hitherto found no channel to express their grievances...." (14) (Apart from AM Jabavu, it is not clear who these intellectuals were.) AWG

Champion was also drafted into the organisation by Kadalie, because of his knowledge and competence, or he was sent into the organisation by the general manager of Crown Mines to report on the Union's doings. (15)

What Champion's immediate antecedents were is only of peripheral interest, because in the long run his interest in the ICU showed that he was out to make a niche for himself. (16)

Apart from the resistance of the ANC, the ICU found itself in confrontation with the Joint Council. Africans who participated in the Joint Council, those who worked for the Umteteli, were described as "goods boys". Silwana said of them, "these Good Boys are the beloved leaders of all those who have been unfortunate enough to be mesmerised and fascinated by the capitalistic offers, under the disguise of Joint Councils, 'Bantu Men's Social Centres' and the like." (17) There was thus considerable ill-feeling between the two organisations. On the part of the Joint Council, the feeling was expressed thus; "The Joint Council of Europeans and Natives had always looked with disfavour on the Trade Union movement among the natives, and on the ICU. This was possibly due to the fact that the early days

of the ICU were supported by men with a reputation as agitators." (18)

2.

When the ICU came to Johannesburg the city was going through the early traumas of the Urban Areas Act of 1923. Although the Act was passed in 1923, it was only brought into operation in 1925. On the 1st January it became an offence to allow Africans other than employees to reside on household premises. In Benoni, within five days of the implementation of the measure, thirteen Africans were fined ten shillings for being on premises where they did not work. They were told by the magistrate that they had to sleep in their location. (19)

In Johannesburg, the removal of "illegal" people from the centre of the city was done on a piece-meal basis, but nonetheless with as much trauma. It was decided to develop and apply the Urban Areas Act and the Johannesburg Municipal Housing programme alongside each other.

"A start has actually been made with the segregation of the natives. For this purpose the area in Doornfontein bounded by End Street, Harrow Road, Saratoga Avenue and the Rail Reserve has been first tackled, and natives who are otherwise not provided for under the Urban Areas Act have been notified that they must remove from the area. For their accommodation the last 150 houses built by the City Council in the Western Native Township have been specially earmarked." (20)

1200 notices were served on people in the Doornfontein area. The notices were served on 'white' residents and their African tenants by the Johannesburg Municipality under the Urban Areas Act. Large numbers of people had already been transferred to the compounds at Wemmer, Salisbury and Jubilee and to the Western Native Township. In the city the first batch of prosecutions under the Act came up before the magistrates. These were to presage countless numbers of prosecutions within the next few years.

"Four natives all living in Doornfontein, were each marched into the dock in turn. They each raised a protest that they did not want to leave Doornfontein as they had already made their homes there."

These 'offenders' received fines of £1 each or 14 days imprisonment with hard labour. Similar complaints were made by most people convicted under the Act. (21)

By March the focus of the removal programme had shifted to Vrededorp. The location had become a grave point of discomfort to the people of Brixton and the rate-payers of Vrededorp. Their representative, Dr Visser, and three members of the Vrededorp Ratepayers Committee had gone so far as to petition General Hertzog, who was also Minister of Native Affairs, on the subject of the location. They.. protested that the location was a nuisance and asked for its removal under the Urban Areas Act. (22)

Hertzog was sympathetic, but reminded them that the matter was strictly a municipal one.

A solution was in the making though. Mr. GA Hay, a member of the Legislative Assembly, proposed a plan whereby the separate accommodation of the 'coloured' people from Malay Camp could be achieved. Hay offered 200 morgan owned by the Consolidated Investment Company to the City Council for the development of a 'coloured' township. The land lay between Langlaagte, Newclare, Mayfair and adjoined the Western Native Township and Brixton. (The area is probably what is now called Coronationville.) (23) Furthermore, to add to the hopes of the embittered franchised component of Vrededorp and Brixton, it was revealed that a section of the location had come under the scope of the Urban Areas Act and that by the 30th April all African people in the area had to be out. (24)

The franchised people of Johannesburg displayed enormous resistance to City Council attempts to build compounds or hostels in their suburbs and business areas. In Norwood the Council proposed the construction of a hostel for African women. (25) This scheme was opposed by the residents of the suburb who could not accept such a blight on their neighbourhood, and in the end the idea had to be abandoned. Not many weeks later, the same pattern emerged in Motortown where barracks

were being built for African workers. (26) The newspapers described the action as a threatening menace. A vigilance association was formed for the area to protest against the conversion of Motortown into a 'black' slum. The Association reacted strongly to the threat which would be posed to their capital interests vested in the area. Businessmen claimed that the value of property would decline as would overall investment potential. (27)

The issue of passes for African women in the meantime had become important, and superceded the Urban Areas Act as an issue worthy of being canvassed by the main organisations. The extension of the Pass Law to women evoked strong reactions of outrage in the African community. The Government's justification was that the present want of control allowing native women to roam about the streets at all hours was a very serious evil and should not be allowed to continue....." (28)

The Government had put in abeyance, until the 1st of June, the proposed enforcement of the Native Pass Ordinance of 1912 "upon the understanding that the Joint Council... endeavour to place before the Government an effective and acceptable alternative scheme in solution of the problem." (29)

In response the Joint Council, after a conference with African teachers, Ministers and the Bantu Women's League,

pleaded for the complete abandonment of any system of passes for women. Instead they felt that a census of African women ought to be taken and that magisterial bureaux be set up where women could register for work. Thereafter it was suggested that accommodation on employers' residences be made a sine qua non of employment for African women as part of their contract of service. In addition the construction of hostels as supplementary accommodation was strongly recommended. (30)

The Joint Council's recommendations were not accepted by the Government and the pass law was extended to women accordingly. The ICU and the ANC held meetings where the action was condemned and threatened strike action. The Natal ANC gave its support to the ICU and the ANC and condemned the Joint Council "as the latter held no mandate from the natives". (31)

In the light of all the attention given to the pass issue, the Urban Areas Act did not gain the attention of the ICU nor of any of the other organisations in Johannesburg. It was only in 1927 and 1928 that the ICU began to take an interest in the dynamics of the Act. The approach of the ICU was basically to exploit such issues from which it could gain most mileage. The Pass issue appeared to be more controversial than the Urban Areas Act and likely to

generate more attention and even membership into the organisation. Thus the more sensational events in the community were given prominence at the expense of other more fundamental issues. In the meanwhile the Act had already affected 5000 people in the twelve-month period from January to December of 1925.(32) Resistance to the legislation came, not from the people so much, but from the slum landlords who tried to avail themselves of loopholes under the Act. The losses which they incurred motivated them to contest certain parts of the legislation in court.

It does seem though that there were many people who ignored the Act and continued to live in Doornfontein, Jeppe and Malay Camp. Well into 1930 people were still squatting in these areas until they were forcibly removed to Meadowlands.

3.

At the beginning of 1925 the ICU had achieved a membership of over 39000. The Union's provincial branch in Durban acquired a strength which laid the basis for rapid expansion. It can also be conjectured that the presence, if indeed sporadic, of the Workers' Herald was extremely effective in advertising the ICU. Similarly, the support of Imvo in the Eastern Cape also contributed strongly to the growing image of the Union.

Furthermore Kadalie's foray into Bloemfontein in January of 1925 left a marked imprint on the minds of followers and antagonists alike.

The speech he made at Bloemfontein was the famous 'Parliament House would tremble' address. The message he brought for them in 1925 was that "...you must be free men and women in the land of your fathers..." He spoke of the wages and the railway issue, saying that if Parliament did not put through a minimum wage bill for the whole of South Africa "they would hold up the railways and the entire mining industry." (33) Such wild talk, for Kadalie hardly had the power to bring about such action, served to vault him into the public glare. It also aserved to make the ICU that one organisation which the people could look to for bringing about relief, if not change.

Although strains of nationalism were becoming clearer, and the organisational base had expanded to contain this extra-industrial urge, Kadalie did not come out vociferously against the Pact Government yet. The conference of 1925, as improved as Kadalie thought it to be, was composed of a multiple of different interests.

The conference of 1925, the third African Labour Congress and the fifth annual conference took place in Johannesburg on the 13th of April to the 19th.

It was opened by the Mayor of Johannesburg who made a plea for moderation. However, such moderation as sought did not come undiluted. The conference produced a motley of statements, resolutions which were alternately militant and respectful.

Kadalié himself said at the beginning of the conference that

"We are aiming at the building up in Africa of a native labour organisation of the aboriginals, through which we shall break the wall of white autocracy and capitalism. We must prevent the exploitation of our people on the mines and on the farms, and obtain increased wages for them. We shall not rest there. We will open the gates of the Houses of the legislature, now under the control of the white oligarchy, and from this step we shall claim equality of purpose with the workers of the world to overthrow the Capitalist system of government and usher in a cooperative commonwealth, a system of government which is not foreign to the aboriginals of Africa." (34)

The strident tone which Kadalié adopted in the beginning of the conference hardly persisted. The resolutions adopted showed an organisation which uncomfortably wavered between its constitutional image and a fresh radical input.

It was decided to send a deputation to Cape Town to brief the Select Committee for the Wage Bill so that the African's case could be heard. (35) One man, Mr Elias of Bloemfontein, sought more drastic action.

"Mr Elias... said everything pointed to the fact that the time was ripe for the native worker to

organise. We can hold up the railways; we can make them sit down", he said. "As far as the Bloemfontein district is concerned, I personally can do it. We must organise for the emancipation of the black man. The 'boss' is the man who does the work, the man who sits down is a loafer."(36)

The wages of the dock-workers were subjected to a similar treatment. There came the polite resolution that a deputation should be sent to the Government and the anticipated countering outburst which called for and threatened strike action to make the authorities meet the demands of the workers.

Out of the motley of expressions which emerged from the conference, it appeared that there still existed an implicit, if not always articulated, faith in the correctability of the social and political system. This was borne out by the nature of the resolutions taken at the conference and submitted to the Economic and Wages Commission of 1925. (This commission consisted of rather strange bed-fellows, amongst whom was WH Andrews, the known Communist leader. His individual report was an extremely interesting contribution.)

These resolutions, apart from those already mentioned, were the following (which I quote in part) :

"That this conference most respectfully requests the government to recognize its decisions to exclude agricultural labourers and domestic servants from the scope of the wage bill...And ... that this conference elect a wages committee with a view to give evidence before the select committee of the House of Assembly.

That this conference congratulates the Government on the introduction of the Wage Bill now before the parliament.... but we would humbly suggest the necessity of so amending the provisions of Section 1 of the bill as to categorically define industrial spheres to which Act will apply... should the bill become law in its present form, the conference fears that party political considerations may act as a brake upon the Minister in his exercise of the powers conferred by Section 1 of the bill.

"That this conference of organised native and coloured is (of) the opinion that Passes, no matter what shape or form, are nothing less than an institution of the present capitalist system of Government to reduce the African workers to a state of abject servility so as to facilitate their utmost exploitation and further, this conference condemns the proposals of the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives intended for submission to the Prime Minister, but in the opinion of this conference requests the Government to introduce into the House of Assembly a short bill so amending the Industrial and Conciliation Act No. 11 of 1924 so as to include Native Miners and Colliers in the definitions of 'employee'....

"That while desirous to avoid embarrassing the Government in its laudable attempts to devise effective means of settling industrial disputes in times of emergency, this conference wishes to call the attention of the parliament and the public to the fact that the powers conferred on the Minister under Section 11(1) of the Emergency Powers Bill are constitutionally too enormous, and virtually obviates the necessity of an Indemnity Bill,..... indeed the section constitutes the sapping of the foundations upon which rests the constitutional doctrines of the law. " (37)

Despite the manifest presence of strong socialist influence, the correctability of the capitalist system was envisaged by these resolutions. It needs to be stressed here that the resolutions indicated an awareness of the job-situation, which could be described as

partaking of a workers' consciousness. However, this consciousness did not reflect, or partake of a revolutionary consciousness. In the above instances, perfectability was hoped for in that workers' demands were presumed to be reconcilable, as was illustrated by the demand that the scope of the Industrial Conciliation Act be widened. Furthermore, one can argue that the rejection of the system as determined by a workers' consciousness (which may or may not reflect socialist influence) was incapable of seeing the struggle in other than economic terms, unless the industrial focus was enlarged to include a complementary political vision. The Pass system was thus acknowledged to be a method of facilitating worker exploitation, but the solution, as posited, was not the removal of the capitalist system, but that of the pass system.

The Rand Daily Mail had cause to question the presence of 'Red influence.' It pointedly remarked that "a number of Europeans walked into the hall. One of them was a well-known communist." (38) If the socialist input into the conference was derived from the Communists, and there is no reason to think otherwise, the ideological misconceptions at the strategic level were not only those illustrated by the 'black' leaders of labour, but were also shared by the communists.

While it is true that Kadalie himself had largely guided the direction and policy of the ICU vis-a-vis both political and industrial issues, he and the ICU emerged as a fertile ground for the influence of both communists and liberals. For a while the radical image was in the ascendant, but then the stronger hand of the liberals was able to determine the direction and fortunes of the ICU until its death in 1930.

Roux, in his autobiography, talks about how he met and became friendly with Kadalie. (39) The Communist Party had decided in 1924 to campaign amongst 'black's' and thus ultimately interested itself in the affairs of the ICU. James la Guma, a prominent pioneer member of the ICU, had joined the Cape Town branch of the CP in 1924 (so it seems to Wickins). It was then too that John Gomas had also become a member. In Johannesburg the socialist standard was borne by Mbeki and Silwana. Amongst the forefront of the ICU's leadership there thus existed a strong coterie of people who held strong bonds with the communists.

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this ground that the attachment, albeit a temporary one, provided certain possibilities for the ICU. The leaders, as Wickins says, wanted to influence the "white political system" and it was into this system "that the ICU leaders wanted to penetrate." (40)

The penetration of this system would permit the realisation of the ICU's bourgeois vision of the correctability of the capitalist system.

The influence of the communists could be seen in the constitution which the ICU adopted in 1925. The change which the constitution underwent is a remarkable one. Yet to preserve a lucid sense of the potential shifts or progressions in the ideology and strategy of the Union, the preamble of the constitution ought to be looked at. This preamble was important, since it carried with it some indication of what Bonner calls the "strategic objectives; they wanted a fundamental redistribution of economic and political power." (41)

The preamble went thus :

"Whereas the interests of the workers and those of the employers are opposed to each other, the former living by selling their labour, receiving for it only part of the wealth they produce, and the latter living by exploiting the labour of the workers; depriving the workers of a part of their product in the form of profit, no peace can be between the two classes, a struggle must always obtain about the division of the products of human labour, until the workers through their industrial organisations take from the capitalist class the means of production to be owned and controlled by the workers for

the benefit of all, instead of for the profit of a few. Under such a system he who does not work, neither shall he eat. The basis of remuneration shall be the principle, from every man according to his abilities, to every man according to his needs. This is the goal for which the ICU strives along with all other organised workers throughout the world. Further this organisation does not foster or encourage antagonism towards other established bodies, political or otherwise, of African peoples, or of organised European labour." (42)

The inconsistencies and fallacies of the preamble give an insight into the ideological confusion which beset the ICU. These, in brief, for I shall pursue this more lengthily later, consisted of the ICU investing itself with the role of revolutionary party and vanguard in the political formation. I first want to carry further the involvement of the ICU in its new 'radicalism' and thereby show that the real objectives of the Union were anything but a fundamental redistribution of political and economic power.

The ICU maintained the tolerance of the 'radical' communists until late into 1926 when it expelled them. Even though the 'radicals' were very much in evidence during 1925 and part of 1926, the actions of the ICU were not unlike those of a normal union. In between making the trip to Cape Town with the ICU delegation, Kadalie had effectively come to root himself in Johannesburg. The Union was involved in a number of minor incidents which were sufficient to command attention though. At the

House of Assembly, Kadalie called the 1925 session of parliament, the 'kadalie session' and the 'ICU session' (43)

Immediately after the conference the Bloemfontein Riots erupted, which had no real connection with the ICU, or with specific industrial questions. The trouble originated with the "attempted arrest of women who were brewing 'kafir-beer' and became serious as the result of the death of one of the crowd that threw stones at a police detachment." (44) The affair escalated into a large fracas on the subsequent day where a number of people were killed and several were hurt. The attack angered the local African residents who resented the partisan behaviour of the 'white' people of Bloemfontein. Wickins says that the "riots were not wholly disastrous for the Africans of the town. White people seemed to have had an attack of conscience." (45) Some few concessions were made, including the grant of a lease on a site intended for the construction of a hall for the ICU. In addition a Native Wages Commission to consider and make recommendations on "what constituted a 'fair basic wage' for blacks doing unskilled work." A better appraisal of the actions of the 'whites' or the bourgeoisie (they are not synonymous), is that the concessions were made to defuse and allay the people's grievances for fear that major industrial unrest might develop, since it was clear that the ICU commanded strong support in the area.

In East London the ICU instituted wage demands which were partly met. The celebrated Maytham's Ltd strike took place in September in Johannesburg. Kadalie says in his book "... our prime object, to improve the conditions of our fellow-workers was steadily forging ahead. It was at Maytham's ... that the first action by our members was taken." (46) This, in fact, was one of the few occasions, in which the ICU played any real part in a large industrial dispute. In all fairness though, the ICU did investigate individual cases for members and often went so far as to contest matters through litigation. This was a particular characteristic of the ICU's strategic approach. The Union was not slow in seeking redress, whenever it could, through the court. It was Champion who later consummated this practice in the ICU.

In 1925 there were emerging signs of strain inside the organisation, at least at the level of the National Executive and the Board of Arbitration. An invitation to Kadalie had been received from the American Negro Labour Congress, which was vetoed, it seems, by the Board of Arbitration. Further, the Board also expressed impatience and annoyance at Kadalie's control of the Johannesburg branch, which he ruled as a personal fief, without a proper executive. (47)

Kadalie had set up a Workers' Hall in Johannesburg.

without the Board's permission and had incurred considerable debt, which had to be redeemed by the Board itself. The Hall was an object of curiosity as well as an entertainment centre (apart from its administrative purposes). Kadalie claims that the growth of the ICU in Johannesburg was due to this centre.(48) In a word, the ICU revolutionised the life of the African proletariat of the Golden City through its Workers' Hall." (49) The Hall was in all probability a rival to the Bantu Men's Social Centre. However, if the lives of the city's proletariat were in a condition of revolution, this was entirely due to legislative measures., rather than the diversion which Kadalie had on offer.

The Hall itself was officially opened by a trio of remarkably incompatible gentlemen who shared a mutual antagonism for each other. The first man was the Reverend BR Hattingh, the Nationalist MLA for Krugersdorp. The other two men, were WH Andrews and CF Glass. Andrews, apart from being a communist, was also secretary of the new South African Association of Employees' Organisation. Glass was the secretary of the Tailors' Association. Why Hattingh was asked to perform the chief ceremony is not clear. It is true though, that the ICU had not made a definitive break with its Pact alliance, and it is possible that this could have

represented a last attempt to gain the official sanction of the ruling party.

The Nationalist representative spoke of his party's plans for separate development.

"They want the native to have his part of the country where he shall be able to possess ground-land- where he shall be able to develop himself according to his own interests; and eventually to govern himself through his own people. And in these territories...the native shall be supreme.....I want to warn you against some of your own who will be trying to be higher than the ordinary man. They agitate and show you the moon and tell you to take it... You must not only look to the side of the employer to see that he does right to the worker, but you must also see that the worker does his duty towards his employer." (50)

The Reverend Hattingh was applauded at the end of his speech, as he was consistently during the course of his speech. Andrews' speech was wholly different in tone.

"...all history in this and every other country proves this one fact that the more perfectly organised the workers become the less danger there is of disorder of any kind... And all these men who have the welfare of South Africa at heart will help and encourage you in your efforts to bridge the gulf economically as between the native workers and the rest of the population of this country.... there is nothing wrong-nothing revolutionary in such a proposition. It is the sacred right of every working man in every country to rise as high as they possibly can in the scale of civilisation."(51)

And finally Glass spoke.

"The native workers secured a great victory in that strike, and what has been done in the case of the small workshops like Maytham's can be done

role of the working-class. Instead the revolutionary role was delegated to the ICU - "until the workers through their industrial organisations take from the capitalist class the means of production." (See preamble to the ICU's constitution - 1925). The ICU, however, was not a revolutionary vanguard party which could claim to represent a revolutionary working-class; the fact that the organisation was primarily an industrial organisation made nonsense of its claims to represent the revolutionary political interests of the workers. (Furthermore, even in these middle years of the ICU, one can question the mass or even the working-class character of the organisation. One can contend that the ICU was already going through the process of shifting away from the masses.) In this sense, the socialist content of the union might have extended the union beyond its narrow economism, but the Union remained rooted in a trade union consciousness. And as Grossman says, "the ideology of trade-unionism presents such struggle as the ultimate limits of working class action." (55) The struggle could not be perceived in broader working-class terms, but was confined to the organisational framework of the ICU. In any event, the new socialism hardly reflected itself in the policy of the ICU; the socialism which the ICU practised was restricted mostly to rhetorical platform performances and vociferous harangues.

This fundamental limitation of the trade-union setting the CP either could not see or chose to ignore. By so doing, it contributed its own part to the misconception that trade-unionism by itself was progressive and could lead towards a revolutionary consciousness. In assessing the role of the CP, it was not its role as a vanguard party which comes into question, but its ideological assessment and analysis of the South African scene. Outside of this particular debate, in so far as there was a problem, the problem would lie in the absence of a truly revolutionary vanguard party.

Theoretically, one is led to the conclusion, that trade-unions have intrinsic ideological limitations, which in effect reduces all unions, be they communist or reactionary, to a similar role. Communism or socialism or radicalism is not sufficient to pilot a trade-union beyond its limitations. The addition of a radical strain is an addition to trade-union consciousness only. "Insofar as the working class breaks away and moves beyond these reformist limitations, this is due to factors outside of trade-unionism." (56) This is because trade-unionism serves to present the working-class struggle as the struggle of the trade-unions, which means at once practically and ideologically operating within the economic, political and ideological framework of capitalism. An attempt at inculcating

socialism in the union setting produces the effect of making the struggle a wage struggle in the first instance, and secondly only, a search for socialism. This renders all trade-unions the same, where there is no qualitative difference brought about in the struggle, militancy, in a subordinate position, is reduced to the level of a union trade mark.

The effect of this association with the communists had a clear influence on Kadalie. His terminology and his rhetoric had become decidedly more socialist in tone. Yet, it was an addition to his understanding of general issues which he handled uncomfortably. He was clearly incapable of developing through this addition, and thus exposed himself to the thinking of others who were able to guide him into more comfortable and palatable areas of thought. His trade-unionism was used to find a better solution inside the confines of capitalism.

With this backdrop, one needs to look afresh at the notion that the ICU sought a fundamental redistribution of economic and political power. Rather, in Kadalie's actions, one detects the desire for a part of the economic and political cake of the bourgeois system. This may not have been an explicit objective, but it is underscored by the objective circumstances in which his ideological framework was set. This meant that his pandering towards the left in 1925 was a manifestation of his search

for a solution to the situation where he found access refused him, and his organisation, by the dominant bourgeois fraction.

Allowing the development of this analysis, one saw the purpose of the ICU being to :

"educate the chiefs and their people that our trade union movement does not suggest disloyalty to constitutional government or any disloyalty to the chiefs themselves, but is calculated on a 'bread and butter' struggle for ourselves, our women and children - a holy and noble struggle we shall then be nearing our goal to economic emancipation." (57)

It is theoretically misconstrued if the belief is nurtured that the ICU could have played the role of revolutionary and vanguard party.

The policy of the CP, that of gaining control of the African labour movement, was carried a step further after the CP members of the ICU were expelled in 1926. The CP was instrumental in establishing the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions of South Africa in 1928. This Federation inveighed against the reformism of the ICU and its failure to continue a militant struggle. It considered its own task "To bring the great mass of the native workers into their organisation." This was essential since

"only with the mass organisation of the native workers can there be an effective struggle against capital. This organisation must become the vanguard for revolutionary struggle in South Africa.....(it) must struggle... for the unity

of the trade union movement upon the basis of the class struggle.... The many tendencies towards joint meetings and joint strikes of the white and black workers show the feasibility and possibility of this union... It is quite clear that black workers must struggle to raise the position of the whole proletariat to struggle jointly in strikes etc.... But without common struggle of black and white workers this cannot be realised. Thus, the Black workers, whose interests are insolubly bound together, must struggle to achieve and raise the standards of wages and working conditions of the whole proletariat. , This is the basic task of the working class of South Africa." (58)"

This communist control of the Non-European Trade Union carried a number of implications, the major being that the constrictive nature of trade unionism was disguised. The important point is that not only does a trade union consciousness ultimately generate a conservative ideology, but that a trade union praxis promotes the ideological limitations imposed on a union by the bourgeois capitalist environment. In this sense, workers are then absorbed into a reformist praxis which legitimates wage struggle as the primary revolutionary task. The CP, through the Federation, did what is theoretically perverse. It imposed a limiting vision of the struggle on to the labour movement.

Indeed, the Federation was more militant than the ICU. However, as soon as the struggle was diluted to that of fighting for higher standards, economism was

legitimated as the class struggle itself. Hereby the role of the working class was obfuscated and an impediment was placed in the growth of real class-consciousness.

Trade unionism has a tendency to regenerate its own determinants. Militancy is this reduced to essentially the same activity as conservatism, since militancy is equated with progressiveness which ignores trade union limitations. It is in this sense that the Communist Party outgrowth into the ICU, and later the Federation, was falsely predicated as a revolutionary experience.

N O T E S

1. C Kadalie My Life pp62 and 63
2. Ibid
3. Umteteli wa Bantu 7/6/1924
4. Roux Time Longer than Rope p202
5. Ibid p201
6. C. Kadalie Op Cit p67
7. Ibid
8. Rand Daily Mail 18/9/1924
9. Umteteli wa Bantu 11/10/1924
10. Umteteli wa Bantu 18/10/1924
11. Workers' Herald, National Secretary's Report
27/3/1926
12. Workers' Herald 2/4/1925 B/UCT
13. Ibid
14. C Kadalie Op Cit p73
15. See South African Labour Bulletin September/
October 1974 volume 6, articles by E Webster,
AWG Champion; and also see the pamphlets put
out by Champion, the Truth of the ICU and
Mehlomedala.
16. Champion worked in the Police Force for two years.
He then worked as a time keeper in a mine and in-
between other jobs returned to the mines before
joining the ICU in 1925. He "is one of the
founders of the Joint Council of Europeans and
Natives in Johannesburg, the Bantu Men's Social
Centre, the Transvaal Mine Clerks' Association
and the United National Association of Commerce
and Industry Ltd... when he resigned his appoint-
ment at the Crown Mines to join the ICU nearly

all his colleagues tried to prevent him ... warned him of the risks he was taking, but... when the call came for leadership in the greater field of the ICU, he could not be kept back by any fears or threats of consequences. The divine urge...forced him to go forward to greater service for his people." The Truth about the ICU, AWG Champion (a pamphlet). This is Champion's description of himself. His background is that of a worker, however, he adds an extra dimension to the activity of the ICU by being involved in distinct commercial and speculative ventures which makes his class position definitely that of a bourgeois.

17. Workers' Herald 2/4/1925 Found in B/UCT
18. The Relationship of the ICU with Joint Council, "Universities etc. Forman Papers/UCT BC/347 A5. VIII. 12
19. Rand Daily Mail 6/1/1922
20. The Star 20/1/1925
21. Rand Daily Mail 19/2/1925
22. Rand Daily Mail 8/1/1925
23. Rand Daily Mail 13/1/1925
24. Rand Daily Mail 17/3/1925
25. Rand Daily Mail 31/1/1925
26. Rand Daily Mail 25/2/1925
27. Star 27/2/1925
28. Pim Papers D Steyn (PM's Private Secretary) to the Joint Council 22/1/1925
29. Ibid
30. Rand Daily Mail 14/3/1925

31. Umteteli wa Bantu 6/6/1925
32. Star 11/12/1925
33. Umteteli wa Bantu 24/1/1925
34. Umteteli wa Bantu 18/4/1925
35. Wickins Op Cit p269
36. Rand Daily Mail 16/4/1925
37. C Kadalie My Life pp 74-77
38. Rand Daily Mail 16/4/1925 Forman Papers UCT
39. See E and R Roux, Rebel Pity
40. Wickins Op Cit p249
41. P Bonner : The decline and fall of the ICU - a case of self-destruction, in SA Labour Bulletin, September/October 1974 vol 6 p 38
42. Karis and Carter vol 1 From Protest to Challenge p325
43. Wickins Op Cit p278
44. Wickins Op Cit p275
45. Ibid p276
46. Kadalie My Life p86
47. Wickins Op Cit p282
48. Ibid p85
49. Ibid p86
50. The Star 7/9/1925
51. Ibid
52. Ibid
53. Umteteli wa Bantu 24/1/1925
54. See Roux Time Longer than Rope p200
55. J Grossman Op Cit p51

56. Ibid p54; also see the introduction to this thesis.
57. Workers' Herald 28/4/1926
58. From JW Ford: The Affiliation of Non-European Trade Unions of South Africa to RILU

CHAPTER SEVEN :1926. THE LIBERAL INFLUENCE ON THE ICU

The ICU continued its relationship with the communists into 1926. However, the weight of 'liberal' sympathisers was influential in bringing about a change in the ICU's strategy. This chapter looks at the influences which came to bear on Kadalie and the ICU, and how the 'radical' component of the Union was substituted with a more moderate one. The ICU sought to project an image which was less militant and in line with the requirements demanded by the 'liberal' friends which it had acquired. The purpose of the discussion in this chapter is to indicate the extent to which Kadalie could go to achieve acceptability and recognition by the bourgeoisie. It is important to see and understand how Kadalie could change his stance from militance to moderatism within such a short time. Kadalie's rapid switch from the radical stance of 1925 and 1926, to the moderate approach adopted in 1927 appeared to be based on a measure of expediency. The argument of this discussion is that militance, despite its vociferous nature, was quickly rejected by Kadalie because it failed to generate the rewards and benefits which he sought. We are thus looking at an about-face determined by circumstances of convenience, where strategy was not determined by strict principles, but rather, it appeared, by an approach of opportunism.

Kadalie's platform performances in the early months of 1926 indicated the lingering influence of socialist ideas.(1) At the Annual Conference of the ANC in Bloemfontein in January, he was reported to have "flooded the Convention with abusive language" because of a resolution which expressed appreciation of the Prime Minister's "courageous attempt to wrestle with... Native Affairs and to place them on a sounder footing." (2) The Colour Bar Bills were being tabled in Parliament at the time, as part of Hertzog's attempt to find a solution to the 'native problem'.

This militance was to manifest itself in most of Kadalie's public appearances. A month after the Bloemfontein convention the ICU and the ANC held a joint meeting in Johannesburg. The meeting discussed the questions of the Colour Bar Bills and the segregation policy of the Government. Kadalie's speech, said Umteteli wa Bantu, was redolent of 'Mr Sydney Bunting's midnight oil'. (3)

"This monster meeting is the formal opening of the great propoganda campaign prepared by the ANC in Bleomfontein and which will some day burst into something. (Cheers) I have no doubt that the backbone of this country - I mean of course, the black workers - are going to keep up this agitation, for that is the only way by which we can indicate to the government our utter abhorrence of the infamous legislation that they propose to operate to our detriment. (Of the 'native problem') whatever problem is being made of it is really the handiwork of those who are now sitting in luxurious mansions in Parktown (hear,hear) and who are industrially robbing the men and women of Africa, both black and white. Comrades I am looking forward to the day when both black and white workers of

South Africa, the Proletariat - will stand united under one banner, and our exploiters under another and we shall have to meet them... by now the Africa-for Africans Party, encouraged and supported by their Indian and European fellow workers, realise the true significance of these sinister measures which, euphemistically called Colour Bars, are nothing less than a libel and a travesty on democratic government and democratic principles... Let the government, parliament and the white people generally, understand this, that the day segregation is passed by the House of Assembly there will be a complete stoppage of Native work throughout the country. That is not a mere idle threat... We are going to infuse in the workers a spirit of revolt..." (4)

Yet, at the end of this speech there followed an unexpected appeal to 'mother Britain' to "vindicate that principle" which Britons had died for. "If foreigners are given protection by mother Britain surely her own helpless children should have precedence in that respect." (5) The way was thus prepared for subsequent appeals to the British, to assist the ICU to gain the recognition of the local bourgeoisie.

In March a Joint Council of Europeans and Natives was started in Bloemfontein, consisting of 8 Africans and 8 'whites'. The Joint Council was congratulated for its victory of moderatism by the Unteteli. It was agreed by the Joint Council that the minimum wage for Africans in Bloemfontein be fixed at 3s a day. The Umteteli claimed that Kadalie then "sought to impose his will on the Wage Board, the Minister of Labour, and other august persons and bodies. The bellicosity of the ICU minions was reawakened, excited

audiences reacted to impassioned speeches and Waaihoek again was unrestrained, seething with a discontent engineered by the dictator from Nyasaland." (6)

Although members of the ANC asked Kadalie to accept the wage recommendation as a temporary expedient only, he still threatened that a strike would take place if "a civilised standard of living for all classes and workers, irrespective of race or colour" was not secured. (7)

Kadalie's performances did not fail to attract the attention of the Government. In the House of Assembly suggestions were being made that Kadalie be deported. Since such a measure was impracticable, the Prevention of Disorders Bill, better known as the Sedition Bill, was tabled before Parliament. The Bill was aimed directly at the militancy of the ICU and its adherents. It is possibly true that the ICU had come to represent a threat to the herrenvolk 'white' nationalism of the day. In making demands for equality, the ICU was challenging the segregation ideology of the Nationalists. The Bill however, aroused too much dissent and subsequently had to be dropped. (8)

This failure to have the Sedition Bill passed notwithstanding, a ban was placed on the movements of Kadalie in April. He was not allowed to leave Johannesburg, and was refused permission to go to Natal. "Your presence in Natal considered likely to disturb

considerably public feeling already exacerbated by inflammatory speeches of delegate of your organisation."(9) This telegram from the government referred to the speeches of Thaele, whom Kadalie strenuously denied to be a member of the ICU.

Although Kadalie very much appeared to be the full blooded radical, there were remarkable developments taking place behind the scenes. "While the Communists were carrying on their battle to capture the ICU, there were other factors behind the scenes. In South Africa there were certain European women, I am bound to acknowledge here, whose advice and help led me to adopt a middle course." (10). It was becoming important to Kadalie that the ICU secure the recognition of the moderate 'whites' amongst the liberals and in the recognised trade unions. This feeling was encouraged by his new friends who slowly persuaded him that such an object would be reached only if the ICU were to be less militant.

The Annual ICU Conference in 1926 held some indication of this move to the right; (that is relatively speaking, in the light of the ICU's 'radical' image.) As a result of this shift, there emerged a feeling of unease between the left and right factions of the movement. The meeting was held in April in Johannesburg and the most notable figure the ICU could find to open the Conference was Colonel Silburn, a retired Labour member of Parliament.

The Umteteli described the Conference thus :

"There was displayed a strong anti-Government feeling at the recent ICU Congress... The pass laws were attacked; a minimum wage advocated; open revolution was urged by an irresponsible delegate; protests against segregation both territorially and industrially, were recorded and a savage assault was made on the recruiting system. Mr. Kadalie counselled moderation and it is pleasing to report that he exercised a restraining influence on the several hotheads who were inclined to make the pace too fast...." (11)

According to the Worker's Herald there were three different concentrations of attitude at the conference. There were the Gingerists, who generally took a strong line on all issues; the Die-Hards who were centrists and the Moderates who represented the right wing of the movement. All things taken into consideration, it was the right which ultimately seized control of the conference. The three major resolutions which were passed bear out this assertion. The resolutions were

- (5) "This conference instructs National Council of the ICU to enter into negotiations for the affiliation of this organisation to the British Trade Union Congress, with the further object of bringing the case of the African worker before the League of Nations and public opinion throughout Europe."
- (6) "This conference most respectfully requests the government to acknowledge the injustice of keeping native miners and colliers outside the scope of the Industrial Conciliation Act and to bring in amending legislation accordingly."
- (8) "This conference voices its satisfaction at the passage of the Wage Act in so far as it lays down the principal of a fair and equal wage to all labourers irrespective of colour, and further in so far as it does not aim at eliminating the Non-European worker in favour of the European at the same wage. In view of the fact that the

Economic and Wage Commission definitely asserts that the wage of the unskilled labourer is too low in comparison with the higher wage of the skilled labourer, this conference is of the opinion, that the time has arrived that the Wage Board should recommend a minimum wage for unskilled labour throughout the Union." (12)

As far as the 5th resolution was concerned, the promise of a solution was planted in the minds of the people at the conference. This resolution carried the hope that the liberals in England would rescue the 'black' oppressed in South Africa. This move represented a desperate search for a powerful ally to substitute for the absent liberal and labour support in South Africa. The resolution optimistically hoped that the ICU's bargaining base would be strengthened by this alliance and would enable it to confront the local authorities with more muscle.

On other issues there were differing reactions from the different factions. The Sedition Bill was strongly condemned and someone even moved that Tielman Roos be arrested for inciting violence. People of Jabavu's ilk were cautious in their addresses when it came to talking about the Government's attitude. The radicals, such as Gomas, were more forthright and less guarded in their speeches. Gomas, for instance was extremely sceptical about applications to the Wage Board, and in effect propounded that a more militant attitude be taken to wages. (13)

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On the question of strike action there was some ambivalence. Even Kadalie did not side distinctly with the moderates. Dippa, one of the Moderates' chief spokesmen, said that

"It won't help to always make a noise and blow off steam. Let us follow Lujiza's advice and organise the chiefs... At New Brighton (Port Elizabeth) a strike was engineered without his knowledge, but he blocked the move at the New Brighton Station."

To this Kadalie replied somewhat ambiguously,

"Strike was the only weapon of the worker of modern times, but it should not be played with or grossly encouraged before the workers were properly organised."

(Kadalie probably had a great deal more to say than the footage given him in the Herald indicates, since this extract, by itself, does not seem to warrant the kind of reaction shown by Jabavu.) Jabavu, supporting Dippa, said that

"Strikes should be the last word, and should not be thought of until all other constitutional methods were exhausted, and if Bloemfontein or other centres were ready, they should mark time with the less advanced centres, until they could all speak with one voice." (14) (15)

On issues like the Colour Bar Bills the Die-Hards, with Champion as the outstanding figure, urged boycotting or passive resistance as protest. The Gingerists sought far more radical action. They wanted "something revolutionary. Let us show the Government that we do not only threaten, but can act as well." (16) Similarly, as far as the recruiting system was concerned, the forces of opposition were aligned as they were with the Colour Bar Bills. Champion and Jabavu spoke at length

of the evils of the system, citing the active connivance of chiefs and recruiters in forcing people to submit to the system. (17) The debate, although enthusiastically participated in by the Gingerists, the Die-Hards and the Moderates, had to be broken off when Kadalie brought the notice of confirmation of his ban to the Conference.(18)

In all, the Conference failed to issue a clear directive on the overall policy of the movement. Roux's theory that the 'hamba kahle' (go carefully) supporters "were not willing or able to produce any concrete plans" is only partly true. (19) The decision to tie the ICU with the European labour movement was a crucial determinant for future developments inside the ICU. However, that the 'hamba kahle' policy in general was spreading disillusionment seems a fair assessment. The Cape, which carried the ICU until 1926, experienced the effects of non-activity and therefore declined in enthusiasm.

The move from Cape Town to Johannesburg was resisted by the administrative office there. Elsewhere the ICU was able, as on the Rand and subsequently in Natal, to enflame the expectations of prospective members and so gain that momentum which it fed on. The loss of one area of support was thus compensated for by gains in other areas where the ICU gospel had not yet reached.

The issue of Kadalie's ban brought out the ICU's pre-occupation with the use of litigation. Champion,

who had been sent to Durban, had already made extensive use of recourse to court action. (20) Champion, advised by his lawyers in Durban, urged Kadalie to test the ban on his movements. Kadalie thus undertook a journey to Durban in August. Since there was no official reaction he made the trip a second time in September. This time he was convicted. An appeal against the conviction was given a favourable decision by Justice Tatham. The victory was a hollow one though, since it was found that the conviction was technically incorrect. Obviously the construction put on the decision by the rank and file was different. The popularity of the ICU was increased.

After this Natal rallied to the ICU on a scale which was unprecedented. "To exploit the occasion to the full advantage, Champion leased a big property in the heart of Durban, which was used as offices and a club for our members." (21) This 'victory' was followed by other legal adventures, the more significant being that of the subject of dipping, which was successfully contested, redounding to the obvious advantage of the ICU in Natal. Apart from Kadalie's personal popularity, a minor legend was growing around the figure of Champion.

With the Union so much in the public eye, it was inevitable that the liberals would attempt to make a play

for the support of the ICU. On the part of the ICU, we saw that they had taken an antagonistic attitude towards the Joint Councils and the Bantu Mens' Social Centre in Johannesburg. This militancy, up to this point, ruled out any association with the liberals who were the patrons of these organisations. However, since the South African Trade Union movement had spurned the fraternal gestures of the ICU (22), and the ICU had indicated a definite desire to ally themselves with a colour-blind labour movement, an association with the local liberals, some of whom were in touch with the British Labour movement, carried much promise. The ICU then managed to change its hard line attitude and took a distinctly more conciliatory approach to the Moderates. This change of allegiance was in keeping with the ICU's approach of expediency to outside organisations. As soon as an association failed to produce tangible benefits it was terminated. Such a rapid switch of faith, from hostility to friendship, could only have occurred because of the ICU's lack of firm commitment to a policy of militance. Had a militant consciousness been firmly embedded within the ICU, it is unlikely that such a volte-face would have been accomplished so easily. Without this kind of explanation, it would be difficult to understand the ICU's mercurial character.

In this sense, the ICU-Liberal association was not a

perversion of the ICU by the liberals; rather, the Union found a more profitable and comfortable attachment in the association. This attachment gave the ICU a respectability, and at the same time allowed the Union to express the desire for social change without appearing to be revolutionary. It would appear to me, that it is erroneous to claim that the Union was subverted and rendered harmless by the liberals.

The ICU was then able to utilise the receptivity of the few liberals to good effect. The most influential person was Winifred Holtby who was a member of the British Independent Labour Party and who also worked for the League of Nations. Mabel Palmer, the contact Kadalie had established in Durban in 1924, had introduced Winifred Holtby to the ICU in 1926. Holtby had given Kadalie assurances that she would see what she could do to promote the cause of the ICU overseas. A third woman, and possibly the most persistent of the three, was Mrs. Ethelreda Lewis who in 1925 had already been busying herself trying to bring some moderating influence to bear on Kadalie. She had sought the assistance of 'promising' young men to guide the Union and advise Kadalie. (23)

Mrs. Lewis, in addressing the Anglican Synod of 1926, had explicitly put forth her ideas. She said that,

"We need South Africans of both white races, who have been brought up to look at the native with a familiar, and unsentimental eye. And we need to train that eye, which has shown the native all its life, to be imaginative, to be just, to be pitiful, to be brotherly, but never to be sentimental."

Of educationists, she had said earlier,

"They have allowed the Bolshevik education first to get into the nursery of a child who has begged in vain for education. Never blame the native for listening to the foreign agitator... let the black man proceed slowly... let him remain an agriculturalist and an artisan until he comes to years of discretion... The only course left to us by apathetic politicians of the last ten or twelve years who have allowed such a state of things, is to set up a counter education and do it vigourously...(24)

She thus had set out to Kadalie in 1926, clearly enough, with the conviction

"that a good labour organisation... is a more excellent thing for the natives and for the country generally than keeping a docile crowd of unintelligents, who because they are not able to act and organise are always in danger of being docile to the wrong man..." Therefore, "he would find better, safer more stable white friends for himself than the white communists-people who will never let him down again to the ultimate necessity of falling back on communist friends or fighting quite alone for the rights of black workers." (25)

Here Mrs. Lewis was echoing the thoughts of RFA Hoernle, one of the most influential liberals of the day. He had said that the great task of South African development was to guide the gradual transformation of the mass of Africans into the class of wage earning labourers,

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"wisely on such lines that the creation of a corrupt, discontented, and dangerous industrial proletariat is avoided." (26) It was quite explicit what Mrs Lewis' interest were, and it was quite possible that she could also have attributed the expulsion of the communists wholly to herself, which was only partly true.

The ICU gained a legitimation of sorts for its 'economistic' endeavours through its association with the liberals. The relationship with the liberals was more comfortable for Kadalie in that he could then drop any pretence of being a revolutionary.

Other Liberals, such as Rheinallt-Jones, were in the meanwhile recognising the ascendancy of the ICU in Johannesburg. Missions were sent around the country for the purpose of reconnoitring for the Joint Councils. The receptions which the missions received were not always enthusiastic. However, a considerable number of Joint Councils of Europeans and Natives, and where necessary Councils of Europeans and Coloureds, were established which were to form the nucleus of the Institute of Race Relations formed in 1929.

Winifred Holtby had approached the ICU

"with suggestions that their status as trade-unionists, and through them the status of all coloured workers might be made more satisfactory if they allowed her to make friends for them amongst the moderate socialist groups in England.. uncontaminated by violent communism." (27)

She was instrumental in assembling a group of influential English interested in Africa. One of these people was Creech-Jones, an official of important standing in the labour movement. Kadalie had written to him in October, and he in return had advised Kadalie to make an application for admission to the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which Kadalie did.

Even though as late as October Kadalie was still spouting his militant rhetoric, (in Cape Town, during an address, he described the ICU as the Vanguard of the oppressed peoples of Africa,) (28) he claimed, in his book, that the policy he was minded to adopt was the middle one between the opposing views of radicalism and moderatism.(29) This middle view impelled him to steer the Union away from the "doom as foreshadowed by the Communists." (30) It took its clearest form in the expulsion of the communists (see below), but it was also manifested in the manner in which an approach of moderation became the dominant tactic of the ICU. (See conferences of ICU in 1927 and 1928) The Union had not become 'docile' as some liberals had hoped, but it certainly presented itself as being a more co-operative quantity as far as the Liberals were concerned.

The communists remained in the Union during this flurry of behind the scenes work, which presumably was not well known. In October, soon after the arrest of Kadalie, because of his contravention of the restricting order, he made an impassioned speech at the Workers' Hall in

Johannesburg. "... it behoves the ICU... to get rid of the NAD... The reactionary policy of the Government will only help to popularise the ICU... We must rouse the workers of Africa to mass action.... In every square, on every corner, in every compound meetings must be held and workers roused." (31) Very soon afterwards, however, the militant tone of the ICU was conspicuously diminishing.

The unease between the communists and the moderates in the Union was heightened in the early months of 1926 when La Guma had issued his report as General Secretary. The report had soundly criticised the administration of the Union. The report condemned the commercial ventures which the Union had undertaken, as well as the innumerable unconstitutional activities which were taking place, especially in Durban and Johannesburg. However, he had one major criticism which particularly riled Kadalie. He said that

"I am prepared to state without a shadow of doubt that a great deal of corruption exists within the official ranks... for the good of the movement it is essential that cases of indiscipline and unconstitutional action be harshly dealt with irrespective of office and person... There seems a certain amount of confusion prevailing as to the powers of officials, and this is leading to friction which can be avoided in future if a frank and open discussion took place upon the question. From appearances recently it seemed that a distatorship is in embryo. This, as can be easily foreseen, will constitute the greatest danger of all....." (32)

In December, when the National Council met, it was resolved

that communists either resign from the Communist Party or face expulsion from the ICU. The decision taken to effect this resolution was passed by a slim majority. As Kadalie said,

"it was noticed that the Communist Party was prying deeper and deeper into the internal affairs of the Union. The climax was reached when the CP nominated Comrade J A La Guma (late General Secretary of the ICU) as their delegate to the forthcoming Brussels Conference. Comrade La Guma, without consulting his Head Office, where he was employed as a full-time paid official, accepted the Communist nomination... When he put his application before the National Council it was negatived... This led the Head Office to place on the agenda an item calling for a definite policy to be laid down defining the Union's relation to other political organs, such as the CP." (33)

It could be that La Guma's wish to go to Brussels offered the ICU the most appropriate moment to purge itself of the communists (thereby taking Lewis' advice that the Union would only gain acceptance once the Union was rid of its communists leanings.) This could present the impression that the ICU was not acting unreasonably, but with good cause. It had become clear that Champion had begun to develop a distaste for communist participation in the Union, and it was he who had seconded the resolution that the communists be removed. (The motion had been proposed by Maduna.) An amendment to the resolution that "no official be expelled by reason of his being a member of the CP" was defeated. The five communists, La Guma, Gomas, Khalile, Mbeki and one other, who all

had held positions of importance, refused to resign their CP membership and thus were expelled from the ICU. Mbeki subsequently renounced his CP membership and was retained in the Union.

Kadalie condemned the communists criticism of the Union's administration. The communists had said that

"much remains to be disclosed as to the financial and other business reasons behind the action of the national council."

Kadalie's reply was that "This statement, of course, is the mere squealing of puppets who have fallen from grace." (34) He also returned the insults flung at him by the CP, who called him a reactionary. "Not one of the expelled officials except, Gomas... know the workers," said Kadalie. (35) Kadalie emphasized the constitutional approach of the ICU as distinct from the CP's "haphazard and fanatical manner calculated to earn for them the contempt of the best school of thought in this country." (36)

The ICU thus reaffirmed its new alliance with the forces of moderation and renounced its connection with 'methods of extremism'. Having had a brief relationship with militant radicals, the ICU used a barrage of insults to justify their expulsion and pounced on instances in the press which congratulated it for its action. One article in the Bloemfontein 'Friend' was called, by the Herald, "almost the most important statement ever made relative to non-European trade-unionism." The article

spoke patronisingly that

"If black industrial claims are fairly considered and as far as possible met by the white man the Native will be content to follow the methods of organisation and of constitutional agitation adopted by the white trade-unionist." (37)

As Simons and Simons say, Kadalie had little reason to fear a communist take over of his union, since he had accomplished the task of removing them so comfortably. The operation was inspired largely by the liberals, as Kadalie later admitted, and all he had done was wait for the appropriate moment to play his hand.

The significance of the unease and schism between the radical/communist and moderate/liberal approach to trade unions in this setting, resided in the differential rewards paid out by the different approaches. Ignoring the relative possibilities of the different economic fronts, i.e. the radical and the moderate, it must be emphasized that trade-unionism as a potential avenue for change reveals itself as being constrictive. We saw that the CP's trade-union creations were qualitatively no different to that of the more moderate ICU. This was essentially because of the failure to perceive the 'economic' generating power of a trade union praxis.

It is my contention that radicalism, as a strategy distinct from moderation, was rejected by Kadalie because radicalism in a trade union formation was not of the kind

likely to secure the economic benefits and recognition he sought. Of far more positive value, was a policy which would allay the suspicions and the fears of the bourgeoisie, which would therefore be more tolerant and conciliatory in its attitude to the workers.

When reviewing the period of 1925 and the greater part of 1926 of the ICU, it is correct to see it as the 'radical' trade union stage, rather than the revolutionary stage. It is not to be doubted that the ICU did represent a threat to the government, but it was really only a vociferous protest against the status quo for its intransigence. This makes it difficult to claim that the ICU could have unseated capitalism. It is possible that if Kadalie had called out the workers, as he threatened countless times, he may have severely disrupted the economy. However, he lacked the revolutionary consciousness, and even the organisational base, to extend that sort of action into bringing about fundamental changes in the system. As a threat, he was involving himself in activities, in the period 1925 to 1926, which were not always in support of the capitalist system. It was here that his danger was most clearly perceived, and this was the reason for the eager extension of the hand of friendship on the part of the liberals. Once he was safely within the influence of the liberals, the reaction to his Union from the authorities was considerably more tolerant.

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N O T E S

1. The Umteteli wa Bantu however, took great delight in repeating some of the evidence which the ICU had presented to the Economic and Wage Commission of 1925. The newspaper claimed that "the ICU suggests that each mine should provide separate accommodation for the educated and illiterate Native." This evidence, the newspaper said, "scarcely accords with ICU professions." Umteteli wa Bantu 3/10/25. This evidence was probably the work of Champion. It is unlikely that Kadalie himself would have made such a mistake at that time.
2. Umteteli wa Bantu 9/1/26
3. Ibid 6/2/26
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Umteteli wa Bantu 6/3/26
7. Ibid
8. See Wickins The ICU for an explanation of this controversy p288
9. Umteteli wa Bantu 3/4/26
10. Kadalie My Life p85
11. Umteteli wa Bantu 17/4/26
12. The Workers' Herald 28/4/26
13. Ibid
14. The Workers' Herald 28/4/26
15. There are two elements to Jabavu's speech. He envisaged action being successful only on a nation-wide basis, yet in his attitude to 'exhausting constitutionalism' he appeared to imply that this last approach would not produce any results. Thus if his strategy had to be defined, it would seem that it was a nationalist one, in keeping with his ANC background.

16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. Ibid
19. Roux Time Longer Than Rope. p160
20. See Forman Papers UCT BC 581 b2.82. Champion to La Guma 18/1/26
21. Kadalie My Life p95
22. See TUCSA Papers. Minutes of meetings October 1926 onwards
23. See J D Krige to E Lewis 30/11/25 Johannesburg in B/Wits. Krige told Lewis that "I am a little doubtful whether native unions should be on the same lines as European, simply because the weapons of the trade union in the hands of the native would be highly dangerous." He did not share Lewis' commitment to guide the 'native', and refused her invitation to play a role in the ICU.
24. E Lewis Speech to the Synod, 1926 in B/Wits
25. E Lwis to General Smuts. 4/1/1927 in B/Wits
26. See Legassick : Social Change in South Africa. African Affairs vol 75 no.299 April 1976
27. E Lewis to the Prime Minister 3/1/1927 in B/Wits
28. The South African Worker 1/10/1926
29. Kadalie My Life p99
30. Ibid p100
31. The International 8/10/1926
32. J La Guma Report of the General Secretary, March 6th 1926 in the Forman Papers
33. The Workers' Herald 12/1/1927
34. Workers' Herald 12/1/1927
35. Ibid

36. Ibid

37. Ibid

CHAPTER EIGHT :ICU ACTIVITY IN 1927

Thus far we have paid scant attention to the activity of the ICU at actual branch level. It is not the purpose of this thesis to do so. (The work of Dr Wickins is invaluable in this respect.) Crucial to our work though, is the rapid growth of the ICU and the proliferation of branches during 1926-1927 in Natal, the Free State and even the Transvaal. This chapter attempts, to look at the reasons for this growth; to discover what the attractions of the ICU were; and finally what the leaders were promising their members.

There are four main areas of interest in this chapter. The first is the ICU's relationship with the moderate trade unions of Europe and the effect it had on relationships which the ICU had made in South Africa. The second strand of interest concerns the ICU's level and intensity of activity in the urban areas. The third strand of interest covers the rural areas and flows directly from the discussion on the urban areas. It is my view that the shift of attention from the town to the countryside signalled an awareness (not always explicit) of an urban failure and the perception of a more fruitful area of organisation in the rural field. The final strand is the activity of the ICU at the level

of litigation and financial speculation. These four areas, both cumulatively and separately, appeared to be responsible for the great stimulation of interest and loyalty to the ICU. It is also probably these foci, the manner in which the ICU addressed them, which brought about the final collapse of the ICU. The major theme which pervades the entire discussion is the haphazard and unsystematic, even unprincipled, manner in which the ICU came to handle each issue.

THE ICU AND THE MODERATE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

The period of 1927, saw, in several ways, the ICU seeking to strengthen its ranks and its bargaining position vis-a-vis 'white' South Africa. This emerged quite clearly in the attitude which the Union took to its association with the European labour movements. The ICU had affiliated with the International Federation of Trade Unions in Amsterdam on Creech-Jones' advice. This move was accompanied by great optimism in the ICU. The Workers' Herald had cause to say that

"Members of the ICU are asked to pay more attention to the wonderful strides made by the organisation during the past year. The affiliation of the ICU to the International Federation of Trade Unions with headquarters at Amsterdam and the formation of the 'Imperialism' Committee of the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain, who have assured us that they will help us in every possible way to gain full recognition within the labour and trade union movements, to give publicity to our grievances, and to give full political support where possible, are matters that have a far reaching

effect on the status of the organisation. Whereas before we were totally isolated on account of the antagonistic spirit of the white workers of this country, who are inherently a selfish and greedy class, we have now in the Amsterdam International and the ILP worthy and powerful allies, to whom we could appeal in moments of distress. It is the intention of the ICU to make immediate use of its affiliation and appeal for help in smashing the ubiquitous Native Administration-cum-sedition Bill."(1)

The connection was thus invested with a potential which had hitherto eluded the ICU in its relationships with other organisations. Indeed, the CP was still railed and bolshevism, was becoming the bete-noire of the organisation.

The ICU National Council, at its historic meeting in December of 1926, had decided to make an application to the Department of Labour to consider Kadalie as the official delegate to the Geneva Labour Conference. (At the same time, there was a struggle going on between the South African Association of Employees, (already then renamed the South African Trade Union Congress) and the Cape Federation of Labour about who should represent South Africa's workers at the conference in Geneva.) The ICU's claims to have the right to nominate a delegate were based on the following facts : (i) that the ICU was the only organisation affiliated to the IFTU, (ii) that the ICU had a combined membership larger than that of the Cape Federation and SATUC put together and (iii) that the ICU was the most representative labour organisation. The Union claimed to have 80,000 members

who were distributed thus :

Agricultural workers	15000
Building workers	5000
Clerks and shop workers	8000
Domestic workers	5000
Municipal workers	8000
Mine workers	5000
Marine workers	2500
Warehouse workers	2500
Railway workers	15000
Transport workers	6000
Wharfside workers	7000
General workers	10000.

(2)

The Department of Labour could hardly have sanctioned the ICU's request, and subsequently sent its own candidate. The Government sent the following telegram to the ICU :

"Re your telegram Minister of Labour cannot regard ICU as the most representative Industrial organisation in South Africa and is not prepared to nominate its nominee for Geneva." (3)

Despite Kadalie's socialist vocabulary, the ICU blamed the Government's rejection on its colour prejudice. It said that the refusal was the result of an 'anti-native' spirit. This was to be Kadalie's cue for stating his case in most of his speeches when he went to Europe. The impression was strongly transmitted of the English and the Afrikaner farmers fighting against the 'black' population.

The CP saw the matter otherwise. Despite what the Government was doing in terms of introducing repressive

legislation, the ICU was trying to clear the way for affiliation to the IFTU by inching out the communists and, in this way, had effectively sold out to the bourgeoisie. (4) This was the stage at which Kadalie had claimed revolutionary progress for the ICU. Revolutionary claims aside, the Union did experience a dramatic increase in numbers. In July of 1927, the Union's membership had increased by 30,000.

In the meanwhile Winifred Holtby had been clearing the way for Kadalie in England. The labour movement in England, fully endorsing labour socialism, was only too pleased with the communist purge and tried to underplay Kadalie and the ICU's anti-white sentiments. It was true, as we have said, that the ICU did seek 'white' co-operation, since this constituted the essence of its attempts to gain respectability. Yet, when such efforts were rebuffed, the Union assumed a militant stance. Each time this was to happen, Kadalie was severely rebuked by his liberal friends.

The 1927 Annual conference of the ICU was held in Durban in May. The conference was significant for its re-affirmation of the spirit which came out of the National Council meeting in December 1926. The Mayor of Durban was invited to open the conference, but after some evasive hedging declined, and said that he could not associate with an organisation which had a constitution

such as the ICU's. This was a reference to the famous preamble which was born out of the 1925 conference in Johannesburg. Finally, Kadalie was forced to perform the opening ceremony himself.

The Workers' Herald, as was becoming customary, claimed that the conference would

"remain green in the memories of all patriotic non-Europeans of South Africa. If there was one thing the conference revealed it was the solidarity of the Native and Coloured working class of today. This unity of spirit is undoubtedly due to the revolting legislation contemplated by the Union government." (5)

On the other hand, the conference felt that the legislation made it despair of a healthy relationship between 'whites' and 'blacks' which was so essential "for the future welfare of South Africa" It felt therefore, that if this measure (the Colour Bar Bill) were to be implemented, its National Council should "use every means within its power to resist the operation of this act, and we hereby pledge ourselves and the members whom we represent to loyally support, carry out and abide by any action we may be called upon to take." (6)

This fervour was further buttressed by a call to all the workers in the country, both 'black' and 'white', to join in one trade union movement against the common enemy of capitalism. However, in the end, this outburst of militancy which the Union had pledged it and its members to, consisted simply of observing a day "of protest against

such inhuman and undemocratic action of a civilised government." (7) The conference also resolved to ignore the government's decision on their request to send a delegate to Geneva, and instructed Kadalie to proceed to the International Labour Conference. It was hardly likely though, that while the Union was seeking recognition by the government, that it would stage a demonstration any more militant than it did. The constraints which it had accepted, by endorsing a line of respectable trade unionism, meant that it could not pursue a radicalism which would threaten these constraints. Even inside the limits of the bourgeois ideology, of which it had objectively become a part, the radical option was eliminated and the line of moderation was secured by making the alliance with the labour movement in Europe.

Therefore, even though people like Champion were deprecating the Labour Party of South Africa - he called them traitors - and the rank and file appeared to be endorsing the radical developments taken by the liberation movement there, it was not unexpected that Kadalie would relegate the usefulness of the strike weapon. There were people at the conference, members of a depleted 'Ginger Group', who felt that the strike should be used (against the Colour Bar Bills), since it was the only alternative which was left. "Kadalie sought a compromise and suggested a day of protest, which

several people claimed was too mild. Kadalie (then) retorted with an emotional outbreak, 'All right... if you want to lead a bloody revolution I am going to follow you, but mark you, if I do follow you I am going the whole way.' " (8)

The debate which was aroused by this controversy, was quickly dominated by the Moderates. Comrade AJ Phoofolo, having heard the names of Lenin and Trotsky mentioned thought that there were some members who were of communist leanings. He said that the resolution by the Gingerists was false, since there were many ways of killing a cat, "and I doubt whether Mbeki's resolution (Gingerist) will liberate the South African workers." (9) Kadalie and others pounced upon the radicals, having been given the lead by Phoofolo. Kadalie then emphasized the dangers and weakness of the strike weapon, and felt that all constitutional channels ought to be exhausted first," then, and only then, should other means be resorted to." (10)

Altogether the constitutional channels were to be thoroughly tried and utilised. Kadalie even gave sanction to the activity of the Wage Board. (11) The respectability which Kadalie sought prompted him to remark that

"There is still a section of the white population in this country that expects a 'native uprising' through our movement. It must be our duty to expel this silly thought from the minds of our European friends." (12)

The ICU thus abrogated the role, which it had determined for itself in its 1925 constitution. It no longer had any pretensions of leading the revolution against capitalism in South Africa and wholly allied itself to following a more comfortable path as an ordinary trade union in the South African social formation. (There were other incidents worthy of mention. S M Petterson, a 'white' worker, desired to be admitted as a fraternal delegate. Despite Kadalie's warnings against racialism, the conference did not seem happy about accepting him. His request was thus rejected. In the prolonged debate on the Native Administration Bill, among other things, the Bill was slated as being anti-British.)

Kadalie went to Europe early in June of that year. He spent two weeks at the Labour Conference at Geneva and addressed the Workers' Group, but was not officially allowed to participate in the proceedings. This exclusion caused somewhat of a minor stir in the Credentials Committee of the Conference. Wickins says, it appeared that they refused to set foot "into the minefield of South African race relations." (13) An explanation more trenchant than that is required, since it did appear that the 'old school' of British delegates did not wish to antagonise the official South African delegation. Kadalie subsequently claimed, how justifiably is not clear, that the South African Government had used all its influence to prevent the ICU from stating its case. (Meanwhile in South Africa, the Native Administration Bill, incorporating sections of the

dropped Sedition Bill, provoked much protest. The Bill was later to be altered. However, the notorious tenor of clause 26 remained unchanged.)

The formidable growth of the ICU and the authoritative voice of the European Labour movement in support, prompted furious discussion in South African Government departments. Wickins has brought this information to light, and there is some suggestion that a reappraisal of the ICU was underway. The official extension of the Wage Act to Africans was favourably considered in certain areas. The intention of the South African authorities was suggestive. They felt that "Native participation in industries ought to be allowed, but steered carefully." (14) They thereby partly incorporated the 'black' trade unions into the industrial bargaining system, but made them stay a respectful distance so that their actual bargaining power qua trade union was restricted.

In Europe Kadalie was blithely pursuing his task of spreading information about the legal and social incapacities of his Union. He was drawn closely into the network of some of the more influential liberal trade-unionists. He was allowed to address several meetings in the United Kingdom, as well as the Commonwealth Group of the Labour Party at the House of Commons. He also made visits to the Continent where he was generally received with enthusiasm, if not a great deal of curiosity. The most

significant point of Kadalie's visit and sojourn in Europe and England, was the advice plied on him by Creech-Jones and Holtby. His experience in Europe was epitomised by the line (ideological) which he gained from these two individuals. (15)

First of all, the idea was born of bringing an experienced trade unionist to South Africa to assist the ICU. And secondly, the force of Creech-Jones' argument that the constitution of the ICU be altered by doing away with the more blatant political aspects, was later implemented. These two suggestions were parallel assaults on the character of the ICU. The first implied that the ICU could improve its bargaining skills and administrative effectiveness by importing an adviser, and the second, that the preamble to the Union's constitution was unserviceable for a trade union.

Given these facts, they must be seen as an attempt to correct the immanent contradictions faced by a 'black' trade union in the South African setting. To the extent that such changes were deemed desirable by Creech-Jones and Holtby, they failed to understand the circumstances surrounding the existence of such an organisation. This meant that their ideological positions, rooted in trade-union praxis, could not conceive of the ICU playing a major role in the politics of South Africa. They felt, and this was correct

within trade union structure, that politics was not the primary realm of a trade union. They expressed the opinion that for the political interests of the workers, a political workers party be established. (It appeared that the South African Labour Party was one such party which they had in mind. However, they would not accept the Communist Party as a viable vehicle for the political expression of the African workers.)

Creech-Jones wrote to Kadalie, after having spoken to him, while he was still in England.

"Regarding the political position of the Trade Union, I think very great care must be taken. The Union must establish itself in the public mind in South Africa first as an industrial organisation, attempting by ordinary trade union efforts to improve the standard of life of the native workers. The real test of the Union, both by the state, and your own members and the public, will be the capacity of the Union to cater for the industrial needs of the natives. It is therefore important that whatever is done in the political field is done with caution, so that no one can suggest that the Union is unconstitutional... or that its main interest is politics to the prejudice of the white government. The Union must not be side tracked by communism, and should not attempt to put itself in the position of being an industrial movement one minute and political party the next.

Obviously the natives must attempt to secure political redress... Thus, while the Union should not embarrass itself by affiliation to the League of Imperialism, it should consider... whether it approves or not the objects of the South African Labour Party.... The test of your Union must be the objects of the South African Labour Party.

I have yet to study your constitution with you, but I think the preamble should be rewritten... your Union should profit by the experience of the British Trade Union movements and there is no reason that certain of the methods which have brought success here should not be worked out in South Africa... (About an adviser)... his task... (would be) to try

the Union could only confront the political aspect with the notion of reforming the lot of the workers in the society, so that they could achieve a better deal both politically and economically without altering the substantive basis of society.

Creech-Jones and Holtby argued for moderation possibly because they saw that militance was less likely to produce such results which would improve workers' bargaining positions. Far more feasible, they considered, was an approach which would not frighten the bourgeoisie, especially a bourgeoisie defined in racialistic and nationalist terms. They felt that a threatened bourgeoisie would be less amenable to making allowances to the working class.

THE URBAN AREAS

There has been little discussion of the ICU within the confines of the urban areas, that is outside of the direct labour focus. The ICU owed its rapid growth in part to the condition of the urban African in his location. It is surprising then that the ICU did not make more extensive use of this grievance area. In the discussion below particular attention is paid to the way in which the ICU came to deal with the important problem of urban accommodation. This area of interest never presented itself as being one of urgent attention as far as the ICU was concerned. In that the organisation was a trade

union, this area was possibly outside the scope of the Union's direct objectives. However, the ICU did come to play a part in this concern; we are thus looking at why this happened and what its end-results were. As a corollary to this question, the attitude adopted to the workers job situation in the urban areas is also to be considered. It will be seen that the ICU's all-round attitude and method of approach to the urban African worker was critical in deciding the fate of the ICU.

The Union, as was suggested in an earlier chapter, was dominated by its bureaucracy. The leadership, consisting of highly individualistic people, such as Champion and Kadalie, stunted the initiative of the rank and file membership. We have already seen glimpses of the life-style and the dominant pre-occupations of the urban working class. One can surmise that because of the multiple disabilities experienced by the working class (specifically that of social, economic and political exploitation), the membership saw in the growth of the Union a vehicle which was able to remedy its disabilities. It is with this understanding that one can perceive how the Cape fell into abeyance and adopted a feeling of suspicion towards the ICU. After the Union had established itself there, and had offered the members a glimpse of a potentially more equitable society, they had become disillusioned with the Union's failure to achieve any tangible results.(17)

Those victories which Kadalie had claimed for the Union were all of peripheral consequence only, and one suspects that they were his personal victories. The wage increases which did come about were hardly of the kind to placate the workers. The workers were subscribing, financially, to the Union and saw in the Union's constitution and heard from officials that money would be used to establish benefit funds as well as to take "shares in any syndicate approved by the National Council." (18) And yet they themselves benefitted little, either in finding financial assistance where needed, or in the Union making constructive efforts to change the nature of the society.

It is very likely that a similar disaffection was taking place in Johannesburg. Here the membership probably benefitted from the presence of the Union's headquarters at a social/entertainment level. Kadalie had said that "the social side of the African people was being revolutionised in Johannesburg by the ICU." (19) However, as to more material results produced by the Union, Kadalie could only cite the solitary example of the strike at Maytham's.

The Urban Areas Act was still bringing large parts of Johannesburg beneath its swath in 1926 and 1927. In August of 1926 an attorney, AP Benson, had taken up the cudgels of the African people who were being removed under the operation of the Act. He had held meetings

in Vrededorp with the people of the location and explained the implications of the Act to them. His plan was to make as many people as possible sign application forms calling on the Municipality to provide them with accommodation. (20) The Johannesburg Municipality in support of a proclamation by the Governor-General, had issued a notice warning people that it was a "criminal offence for any unexempted native to live in a house, street or a part of Johannesburg which did not come within the definition of a native location, village or hostel." (21)

"In terms of this law, therefore," declared Mr Benson, "there are many thousands of potential native criminals today. The law says, 'You are a criminal unless you do a certain thing,' but the Act which the law calls upon you all to perform depends solely upon the ability of the Johannesburg Municipality to make provision for you....If they cannot or will not do so, you must take such steps as may be necessary to prove to the Town Council that what is sauce for the native gander is sauce for the Municipal goose, and that the native also has some rights which can be upheld." (22)

In response, the Council replied that its application of the Urban Areas Act was not to be carried out for the whole of Johannesburg, but on a piece-meal basis. And furthermore, it contended, there was sufficient accommodation available to meet the existing demands.(23)

Benson claimed that, this reply notwithstanding, there existed a conflict of instructions between the Proclamation and the Municipal order.

The result of this was that an appeal made to the Appeal Court, presumably by Benson (and with the help of the ICU, as it claimed), was upheld. The gist of the decision was that "unless and until there is accommodation for all of the exempted natives in Johannesburg a proclamation may not be issued applying to the whole of the town... The other alternative is to proclaim certain specified portions of the municipality as areas in which it is forbidden for the natives to reside." (24) The victory was merely a technical one though. The Municipality was in no way deterred from continuing the application of the Act.

A fresh proclamation was issued in February aimed at the residents of the Ferreirastown complex. (25) On this occasion, the ICU was distinctly more in evidence than Mr Benson. After he had provided the cue, the ICU lost no time in making capital of the situation. The ICU held a mass meeting in the location where Benson's strategy was adopted. The Union would accumulate as many applications for accommodation as it could, and if the Municipality proved to be incapable of coping with the demand, the ICU would contest any action which the authorities decided to take against them. (26) S Dunn, who was acting general secretary of the Union, said that "We desire

to repudiate the suggestion that the mass meeting held at Ferreirastown was an indication of a militant attitude by natives and landlords." (27)

The ICU had made an alliance with the standholders of the location. This alliance was only strange in the sense that it may have appeared that the Union was making common cause with the rent-racketeers who were exploiting the African workers. However, the landlords were exposed to prosecution under the Act as well, and it was not unexpected that they should seek relief from the implementation of the Act, even if their own motives were hardly at one with the workers. (28)

The collected applications were taken to the Town Clerk, who admitted that the position regarding the application of the Act was in a tangled condition. (29) The municipality decided to test the bona fides of the applicants (600-). A tour of inspection revealed, alleged a deputation, that "the results show that 75 per cent of the cases revealed that answers did not agree with information supplied in respect of their applications. Many claimed to be married, and would require houses for families, the majority, it is now stated, are merely living with native women whose status as wives cannot be recognised." (30) The Council claimed that according to the number of accredited applications, the Council could provide accommodation for all of them. (31)

Sam Dunn claimed that the matter was handled with a great absence of sympathy. (32) The ICU's attempts to produce an alternative solution to the predicament of the evicted people had proved to be a failure. Apart from a few Parthian shots, the ICU lost all interest in the matter. It was only in June of 1928 that housing became an issue for the ICU again.

The African people of Johannesburg had to fend for themselves thereafter, (as they were accustomed to doing for many years.) They took the situation into hand themselves, and where they could they instituted Vigilance Associations to protect themselves from the authorities. They also issued demands which reflected their continuing dissatisfaction with urban conditions, and even the administration of the locations. (33) As a result of this, the Governor-General's February Proclamation was declared invalid as well. (34)

However, in the middle of 1928, the Municipality decided to implement the Act with vigour. Ferreiras-town, which had been proclaimed an affected area under the Act, managed to capture the attention of the ICU

once more. This time the ICU arranged for Mr Ballenden, a superintendent of locations, to address the people who were to be evicted from Ferreirastown.(35) The ICU revealed that Ballenden would explain reasons for the Council's action as well as provide guarantees that "where prompt ejections will create hardship, reasonable time will be allowed to the natives concerned to make the necessary arrangements for moving to their quarters." (36)

The action of the ICU may have brought about a delay in the more violent aspects of the situation, but it failed to bring real alleviation. The African residents of Ferreirastown were reluctant to move. In a short time scores of people were charged with illegally residing in the location. (37) By the end of July 300 families were forced to leave the area. The exodus was described by the Rand Daily Mail : "Families pushing carts, and with their goods and chattels carried in bundles, or packed on the backs of donkeys, gradually migrated to Marshalls-town, Ophirton, City and Suburban, the native townships and the various compounds." (38)

The ICU's action in the housing situation in Johannesburg was redolent of the manner in which the ANC had approached the grievances which the people were expressing during the 1917-1920 period. The ICU began to take an interest in the matter only after the people themselves had expressed dissatisfaction. In the event, the results of the ICU's interest were no different to those which the ANC managed to produce. At this level the ICU was heading for the same fate which befell the ANC. It became clear in 1928 and thereafter, that the ICU had failed the urban workers. This index emerged from the decline of interest in the ICU which the workers expressed. Branches on the Rand were reporting a dwindling membership and also a decrease in subscriptions.

By repudiating strong action to repair the wage grievances of workers, and by failing to make an impact on the determination of the fate of the workers in Johannesburg, the Union was experiencing a disaffection of support. This probably constituted the nub of the matter. By eschewing the strike, the leadership was distancing itself from the Union membership at large and had in fact reduced worker participation in the Union to a heavy subscription payment alone.

The strike weapon was the fundamental tool of trade unionism. And in as far as the Union excluded strike action from its praxis, and reduced democratic worker participation, the Union's stance of forced moderation signalled a growing rift between membership and leadership. (39) Bonner sees this as being fundamentally due to the 'elite or bourgeois background' of the leadership. (40) The Union set out on its trade Unionism path on initiative which was externally induced, and thus, according to Bonner, a leadership was imposed from the outside. He carries on to say that by contrast, "in European trade-unionism... leadership had developed organically from the working class." (41) The point made thus is faulty I think. It presumes that organically developed trade union leadership is ideologically superior to that which is developed elsewhere. It would appear, that ultimately, all leadership in the trade union setting has the potential for developing bourgeois aspirations. A more salient point to be made here, is that the trade union leaders confusedly adopted a political aim into their objectives, and in this sense sidetracked the economic objectives of the Union. But in tackling political issues, and thereby replacing the ANC, the ICU found that it could not permanently sustain extra-industrial demands and procedures for any length of time. The ICU's province was basically the reparation of economic disabilities, and in as far as

it propagated promises and ideas of the coming of a vastly different order, it was never by the means to be able to produce such a new order. Even when the workers in the Union had their minds addressed to political questions, their perspective remained that of workers. And because this perspective was not a revolutionary one, the approach to the political was awkward, precisely because their chief objective was to see that the Union met their economic grievances.

It became clear in the early months of 1926, and possibly into the following year as well, that the ICU was financially weak. The Union was living, as Wickins says, 'a hand-to-mouth existence.' (42) The branches of the Union were generally slow in their payments. This was a direct index of the flagging urban workers' interest in the organisation. It would be fair to say though, that where money was paid and irregular accounts kept, it was likely that defalcation on a fairly wide scale was syphoning off workers' contributions. It can be argued that the structure of the ICU, the distance which leadership had wrought between themselves and membership, actually encouraged abuse of funds. Inside a more democratic structure, it is unlikely that workers would have tolerated the lax discipline which many of the officers of the ICU showed. Workers themselves, it can safely be presumed, are sensitive to the way in which their

money is handled. It was only because they were so removed from the control and decision making mechanisms of the Union that it was possible to prevent them from understanding what was happening to their money. Corruption and defalcation were thus a direct function of the way in which the ICU structured itself. It was in this lean period that the Durban branch of the ICU maintained the Union. Unlike the rest of the country, the ICU branches in Durban were vibrant and loyal to Champion. His activities in Durban, it seemed, had encouraged an enthusiasm which was hardly witnessed elsewhere in the country. Champion's legal 'agitations' had won for him a reputation which provided a solid basis of support for the ICU.

THE RURAL QUESTION

The rural question in accounts of the ICU is still very much virgin field. The documents and accounts which are available are insufficiently informative. However, from the material which is available, it appears that several significant developments had taken place, not least of all an awakening of a rebellious spirit on the farms and rural areas which was given momentum by the upsurge of ICU influence.

The presence of the ICU in the rural areas is bewildering.

As a Trade union it is strange that the Union had gone into the rural field. There are some factors which could account for this. The ICU, despite its early intentions to bring agricultural workers into the organisational fold, had left that area largely unexploited and it was not until the late months of 1925 that membership from the rural areas, that of Natal in particular, was expanded on a large scale. It could be argued that the ICU had failed in the urban areas and it was this factor which precipitated a large movement into the rural areas.

The failure of the urban mission did not prompt a decision to invade the rural areas. Instead, the weakening of the Union's urban strength, through its failure to have taken stock of the vibrant consciousness of the urban workers, made it easier to shift attention to the rural areas. The relative opportunities in the rural areas were seen as being far more attractive at that stage. The annexation of the rural areas probably came about through desires of the rural workers to be organised, or, less definitely, there were individuals in the rural areas who perceived the possibilities of organisation and were therefore receptive to the ICU organising in that sphere.

Stimela Jingoos' record of the ICU experience in the rural areas is perhaps the most valuable source of information which has become available. (43)

He had heard Kadalie when the latter had visited Bethlehem in 1927. Jingoos, motivated by the force of Kadalie, began organising ICU branches in the small towns lying near to the present day Lesotho border. It has gone unrecorded, but it is likely that ICU penetration into rural areas elsewhere came with the same osmotic force. By 1927 out of a total of 88 ICU branches, 57 comprised of rural labour membership. The rural worker component of the total ICU membership was at least 70 per cent. (44) It can also only be speculated to what extent the existence of communication channels harnessed by migrant workers might have been influential in carrying word of the ICU.

The rural African population consisted of different categories. There were subsistence farmers who lived on crown-land and paid rent to the Government. There were also squatters who lived on 'white' farms. Slater estimates that there were 421,000 Africans squatting on these farms. (45) There existed a third group who received wages in cash or kind, and/or received the right to grow crops and keep cattle on their employer's land. (46)

The squatter in the Transvaal and the Free State had to work for his employer for a period of three months in a year. Labour tenants in Natal had to work for a longer period of about six months. There were two major areas of grievance in the rural areas; first of all, the rural workers were not happy about the

unavailability of land, and secondly the squatters resented the treatment meted out to them by farmers.

The 1925 Conference of the ICU in Johannesburg had indicated that the issue of land settlement was unsatisfactory.

"This conference submits to the government that in the absence of a definite scheme of land settlement as a compensatory measure the enormity of justice indicated upon the victims of this one-sided policy is incalculable and will positively provoke a deep-seated sense of resentment which the country can ill afford to ignore." (47)

The resolution, which was submitted to the Government, carried much insight, for it was on the back of this resentment that the ICU gained a foothold in Natal and the Free State.

Despite the aims of the 1913 Land Act to prevent squatting, this phenomenon and labour tenancy were still very much in evidence. The Pact Government published the Land Amendment Bill to bring to completion the intentions of the 1913 Land Act. As Wickins says, the purpose was to stop African "cash and share crop tenancies in white areas" and to move 'black' farmers into the scheduled reserved areas. However, it emerged that several farmers "did not want any governmental interference between themselves and their labour tenants." (48) Furthermore, despite the massive disadvantages of labour tenancy, Africans seemed to prefer tenancy to wage labour and, as Wickins said, were reluctant to move off 'white' land. (49)

The African workers on the farms also resented the extension of the scope of the Masters and Servants Act to embrace tenant labourers. The new Land Amendment Bill, which doubled the period of service of labour tenants from 90 to 180 days, added fuel to this dissatisfaction. It was said that the new Bill would "impose new obligations on the family without giving the protection of a registered contract except in the case of tenancies larger than 180 days. What was more, labour tenancies as well as share cropping tenancies were to be reduced in number and black farmers were forced to become a rural proletariat or pushed back into the overcrowded reserves or forced into the towns." (50)

However, if there existed a shortage of labour, it seems unlikely that farmers would have been pushing labour off the land, as was reported. It is possible that it was the African who refused to become a tenant who was evicted to be replaced by someone who would operate as a tenant. In September of 1927 Champion received a letter from a man who indicated that squatters were being pushed off the land. The man said that he was

"perturbed at the present situation of certain members of your union, and these are the members who have been ejected from the farms, and are at the present moment living on the sides of the

main road, with their herds... the majority of them are natives with large herds of cattle and flocks of goats and naturally enough, it is very difficult to find a farmer who will take these natives to reside on his farms." (51)

It is not a wholly unjustifiable conclusion to make that the competition of African squatter farmers was feared by the 'white' farmers. This fear was expressed numerous times in the columns of the Farmers' Weekly.(52) It seems, apart from those Africans who refused to become tenants, that squatters were ejected from 'white' farms because of the threat they posed to the viability of these farms. (53)

The ICU's involvement in the rural areas has yet to be prised open. However, the discontent which existed in these areas made such involvement feasible. The nature of the ICU's involvement was diverse. As far as the ICU leadership was concerned, it was thought, as Coka says,

"...that the ICU leaders were American Negroes who had come to deliver them from slavery. Distorted and exaggerated statements had brought about confused ideas about the whole movement. Others said it would cause the Boers to disgorge their farms; others said it was the beginning of mobilizing to fight against the Whites, and still others said that the conditions of the worker would be improved if they joined the ICU." (54)

It is clear that a millennial aura was cast around the Union. This aura, and the expectations which came from it, prompted an amazing sense of loyalty to the organisation. At Vryheid where the ICU once held a meeting, Coka described the audience as a "multitude not seen since

the news of King Dinizulu's death." (55) According to Coka there were over seven thousand people at the meeting. Jingoos describes similar gatherings in his book. It was said that people used to travel long distances to attend these meetings. (56)

The spirit and fever generated at these meetings demonstrated the results of the firebrand speeches which were invariably made. Kadalie, when he had visited Bethlehém, is reputed to have said, "We are all human beings ... it is true of all things made by black hands in South Africa. Once we have built something or made something, we are not allowed to use it... He (the white man) does not, and will not recognize that the sleepers and rails were laid by Africans who should share in the profit of their work." He carried on to enumerate the humiliations which 'blacks' had to suffer. The goal of the ICU, he said, was "that one day South Africa will be a country where black and white live side by side, and we Bantu will sit in Parliament and speak for other Bantu." (57)

The ICU, however, was not the only organisation which claimed to have the support of the African workers. An African Workers' Union had come into existence with aims which were in conflict with those of the ICU. (58) This Union disclaimed any political interest and appeared to serve the sole function of making 'well-behaved' African labour available to interested farmers. The organisation

claimed that African labourers were happy to work as monthly servants and "you can always get them free of charge from our organisation. This is the only way to reduce the frequent desertions and to end the present misunderstanding between employers and employees." (59)

However, the presence of this organisation hardly appeared to offset the influence which the ICU wielded. With so much talk of higher wages and improved conditions, the people placed an enormous trust in the ICU. They extended this trust to a preparedness to carry out the rudimentary strategy which the ICU had charted for them. (60) They were told by 'Mote the Free State ICU leader, "to go back to their work but to agitate for more money, and if a farmer did not pay their wages they ought to take him to court and 'ruin him' if necessary." (61) That certain members of the ICU did become impertinent and cheeky is not hard to believe. They had come to accept that the ICU would be able to support and defend their every move.

The farmers, on the other hand, were quick to observe the change of behaviour of their workers. Almost simultaneously, Farmers' Associations in Natal and the Free State started complaining of the activity of the ICU. (62) At Krantzkop in Natal, the Association requested the Prime Minister to put forward a Sedition Bill to deal with the 'socialistic' propoganda of the ICU.

It was also requested that punitive measures be meted out to chiefs who supported the ICU. (63) In Reitz in the Free State, a suggestion was made to the Farmers' Association there that the moribund Boerbond be resuscitated to work in the interests of the farmer and to act as a foil to the ICU.(64) Similar meetings were taking place elsewhere in the two provinces.

Farmers were indignant about demands for higher wages. It was felt that the demand for higher wages was utterly unreasonable and in excess of what the farmers could afford to pay. Most Farmers' Associations which experienced worker confrontation, invariably resolved to dismiss such workers. Simple membership of the ICU had become a stigma for the farmers; they would not tolerate workers who had been tainted by the ICU's propoganda.

The Natal Agricultural Union held a special Congress to consider the question of the ICU. The Congress was a repeat of all the Farmers' Associations' meetings, where all their phobiae were unpacked. (65) Two important resolutions were passed at the gathering :

- "(1) That this society is of opinion that the Farmers of Natal and East Griqualand should organise to protect themselves against the unjust and unreasonable action of trade union organisations and communistic bodies.
- (2) That this society submits for consideration as the basis of that organisation the constitution of the Farmers' Vigilance Organisation." (66)

War was thus virtually declared. These Vigilance

Associations later came to play an important role against the ICU. The Agricultural Unions also called on the government to implement direct measures to curb the activities of the ICU "and would suggest that the original clauses in the recent draft Native Administration Bill be re-introduced into the Native Administration Act of 1927." (67)

With farmers refusing to allow ICU workers on their farms and forcing trekking workers to state their reasons for travelling, their stock capital and how many dependants they had, a hard time was had of it by the workers. Not even Champion's efforts to attend and address the Agricultural Union were successful. The farmers thus refused to take cognisance of the workers' position.

Ejectment from farms, because of ICU allegiance, thus became a constant hazard to African workers. The matter was compounded by Solomon ka Dinizulu, the Zulu chief, who spoke strongly against the ICU and so served to strengthen the feeling in the minds of 'whites' that the ICU was perpetuating pernicious falsehoods in the minds of their labourers. (68) The difficulties of the farm labourer were supplemented by an increase in the cost of living, as well as the fact that their consumption of goods on the capital market increased very perceptibly.

Matters came to a head in March 1928 when farmers could no longer contain their outrage. It had been mistakenly reported to them that the ICU had been responsible for desecrating gravestones at the town of Greytown. They formed themselves into commandos and stormed ICU offices in Greytown, Weenen and Kranskop. Farmers elsewhere were also displaying an intense paranoia about the ICU. Jingo's records how much anxiety the ICU had caused a farmer who lived near Ottesdal. He, Jingo's, because he was responsible for instituting ICU branches, had become the object of much attention. Jingo's was described by this farmer,

"Ja but there is such a man. He goes up and down putting funny ideas into the heads of our volk, so that these days we don't understand each other anymore; we don't get on with our volk anymore. I don't want him on this farm. And I think you are that man. And I think I'm going to shoot somebody tonight." (69)

The reaction of the ICU leadership was to seek direct access to the most influential Agricultural Unions in the country. (70) Even Jabavu himself expressed regret at the inability to open up channels of communication with the farmers and the Agricultural Unions. In his moderate tones, he sought the government and the farmers to act with prudence in their dealings with the workers;

"such hasty and ill-conceived resolutions by farmers and government officials was merely sowing the seeds of acute race prejudice which could cause intolerable conditions for the coming generations." (71)

Although the ICU did certainly not endear itself to farmers, it also acted as a labour agency and assisted farmers, when so requested, in finding suitable people to fill job vacancies. Indeed, after the wholesale ejection from the farms, many farmers came back to the ICU for help in the recruitment of fresh labour. In keeping with the precedents set by urban branches, the rural branches used litigation fairly extensively. The firm of Cowley and Cowley had set up a branch of their office in the small town of Ixopo at the request of Champion. This branch managed a brisk flow of legal business for the area for the ICU. The action of being served a summons came as a surprise to many farmers. In the Western Transvaal, when a decision went against a prominent farmer there, it was felt "Unthinkable that a white's integrity should be called in question by a kaffir." (75)

Despite this kind of activity, the fervour with which many people approached the ICU soon dimmed. By 1926 it appeared as if

"the rank and file was getting out of hand. Many members ceased to pay their monthly dues. The wild promises about buying farms had given them eager expectations, and now that they were being ejected in hundreds from their farms under circumstances of revolting cruelty, they looked to their 'saviours' for a lead." (76)

Such a lead did not emerge. It does seem that the notion of buying farms had gone to people's heads,

despite as Wickins says, "that there is no evidence at all to support the suggestion that propogandists made rash promises of land to their eager audiences." (77) However, there was, by September 1927 already, a call for the purchase of farms for displaced labourers. Champion had written to General Hertzog, the Prime Minister, asking him to personally intervene so that such farms could be procured. (78)

Even though land may never have been promised on the public platform, it is certainly likely that the members had got wind of the idea and had certainly come to expect something from it. At the ICU Special Congress in Kimberley opened on the 13th of December 1927, Chief Dhlamini claimed that he was sent by the Dhlamini to "come and see their leader Mr Kadalie, and with regard to the message left with them by Mr Champion at Richmond - that of - (1) a rise of salaries for their boys (2) Dipping Regulations (3) Restrictions to cattle movements... that his people were anxious about the increase of wages" for their boys and to the buying of land : That his people were desirous that we should have our own stores so that the ICU members can only buy from these shops: That many of the people in Natal were rendered homeless and wandering about on the velds and... something should be done to get these settled down." (79)

This speech provoked the elaboration of the exact position

of the ICU to the question of buying farms; it also isolated future areas of tension inside the organisation. Kadalie felt that the Union ought to centralise the funds of the ICU to "help their brothers in Natal to get them funds." Champion pointed out that,

"Mr. Kadalie cannot buy land with an empty pocket... That at present there were no funds with which to buy land... Mr Kadalie in reply to Mr Champion, voiced that there is money in the ICU only that money is being wasted on the officials employed. That the people should not be taxed the sum of £5 for the reason that these people will soon lose hope in us." (80)

The debate showed Kadalie arguing with great optimism about the financial standing of the Union. Champion, on the other hand, was not entirely happy about the arrangement whereby Natal sponsored the rest of the Union. The debate veered towards Kadalie, and it was resolved that a National Council sub-committee be established to utilise whatever money the Union had for the purpose of buying farms.

It became very clear in 1928 that the ICU had let down the rural workers. Apart from running very successful legal campaigns for the workers, the ICU's activity never reached a positive plane - the purchase of farms failed to materialise - instead action centred on palliative measures. As rural delegates indicated at the annual conference of 1928, membership at the countryside was turning away from the ICU. There were people who had

been evicted from farms who thought that they would find relief in the ICU's farm buying scheme. Instead they were reported to be wandering aimlessly around the countryside with nowhere to stay. The pattern of enflamed expectations, heightened enthusiasm and then predictable disillusionment which had occurred in the urban areas repeated itself in the countryside. The ICU showed that it was incapable of sustaining a popular base; its internal structure, as well as the policies of reformism, in whatever palliative form, failed to keep the enthusiasm of the membership alive. It is possible that if the method of operation had been more democratically determined in the rural areas, there would have been a greater commitment to the ICU, as well as more constructive programme of action.

LITIGATION AND FINANCIAL SPECULATION

The Special Congress at Kimberley brought to light several important structural defects, inside the ICU. The organisational make-up of the ICU allowed the Union's leaders to indulge their special talents. The person who had taken greatest advantage of this leeway was Champion. This section focuses on the activity of Champion chiefly, since it was he who was responsible for furthering the ICU's use of litigation as well as providing a precedent for taking advantage of specific remunerative financial speculations.

The conference itself was a stormy one. It was reported that there was some resistance from the floor about rapprochement with the 'white' trade unions. In spite of this last gasp resistance, the victory of the forces of moderation was much in evidence. The most important point about the conference was its implementation of Creech-Jones' suggestions. The major distinction of the new constitution which the conference adopted, was its exclusion of the famous 1925 preamble. In this action, the Union officially dissociated itself from the radical character it had demonstrated in 1925. The purpose of the new constitution was to consummate the trade union nature of the ICU. (81)

There were serious attacks on Champion's credibility in the late months of 1927. These attacks exposed weaknesses in the organisation which were to cripple the functioning of the organisation as a whole. (We shall see in a later chapter how these came to bear on the splintering of the hierarchy of the ICU, and subsequently the rank and file as well.) Although the ICU's constitution had always made allowance for the participation "in syndicates approved of by the National Council and to establish such commercial enterprises as may be deemed necessary for the progress of the organisation or its members," this kind of activity, constitutional as it appeared, was frequently of nothing else but a speculative nature. (82) It sanctioned numerous

schemes of dubious feasibility. Furthermore, in certain cases, even the constitutional safeguards were insufficient protection against the improper handling of monies. As a result of this, the possibility of much abuse was permitted.

The Lenono case which had been brought to court by Champion (wherein he charged Lenono with libel), apart from proving to be a large financial burden on the ICU, showed how much confusion existed in the financial accounts and ledgers of the ICU. In the case of the Durban branch of the ICU, it had become almost impossible to analyse the books properly; this was brought on by the extensive mixing of Champion's personal monies with that of the Union. It became quite clear that the lax discipline which accompanied the control of very large sums of money induced, (or at least helped to do so,) a great deal of dishonesty. There were people who helped themselves to the ICU's funds out of sheer dishonesty. In the case of Champion, such an assertion cannot easily be made.

There were other motives behind Champion's behaviour. His demeanour in subsequent years suggests, despite his continued defence of the workers, that he had clear strains of a petty-bourgeois mentality. As early as June in 1926 an idea was put to him of starting a co-operative store in Durban "to be open to members only". Shares in the store would be made available at the cost of £10 each. There were visions of branches being

"started at Maritzburg etc., till to Ladysmith and so on... in order to show the white people of Natal that the time has come that we are able to control our own businesses."(83) Champion was not averse to the idea, although it never materialised. However, in Durban itself Champion had been more successful. He started a trading company called 'Vuka Africa'. When judgment was passed in the Lenono case, Champion himself did not emerge unscathed. Justice Tatham, the presiding judge, brought it to the notice of the court that there was some suspicion about the source of Champion's funds.

This small-business man consciousness was not restricted to Champion. There were certainly other individuals, and even the Workers' Herald on occasion, who were expressing an interest in taking up commercial and entrepreneurial ventures. The President of the ICU, James Gumbs, had visions of starting a huge flotation scheme in the name of the Union. (Gumbs to Champion) Most of this activity was taking place in and around Durban. Although there certainly were many officials who were honest in their approach to the need and use of funds, the inconsistent behaviour of others certainly built a high capacity for speculation and defalcation into the Union's administration.

The manner in which the Workers' Herald exposed its petty-bourgeois interests was more disguised. (The

nature of the advertisements in the newspaper is also revealing. A great number of these advertisements, there is no doubt though that revenue from this source was lucrative, carried images and symbols which epitomised and were designed to enhance personal respectability and status.) The ICU, through this medium, complained of opportunities which the Africans were wasting, and invoked the Africans to become self-reliant. The objects of 'self-reliance' were less clearly middle-class in inspiration than the objects of personal ventures undertaken by those members who operated without National Council sanction. (84)

At first, 'self-reliance' was envisaged as an attempt to make "the black man self-dependent. Let him work for himself and the so called 'Native' problem will vanish like thin smoke." (85) The purpose of this call at this stage was ambiguous, because, as the rest of the article read, there was a preoccupation with the strike issue. It is possible that during this time the Union had to find a means of propping up the morale of the workers. It therefore had to play up the issue of 'self-reliance' as a counter-point to its rejection of a strike strategy. It is true that around about this time, the Union was still very deeply immersed in the strike debate after the expulsion of the communists. It seems plausible therefore, that the announcement of such a scheme was intended to placate those workers clamouring for strike

action. In defence, the newspaper called the strike 'a two-edged sword' which would kill the perpetrators themselves in their use of it. "Before such horrors overwhelm this land, our advice to the African is that they should become self-reliant." (86)

It was only in subsequent months that the intentions of the Workers' Herald became clearer. While the call for 'self-reliance' was muted the first time, the aspirations of the Workers' Herald were laid bare in a later issue of the newspaper. The opinion was expressed that

"Opportunities galore go begging in this country while the African wastes his time in protests against the unjust treatment he receives at the hands of the ruling class.... the aggrieved must also seek new channels wherein to off-load his burden of sorrow." (87)

With the strike issue no longer a point of contention, the Workers' Herald could effectively dismiss it as a waste of time. After the expulsion of the communists had become a fait-accompli, the Union could concentrate on moulding a strategy and an approach without fearing the reproach of the radicals. The way was now open to the ICU to articulate its more distinctly petty-bourgeois instincts. The article ran thus :

"It is our firm belief that in the years to come all avenues of business, dependent or independent will be closed to the black man...the native must build up a counter business colour bar and help himself... The native gives up huge sums, daily, monthly and annually to the very sources that deny him a share in the profits he helps to swell.... At the present time in this country (thank God)

there is still a small opening in which the black man could exploit his business acumen. Why not then take time by the forelock and make whole propositions of these openings?.... All that is needed is sacrifice, honesty and a true spirit of loyalty to one another.

A six-million shilling fund will produce £300,000. This is enough money to start one thousand £300 ventures all over the country. When once such a scheme is floated... success is bound to follow. This will sound the death-knell of all these bad laws.

Thus we advise an industrial policy that will make the Native scratch for himself. When it is discovered that the South African black man is determined to fend for himself, those who look upon him now as if he were a child of three years will only be too glad to come forward and share the profits and the privileges of the country with him." (88)

The spirit of this leader article predicated a society structured on seemingly different terms to that of the existing society. It bore tinges of Garveyism, but differed from the Garveyist approach in that it envisaged a joint society with 'whites' at the end. It was foreshadowed that the new society would come through the balkanization of an African business class, which would build an alternative economy in competition with the 'white' economy. Within this scheme, it was suggested that the solution to the struggle in society would come through the maturation of a black business class, (which would grow along lines prescribed by capitalism.) This scheme allowed the Workers' Herald to off-load all its petty-bourgeois instincts. And because it was a petty-bourgeois orientated plan, it was more than a simple

search for a revised order of society; it was a plan which aimed at the sheer enlargement of the middle class order at the expense of the worker. In propogating the plan, the Workers' Herald spoke not of acting as an agency for all workers, but only for those workers who had business talent and who would do well to exploit such talent. (89)

Even though the ICU did not implement such a scheme, it is of importance to understand the ideological relevance of the plan. No longer, or less so, was the struggle defined in class terms. The Union added a small business consciousness to its trade union consciousness, and thereby wholly removed itself from participating in a struggle defined by its economic contradictions of rich and poor. Instead, the very class and people which the ICU once sought to abolish, it was now going to compete with. The sharing of society's wealth and profits would not come about through the dictatorship of the proletariat, but through the enterprise of the small businessman intent on self-reliance. This development inside the ICU was not without any roots or influence. Apart from the sway of clear aspirant-bourgeois, such as Champion, other organisations, such as the APO, were expressing similar calls in the same time period.

The ICU'S penchant for pursuing cases in law courts was

a direct influence of Champion. As it was said, "Action is the thing that counts so he immediately attached and caused to be abolished many of the degrading conditions that were hampering the progress of the African workers of that province." (90)

Such action consisted chiefly of relentlessly questioning the legality of certain regulations which applied to the African people of Natal. This kind of action certainly presented itself as tangible evidence of the ICU's constitutional endeavours to bring about change and relief. As we have seen in the case of Jingoos, litigation constituted a field of action of much promise in both the rural and the urban areas. A respect for this approach was set as early as the Kadalie deportation issue in late 1920, and was brought into full use during and after 1926.

The achievements of Champion in this field were indeed considerable. The cases which he took on were instrumental in clearing up the rights of African workers vis-a-vis their employers, and specific to Natal, the rights of the urban population in the municipal areas. By the 31st of January, the firm of Cowley and Cowley had handled sixty-nine cases for the ICU, "mostly against employers, including Durban Corporation." (91) Champion himself listed sixteen major cases, which he had contested himself. Amongst these, were charges brought against him by the Police, by the Mayor and the City Councillors.

Other more noteworthy cases which he had a hand in were the question of the curfew, the dipping of Africans after they had obtained a special pass enabling them to look for work in the urban area, the issue of women having to carry passes, the eviction orders on labourers by farmers, appeals against convictions (such as Kadalie's), cases where employers were forced to pay after they had wrongly entered into private agreements with workers and also issues of compensation to workers. (92)

Champion himself described these achievements thus ;
"Truly a super-human feat for a young man to accomplish in a few years." (93) These feats account for much of the prestige and glamour associated with the ICU in Natal, and it did indeed stimulate workers' interest and enthusiasm. Whereas the other provinces failed to rally continued support to the ICU, the Natal branch survived (as the ICU base Natal later on) into the 1930s when Champion was banished from Natal by Oswald Pirow. This thrust also constituted a large drain on the Union's resources. So expensive had litigation become that the Union was unable to settle its account with Cowley and Cowley in 1928. (94)

At a branch of the firm in Ixopo, the Union had to pay a guarantee of £60 a month for the use of the firm's services. Cowley claimed that his firm's own expenses were climbing drastically as well. And "we understand" he said, "that a similar blow has already been dealt to

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the prestige of the ICU in the country districts of Natal, where the Natives are no longer going to the ICU offices because the offices cannot render the legal help which they have promised." (95) The branches could not sustain the costs which accompanied the luxury of receiving legal assistance every time a matter arose which looked faintly like court material.

Champion's activities were not out of tune with the overall tenor of the Union's activities. Legal representation for the workers, to British Justice, was aimed at improving the status of the worker, his working conditions and to bring about more tolerable conditions in society. In this sphere Champion's activities were laudable, and in as far as he was being successful, he was playing the role of a trade unionist with considerable more success than most of the other leaders. In fact, he had been active in ascertaining and qualifying the legitimacy of actions undertaken by the Union long before Creech-Jones suggested the same to Kadalie. (96)

However, it can be argued that this kind of action entrenched the trade union as the most successful agency for change in the society. The workers saw the trade union as the most viable vehicle for achieving redress of their grievances. It was possibly by virtue of the success of the ICU in Natal, that the actions and strategy of the Union were legitimated. This process was seen

to be self-perpetuating where trade union action led the consciousness of workers into accepting the capacity of legal action to correct the deficiencies of workers; and thereby elevated such action to a definitive level where it became difficult to see beyond this action to other strategical alternatives. Taken in this light, the pre-occupation of Champion with litigation was reformist in its character. Legal action centred on short term objectives and hardly ever managed to question the ideological basis of the legal structure. (97)

It is perhaps naive to expect that a radical appraisal of the existing law would have been undertaken by those who used it in the ICU. However, the very positivist nature of the legal framework beguiled its users into investing it with qualities which it intrinsically lacked. Apart from serving to drain the ICU's funds, the use of this strategy vaulted the ICU into a vicious circle from which it could not, perhaps did not wish to extricate itself. Legal action came to be seen and taken as definitive action. Indeed, the fact that litigation was a luxury did not even occur to leaders in the ICU. Once they had adopted it as a line of action other potential avenues of action were swept out of thought. The dominance of litigation and its acceptance as an infallible system, served to cement the reformism which pervaded the ICU.

NOTES

1. The Workers' Herald 18/3/1927
2. ICU to the Department of Labour 19/1/1927
in B/Wits
3. "Facts to the Labour Conference." Extract from
article on the representation of South African
Workers at the International Labour Conference.
8/6/1927 in B/Wits
4. Simons and Simons: Class and Colour p 359
5. The Workers' Herald 17/5/1927
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. The Workers' Herald 15/6/1927
13. Wickins: The ICU p 416
14. Ibid p430
15. See the correspondence between Creech-Jones
and Kadalie in the Forman Papers.
16. Creech-Jones to Kadalie, 15/9/1927. Forman Papers.
17. See article on the ICU situation in the Cape
in Workers' Herald 6/4/1927. There is also talk
of tribal jealousies. What this specifically re-
ferred to is not clear.
18. Karis and Carter: From Protest to Opposition
vol. 1 p325. Revised Constitution of the ICU, 1925.
19. Kadalie: My Life p 86
20. Rand Daily Mail 23/8/1926
21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. The Star 25/8/1926

24. The Star 28/1/1927
25. Umteteli wa Bantu 5/3/1927
26. The Star 5/3/1927
27. Ibid
28. The Star 11/3/1927
29. The Star 14/3/1927
30. The Star 17/3/1927
31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. The Star 31/5/1927; Rand Daily Mail 4/6/1927
34. The Star 21/6/1927
35. The Star 29/6/1927
36. Ibid
37. Rand Daily Mail 11,12 and 14/7/1928
38. Rand Daily Mail 2/8/1928
39. John Gomas in an interview 21/9/1976. He explicitly said, how much influenced by his CP affiliation is questionable, that the workers disagreed with the policy of Kadalie. "Workers wanted action; they were getting low wages, so they wanted their wages to be improved."
40. P Bonner: The Decline and Fall of the ICU. Labour Bulletin Sept/Oct 1974, p 41.
41. Ibid
42. Wickins Op Cit p339
43. S Jingoos: A Chief is a Chief by the People.
44. Wickins Op Cit p459
45. H Slater: A Fresh look at the ICU. African History Works Progress Seminar, p 15.
46. Wickins Op Cit p360
47. Kadalie Op Cit p75
48. Slater Op Cit p15
49. Wickins Op Cit p365

50. Ibid p366; Farmers' Weekly 15/9/1926
51. I cannot distinguish the name of the writer. It seems to be Anderson Bennet. Forman Papers BC 581 B311
52. Farmers' Weekly 20/10/1926
53. Cases were reported where even stock disputes broke out between farmers and squatters. See Jingoos Op Cit.
54. G Coka: The Story of Gilbert Coka in M Perham's Ten Africans p 295.
55. Ibid
56. Jingoos Op Cit p103
57. Ibid p101
58. Farmers' Weekly 9/2/1927
59. Ibid
60. The Star 18/7/1927 in the Forman Papers
61. Wickins Op Cit 369
62. Farmers' Weekly 1/6/1927 and 8/6/1927
63. Ibid
64. Ibid
65. Farmers' Weekly 24/8/1927
66. The Star 19/8/1927 in the Forman Papers
67. Ibid
68. Ilanga lase Natal 12/8/1927 in the Forman Papers
69. Jingoos Op Cit p109
70. Champion to South African Agricultural Union 31/10/1927. Forman Papers
71. The Workers' Herald 15/9/1927
72. The Workers' Herald 5/9/1929 in the Forman Papers
73. Ibid
74. Jingoos Op Cit p114. To what extent such activity may have impinged on the area of authority of the chiefs is not clear. Perhaps this may explain the hostile attitude of Dinizulu to some extent.
75. Ibid p116

76. Coka Op Cit p305 351.
77. Wickins Op Cit p368
78. Champion to Hertzog 24/9/1927. Forman Papers
79. ICU Special Congress Kimberley December 1927
Forman Papers
80. Ibid
81. The Reorganisation of the ICU. To delegates of
the Special Congress to be held at Kimberley.
16th December 1927. Forman Papers.
82. The ICU Constitution and Rules, 1927. Saffery Papers.
83. JSE Nahloom to Champion 19/6/1926. Forman Papers.
84. Workers' Herald 18/3/1927 and 15/10/1927
85. Workers' Herald 18/3/1927
86. Ibid
87. Workers' Herald 15/10/1927
88. Ibid
89. Ibid
90. AWG Champion: The Truth About the ICU p22
91. Wickins Op Cit p349
92. Ibid
93. AWG Champion Op Cit p22
94. C Cowley to AWG Champion 12/3/1928. Forman Papers.
95. Ibid
96. Creech-Jones to Kadalie 15/9/1927. Forman Papers.
97. See Karl Marx: The German Ideology Part 1 p150-152
in the Marx-Engels Reader. Marx's discussion turns
chiefly on property relations vis-a-vis the legal
structure. There are important insights in this
discussion which reveal the dependent nature of the
legal structure. Law does not stand as an independent
code, but is tied to the interest of the dominant
class. "Since the state is the form in which the
individuals of a ruling class assert their common
interests, and in which the whole civil society of an
epoch is epitomised, it follows that the state mediates
in the formation of all common institutions and that
the institutions receive a political form. Hence the
illusion that the law is based on the will, and indeed
on the will divorced from its real basis-on free will.
Similarly, justice is in its turn reduced to the actual
laws." Ibid p151.

CHAPTER NINE :THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE ICU

By 1928 the ICU had reached the stage where liberal influence had reached its peak. The Union however, did not unanimously accept a liberal line. At the Special Congress held in Kimberley in December of 1927, a significant number of the delegates opposed the idea of 'whites' holding office in the ICU. A message from members employed at a firm called Messrs Lawrence and Company was read to the Congress; it indicated that

"they would wait till you (Kadalie) return from England before joining the ICU. I asked why, they replied that before General Smuts went to England he was a Dutchman, but when he returned, he was an Englishman. We are waiting to see whether Kadalie comes back a whiteman or a blackman." (1)

This chapter looks at the critical year of 1928 in the ICU. During this year, not only had Ballinger (the man who was to be the adviser from England) firmly stamped his own character on to the Union, but he and his liberal patrons had made such an obvious play for the control of the ICU. It was in this atmosphere that both Kadalie and Champion ultimately left the ICU to form their own variations of the organisation. The causes for Champion leaving the ICU were markedly

different to those of Kadalie. The interest of this chapter thus is the ascendancy of liberalism, the splintering of the ICU and the effect which these events had on the viability of the ICU. It is my contention that the personal acrimony and slander which was flung so indiscreetly in the embittered final months of the ICU disguised, and obscured, the deeper malaise in which the ICU was strategically and ideologically. Ultimately, it was a concatenation of several factors which destroyed the ICU. However, the inability to sustain the workers' interest and support was critical in determining the fortunes of the ICU.

The debate generated at the Congress in December 1927 once more reflected the continuing confusion which had beset the ICU. The ICU connection with the IFTU was used by Kadalie and others as a major reason for the Union not taking an anti-white stance. Considerable odium was left amongst the delegates though. The Union thereafter sought an alliance with SATUC, which was gently turned down. (2) Kadalie had envisaged that the ICU would acquire full trade union status by achieving the 'white' trade union acceptance, and explained anti 'whiteism' in his Union as being a result "of our people not having had a special training in the labour movement." (3) Kadalie qualified his stance

at the meeting by saying that "we do not abandon the idea, however, that our ultimate goal must be international socialism." (4) The socialism, Kadalie had in mind was the sort propogated by the Labour Party in England, that which sought Kadalie to avoid antagonising the liberals in South Africa. Furthermore, as has been seen, the English protectors of the ICU encouraged Kadalie to foster links with the South African Labour Party. Such an approach, it was thought, would earn that respectability which the ICU sought. Although there were many people inside the ICU who disagreed with such an approach, it is probably true that this was the end-point which most people in the ICU looked forward to.

Kadalie himself though, on occasion neglected to remember his commitment to a moderate approach of detente with 'whites' in South Africa. Although his public appearances, by and large, showed his continuing allegiance to moderatism (he had condemned the action of 'Mote in the Free State as well as threatened strike action), he was guilty of breaking this code on a number of occasions. On the 22nd April 1928, he addressed a meeting in Marabasstad Pretoria where he revealed a particularly indiscreet streak and made scathing attacks on the government. He was arrested under the Native Administration Act of 1927 and

appeared before a magistrate in Pretoria on the third of May. (5)

A witness, who had been taking notes, quoted him as saying,

"The Prime Minister, General Hertzog, has been working on the native question for the last three years. He has been telling you that he is going to divide the country between white and black and we of the ICU want to know who gave him the right to try to do a thing like that, this country.... has never belonged to General Hertzog and ancestors... never belongs (sic) to Moshesh or any of the other chiefs. This country belongs to the Lord and the fulness thereof. They came here only with the Bible. They stole this country." (6)

The day after he had made the speech he wrote to the Rand Daily Mail, where he tried to explain any misconception of his speech. He claimed that he was attacking capitalism and the capitalists. (7) Kadalie, defended by Advocate Schreiner (later to become a judge), was acquitted on the grounds that he was not inciting race animosity.

This lapse aside, Kadalie's other activities were more consistent with the outlook which he had adopted. He had been moving closer to joint action with the ANC. However, he had made it a condition of the rapprochement that the ANC repudiate its connection with communism. At the meeting of the Executive Councils of the two bodies he forwarded a resolution which went thus :

"That this joint meeting... agrees in principle that co-operation between the Congress and the ICU in matters of native policy, namely the Government's Native Bills and Pass Laws is essential if the political and economic programme of our people is to be secured. But it declares that, in pursuing these objects, the ANC hereby repudiates its association with the CP, which of late has openly identified itself with the Congress...." (8)

Gumede, the leader of the ANC, had indeed given the impression that the Congress and the CP had become better friends. Kadalie, at this stage, was by no means prepared to expose himself a second time to the manoeuvring of the CP.

Mrs Lewis, in the meantime, had been busying herself in her efforts to consummate her good work in the ICU. She saw Champion as "a dangerous tempered man. Would have a bad influence on a crowd and never a good one. So I hope that good will come from ill and Kadalie get rid of him." (9) She still persisted in her idea of importing young men to guard the Union and "to sustain Kadalie and other decent ICU men." (10) She had also conceived the idea of having a sportsground built for the ICU so that the members could occupy themselves in worthwhile activity. She had hoped to get some money from the Carnegie Trust for this purpose.

She was also instrumental in bringing the ICU into much closer co-operation with the Joint Council in Johannesburg,

a process which was completed when William Ballinger came into the ICU. Mrs Lewis also urgently expressed the need to keep the "ICU from touching the country districts." (11) This was probably in keeping with her notion of gradually introducing the 'native' into 'civilisation', so that he would not be too rapidly absorbed into a lifestyle which she thought he was incapable of handling.

As Wickins says, she was also disturbed by the Union's sour relationship with the government at that stage.(12) However, Kadalie and other leaders of the ICU, could not always maintain an approach of moderation. They had to use seemingly radical terms of address in their speeches to show that their absorption into the line of moderation was not distancing them from the immediate demands of the workers. They also had to show that detente with 'whites' was not numbing them to the presence of radical conflict in society. There always existed the danger, as was seen at Kimberley, of a potent division of interest about the race issue specifically. The solution was to present a strong front to members while pursuing the more crucial aims of achieving co-operation with the 'white' liberals.(13)

There were far more sapping tensions inside the ICU in this time period though. The large drain of finance to pay for the costs of litigation, as well as such

peculation and mismanagement of funds which did occur, caused fatal strain in the Union. These were, in the main, the result of the weak discipline and the poor organisational structure of the Union, which were later to be exacerbated by a power struggle between Kadalie and Champion. During Kadalie's absence in Europe, Champion had comfortably set himself up and had appropriated, justifiably so, much of the credit for the rapid growth of the organisation.

This difference of opinion took on a clear form in the discussions on finance which took place at the eighth Labour Conference of the ICU in Bloemfontein during April of 1928. It had already surfaced at the meeting of the National Council in January when the issue of buying farms had again been raised (where it was acknowledged that ICU funds were perilously low, and that the rural workers had been failed). This meeting high-lighted Kadalie's impatience with arrangements whereby the ICU was made to pay for "Champion's personal business," a reference to the libel suit brought against Champion by John Dube. Kadalie insisted that the costs of the Dube the Lenono cases be settled by Champion himself. (14)

The Eighth Annual Conference, which was held in Bloemfontein at the same time as the ANC Annual Conference, was again eulogised by the Workers' Herald as an event

which would go "down to history as one epoch-making event."(15) There were indeed a number of signal improvements to the conference. Kadalie had submitted an Economic and Political Programme for 1928, as well as a manifesto suggesting a policy for the 1929 General Elections. These documents clearly illustrated the ideological position of the ICU. The document on the General Elections carried a fascinating review by Kadalie of his relationship with Hertzog.

"We have now had close to four years of Pact Government... we propose to give our view of the matter, and we say that our action was justified if only for the reason that we have gained greatly in experience. We have learnt that the substitution of one capitalist government for another can bring no benefits to the worker.... The Smuts Government was a government of, by and for the industrial capitalists. The Hertzog Government is one of rural capitalists, of big-landowners and farmers which, true to type, is more thoroughly conservative and more blatantly opposed to working class interests than the more progressive government of urban exploiters."(16)

Hertzog's legislative action was thrown up as an attempt to eliminate the limited franchise rights of Africans. The tone of Kadalie's opening lines seemed to suggest that a much stronger line would be taken against the forces of capitalism. However, he negated such an analysis (that of the above) by calling for "some form of parliamentary representation which will secure to the Native peoples a direct voice in the management

of their affairs." (17) He proved that he was not deviating from his moderatism at all. Those "Europeans, who have proved themselves tried and trusted friends and champions of the Native peoples and their rights" would be the most fit people to propogate the 'Native' cause. (18)

In this action he returned himself to the conceptual line which he had imbued from the liberals and the trade-unionists in England. As we have said before, his consciousness preceding his trade-union involvement was already an aspirant bourgeois one, however, it was the courtship of the liberals which brought him to pursue a more distinct moderate line within the bourgeois framework. Whereas Kadalie may have been spouting a militant line in the period of 1925 to the close of 1926, by accepting the assistance of the liberals he was strategically prevented from adopting a radical alternative. He thus functioned in a framework where liberal agencies were to be used to assist in the elimination of the more odious aspects of capitalism. The liberal bridge was one which had to be preserved as it brought some measure of recognition and respectability for the ICU. The liberals were also influential in the intellectual sphere of the bourgeoisie where they were advantageously placed and able to point out major areas of conflict potential; they were thus able to focus attention on and petition for those aspects of the system in need of amelioration.

The Economic and Political Programme which Kadalie had drawn up bore the same reformist stamp as the policy which was proposed for the 1929 General Election. The programme represented an attempt by Kadalie to weld together economic and political issues. However, it needs to be said that the analysis which it produced was essentially bourgeois in nature as far as it reflected the ICU's commitment to extract maximum benefits for the African people from the capitalist system. The document was an implicit endorsement of capitalism; it projected aims and demands which envisaged the ability of the capitalist system to reform itself. There was a strong rejection of the status of the 'black' man, and on this basis the government in power was to be opposed; an alternative government, it was hoped, would take steps to rectify the status of the 'black' man. The document itself abounded with socialist references and Marxian catch-phrases. However, this was hardly an index of a socialist consciousness, on the contrary, Kadalie's usage of a radical vocabulary obscured his true ideological position. (Kadalie's utilization of a radical vocabulary actually operated as a mystification, and served to present issues in a light which pretended to be objective. This, however, indicated his failure to distinguish between the real underlying relationships and structures in the society and those which presented themselves as the most important determinants.)

In presenting the document, Kadalie saw it as being "consonant with the terms of its constitution." (19) In this sense the programme already prescribed the limits of action which the Union would undertake. In as far as the constitution bound the ICU to negotiate for better wages, any programme thus inspired inevitably carried the same reformist urge. This outlook, it must be stressed, represented the most logical and correct line of action which the ICU could adopt. Any other line of approach was falsely premised, since the Union, from inception, was not conceived as a revolutionary organisation, but as a trade union designed to achieve reforms for the benefit of the worker.

Kadalie though, did not fail to try to make the approach look otherwise. He said that the programme would have to be agitational in character, "for we are not recognised as citizens in our country." (20) He also described the programme as being of an "agrarian character, for the reason that the greater proportion of our membership comprises rural workers, landless peasants, whose dissatisfaction with conditions is greater than that of the workers in the urban areas." (21) In this he explicitly acknowledged the shift of the ICU's attention from the urban areas. Perhaps this also represented a part acknowledgement of the failure of the urban mission of the ICU.

His proposals contained in the document were the following, inter alia :

As far as wages were concerned there should be constant agitation, yet "improvements, however small must be welcomed.... Every endeavour should be made to enter into friendly negotiations with farmers' associations, employers' organisations and individual employers in the towns, with a view to securing improvements. As an immediate objective, a minimum wage of £5 per month... should be striven for..... (this) is not to be regarded as end in itself, but as a stepping stone to the ultimate achievement of the full economic rights of the native workers...."

As far as the franchise was concerned it felt that

"in the event of the franchise being withdrawn a protest should be made by means of a mammoth petition....."

With regard to the Pass Laws,

"I propose that the government be petitioned to suspend the Pass Laws for, say, a period of six months...."

And finally the land question was briefed,

"The total area of land set aside for exclusive native occupation.....is notoriously inadequate. Parliament should be petitioned through one or more of its members to increase the native reserves so as to make provision for the landless native farmers." (22)

The programme hardly gave the impression of being especially 'agrarian'. However, the ICU was presented as decidedly more trade union in nature than ever before.

The Union was to act as a pressure group only; where agitation was envisaged it was not of the revolutionary kind, but such agitation which would be of an entirely constitutional character. It is incorrect to draw Kadalie out of the bourgeois orbit and to create the revolutionary in him. It was his bourgeois definition and understanding of society which prevented him from becoming a revolutionary (in the sense of seeking an entire revision of the structure of society.) Instead, his actions were restricted to making pleas and to bargain with the authorities for the expansion of its ranks. Similarly, the alliance secured with the ANC, part of the ICU's efforts to seek "co-operation, irrespective of class or colour", was seen as being in the best interests of South Africa. (23) It was in this background that Kadalie could be seen as striving for an extraordinary capitalist utopia in South Africa.

The Conference itself was attended by people who, not even two years earlier, would have had nothing to do with the ICU. The Bishop of Bloemfontein was present, as was the superintendant of the African location in the city. The superintendant, Mr Cooper, "declared that relations between employer and employee (sic) was very good. The policy of consultation and sweet reasonableness had borne fruit." (24) He also spoke of the need to curb the influx of Africans into Bloemfontein since the flow contributed to the lowering of wages.

The debate on the farm labourers showed up the organisation's confusion on the subject. A delegate from Natal, ZC Ngubane, criticised the Union saying that,

"too many promises were made... as a matter of fact in his parts members were refusing to pay up their subscription cards, because the ICU made promises and did not fulfil them. He did not like to go back to his branches with nothing to report, so he asked for authority to go to the people and ask them to contribute towards a farm." (27)

No clear guidance on the issue emerged. The ICU was reticent to admit that its foray into the rural areas had produced a great disappointment. However, amid much wrangling, the Conference empowered provincial authorities to handle such purchasing and other financial transactions in the rural areas where they did occur. This was a part concession to the Natal Province which itself had come at the receiving end of several disparaging insinuations.

During the conference the normal cross-flow of rhetoric from the left and right factions of the organisation was again very much in evidence. The right stressed constitutionalism and the left staked their demands for radical strike action. On the whole, the radicals were outvoted and those resolutions moved by the right gained stronger support. The conciliation sought with the ANC and SATUC were generally commended and given the blessing of most of the members of the ICU.

Yet while the Union was indulging in so much free debate, and revealed its incapacity to cope with several of the major issues, Champion had been suspended by a closed meeting of the National Council. The National Council had probably received the report of the accountants Windram and Hooper, who had *been* appointed to investigate into the accounts of the Durban ICU. The accountants report said,

"Speaking generally, the books are merely disjointed memoranda recording in the aggregate the receipt and disbursement of very considerable sums of money, but there is no information as to what became of balances and there is no summarised record of receipts and expenditure in ledger form." (28)

It was revealed that Champion, apart from making several other improper transactions, had used his own bank account for the depositing of the ICU's trust fund money. (29) Comment was also passed on Champion's interest in the 'Vuka Africa' company.

"It seems to us to be decidedly irregular that a whole time servant of the ICU should also fill the position of Manager of a Joint Stock Company's business, more especially when his duty as Branch Secretary of the ICU comes so clearly in conflict with his interest as Manager of Vuka Africa Ltd.... we are not concerned with the question whether the employment of Vuka Africa Ltd was the most convenient method of feeding the ICU delegates or whether it was good business for Champion; we are only concerned to point out the invidious position in which he stood in disbursing Trust Funds to a company in which he was personally interested, even if he was not actually the owner." (30)

The conversion of the Durban ICU into the African Workers' Club was also considered in the report. It was revealed that the club possessed property which was available for use by membership on payment, an action which was contrary to the constitution. It appeared that the African Workers' Club had in fact become an independent unit, sanctioned and governed by a constitution of its own. (31) In a reference to the Lenono case, where Champion was accused of mishandling ICU funds, the accountants remarked that

"we notice that there appears to have been a marked disinclination on the part of Champion to produce evidence in support of his statements. ...we can only come to one of two conclusions, either he could not produce the evidence or did not think it in his interest to do so." (32)

The accountants were certainly provoking a storm, but they refrained from making direct statements indicting Champion. Instead they left the suggestion very clearly that Champion was guilty of abusing ICU funds.(33)

It was this suggestion that the National Council pounced upon. An exaggeratedly violent reaction ensued on the tabling of the report. The National Council's outraged reaction allowed Kadalie to achieve two objectives: he was now able to use Champion as a scapegoat for the poor state of the ICU's finances and thereby also able to camouflage the guilt of other offending officials (this action also helped to stay a government

enquiry into the Union); and, secondly, Kadalie was able to remove Champion from office and thus eliminated the single serious rival to his position as leader. (34)

The rest of the conference was devoted to a discussion on the Greytown and Krantzkop disturbances. Once again differences of opinion emerged between the left and the right as to what should be done. The right sought to take advantage of remedial litigation, whereas the left, with much bravado wanted to see the offices in these towns re-opened for the sake of 'freedom and justice.' (35) Much wrangling took place on the issue of litigation, many saw it as being a waste of money. This debate led to an uncomfortable discussion on how best to go about challenging the pass laws. The left wanted an end to resolutions and to take action, such as the workers in Pretoria had already taken. The right ultimately prevailed and decided to undertake, with the assistance of the ANC, a number of test cases with regard to the Pass Laws. (36)

After the conference the dissension which emerged between Champion and Kadalie boomeranged into a division of loyalty between the Natal and the rest of the country. The Durban branch of the ICU had taken grave exception to Champion's suspension. They hastily summoned Kadalie

to Durban to account for his part in the suspension of Champion. Kadalie appeared to accept the challenge, but when he reached Pietermaritzburg he took fright and was loathe to go any further. The meeting became aware of his reluctance to come down as far as Durban, and already aroused to anger, deputed a contingent to collect Kadalie in Pietermaritzburg. He was taken to the meeting, which had waited until the early hours of the morning for him to appear. His presence there was by no means comfortable. During his address he was heckled and baited.

"Other natives had to be moved from the hall by their friends. Things continued in this way, getting steadily worse...an indescribable uproar (broke) on the quiet 5 o'clock morning. For an instant it looked as if the platform was going to be rushed..." (37)

The meeting adjourned at six in the morning, having secured a promise from Kadalie that he would return the same evening to continue his address. The meeting reassembled that night. However, Kadalie was not going to brave his life this time and returned to Johannesburg. When it was announced to the meeting that Kadalie had returned to Johannesburg there "was anger and disappointment." (38) The meeting proceeded and took resolutions indicating that they thought Champion's suspension to be unconstitutional, and demanded his re-instatement. There was also considerable talk of seceding from the ICU. (39)

Meanwhile there had arisen a 'Clean Administration Group' in Johannesburg itself. The group issued a manifesto which Kadalie had much to say about.

"One thing I know the members of the Clean Administration Group are in close touch with the enemies of the Non-European Workers. As a matter of fact, their manifesto was drafted by two political renegades." (40)

There were also other individuals, close friends of Kadalie, who were unsparing in their criticism. De Norman thought that the manifesto would be a revelation

"to the 'Great man's friends (Europeans) some of whom regard him as an Angel.... One thing however, the so-called left-wingers agree with us is that Kadalie must go." (41)

By this time the Union was irreparably broken. Not long after Kadalie had failed to satisfy the Durban branch about Champion's suspension, they had seceded and had invited Champion to hold the leading position of general secretary of their own union. Champion explained the secession thus : "The secession in Natal did not take place because I was suspended but because headquarters was not paying the staff of these branches and meeting other rightful claims." (42)

Under these circumstances, where "the position in Natal is now hopeless,... while closing of offices continues. Property attached and sold. I think it is my duty to accept invitation of Natal ICU and help my people." (43)

The separate union constituted itself on the 31st of May and disclaimed any relationship with the parent ICU. They claimed that the point of the secession was the decentralisation of control whereby each province could control its own monetary affairs. (44) And thus was the ICU yase Natal born. De Norman, it seemed, had hopes of joining Champion. "I love working for the African workers" he said, "Money is no concern as long as I can get a living wage. At the same time I can assist you in commercial concerns." (45) Despite his great interest in the workers, the attractions of the ICU yase Natal, vis-a-vis the ICU, were great for De Norman. The potential of linking up with Champion's petty-bourgeois concerns was not lost on him.

Kadalie, attempting to stay the hostile tide, tried to stem widespread disaffiliation and spoke of the need to implement a bold programme. The 'bold programme' which he referred to, was that decided upon at Bloemfontein. He claimed that his arrest in April was a testament to his commitment to that programme, "and how many of us have furthered that programme?... If the rank and file still trust me and give me loyal and courageous comrades, I offer myself to lead the agitation for abolition of Pass Laws, a minimum wage for non-European workers throughout South Africa.... Now is the time for our emancipation. (46)

He called for the establishment of a special fund to save the ICU from its debt which "we must morally acknowledge." (47)

Apart from the attempts to delay the eviction of residents from Ferreirastown in June and July of 1928, and convening a conference between employers and organisations representing Africans over the wage question in 1929, the ICU was considerably removed from the daily hardships of the African people in Johannesburg. (48) The African people of Johannesburg were still being subjected to the trauma of the Urban Areas Act which by 1929 was extended to the Southern Suburbs. In many instances the people had organised their own protests. The washerwomen in Wester Native Township had submitted a petition to the authorities complaining that they were "working on starvation wages, and are therefore unable to pay their rent." (49) Those people who came under the effect of the Urban Areas Act in many instances simply ignored notices warning them that they would have to move. (50)

The Town Council was working furiously to ensure that they would be able to accommodate all of Johannesburg's African population still outside the locations. At the beginning of 1928 it was estimated that there were still 37000 outstanding men and women who had to be accommodated. (51) Slum clearance was acknowledged

to have failed in some areas. It was reported that the proclamations did not always have the desirable effect. As soon as an area had been proclaimed an affected area under the Urban Areas Act, and after the people had moved out, fresh Africans coming from outside the town simply took the places of those who had lately moved out. The Town Council admitted that although over £500,000 had been spent on the rehousing project, the matter had in fact only been fringed and that a considerable sum of money was still necessary to rise above the problem. (52)

The ICU seemed to exist in a very different atmosphere to that of the people in Johannesburg. It certainly, still commanded a following in the city; however, this following was rapidly diminishing. Dues and subscriptions to the organisation continued to come in during 1928; it was becoming apparent though that the monies were insufficient to meet and honour the large outstanding debts which the Union had incurred.

It was in this fashion that the ICU succumbed to its multiple contradictions. It had failed to win over the bourgeoisie through its constitutional agitation. Instead, that agitation, in as far as it encompassed litigation, had brought on it expensive debts and had served to bring about schism and dissension in the Union.

William Ballinger's arrival as the 'guardian angel' of the ICU was too late. His purpose of setting up the ICU as a true trade union was missionary in tone, (53) but should also be seen as a shibboleth. The ICU, although avowedly a trade union, had to address itself to issues which were not always narrowly economic. However, the difficulty arose in attempting to sustain the industrial base in areas which were removed from trade unionism and which could not be solved by simple bargaining processes. To sustain its membership and attraction, the Union had to embrace political issues, but it was incompetent and insufficiently armoured to be able to meet the demands emanating out of such issues.

Ballinger's arrival was heralded with great excitement. Soon after his arrival he was given a rousing reception at the Workers' Hall in Johannesburg. Howard Pim and Rheinallt-Jones of the Johannesburg Joint Council, Gumede of the ANC and Gumbs of the ICU each delivered an address of welcome to Ballinger. (54) Ballinger's initial speech carried a suggestion of much that he had learnt from Holtby and Creech-Jones in England before he came. He warned the ICU against revolutionary ideas and emphasized that a strike should be the last effort of any trade union "because it is a gesture of despair. That is what we have found in the old country. But that does not mean that you are afraid,

it means you are willing to negotiate on every possible point, and to ascertain how far you can meet the other man's wishes in so far as negotiations are concerned."(55)

Ballinger's addition to the ICU secured the organisation to the bourgeois bodies, such as the Joint Councils, the Churches, the Universities and so on. Howard Pim had written to Winifred Holtby saying that,

"No healthy Native Trade Union movement can develop in South Africa or prove permanent without European assistance....(About Ballinger) The sensible way in which he commenced his work impressed me and I am sure that he deserves support. Before my departure I introduced him to the principal government officials and to other persons of influence with whom his work will bring him in contact." (56)

Thus was the ideological domination of the respectable bourgeoisie consummated. In Ballinger the liberals had someone on whom they could rely to steer the ICU away from any unexpected radical influences. Some members of the ICU gloated over this nexus. A memorandum was produced which lauded the Union for its line of moderation and played up the beneficial results which it was thought the association with the liberals would bring. (57)

In the beginning Ballinger had had difficulty in obtaining a residence permit, but once it had become clear that he was the "protege of the Johannesburg Joint Council and the eminently respectable liberals" he was given a temporary permit which did not require periodic

renewal. (58) Indeed Ballinger came to be regarded with a measure of respect by the Prime Minister, who was reputed to have said that "Far from there being any reason for expelling Mr Ballinger he is, perhaps to be welcomed." (59) Champion was more than suspicious of Ballinger and wanted to know who was financing him. Kadalie was publicly extremely optimistic about his new adviser, however, in his book, he claimed that he was rather disappointed with him.(60)

The communists were quite blatant in their denunciation of Ballinger. Both Weinbren and Roux scorned his 'Chamber of Mines' friends' and his capacity for ingratiating himself with the government. (61) Ballinger, on his part, seemed to suffer from a lack of tact, and after discovering "on his arrival in Johannesburg... that the ICU was in debt to the extent of nearly £2000", made speeches indicating that the ICU was to be organised on 'new and saner' lines.(62) Such statements could hardly have sounded flattering to Kadalie, said Roux.(63)

However, it was true that Ballinger had come into an invidious situation, at a time when it seemed that the ICU was going through its first death throes. He belatedly introduced financial reforms into the Union and had Howard Pim's accounting firm in to audit the books. At the public relations level, his strategy was to eliminate the vapid noises and brash promises that

leaders had become accustomed to making. An attempt to secure a general agreement with farmers failed, primarily because of the reputation which the ICU had acquired in its earlier encounter with the farmers.

During the period in which he and Kadalie still enjoyed some measure of accord, a number of events occurred. A strike took place at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Laboratory in Pretoria where the workers were members of the ICU. The Department of Agriculture was unwilling to negotiate with the ICU on the matter, even though Ballinger had managed to secure the backing of SATUC. (64) At a higher level, the ICU presented an opportunity for Hertzog to rid himself of Walter Madeley who occupied the post of Minister of Telegraphs and Posts. Madeley had refused to grant the ICU an interview after they had requested that he see them. He was however, prepared to accept WH Andrews as an emissary. Undaunted by this condition, Kadalie and Ballinger decided to accompany Andrews, regardless of the consequences. The consequences were drastic indeed. The event infuriated Hertzog, who had forbidden such meetings altogether, and now finding a ready excuse for eliminating Madeley, omitted him from a reconstituted cabinet. Even while the government had seemed to be more tolerant in its attitude to the ICU, it could not yet allow the ICU to gain the impression that it had become entirely acceptable.

Ballinger and Kadalie "appeared to get along famously"(65) in their early association. However, as Ballinger's activity in the Union stepped up, it became clear that he was behaving less as the adviser, but as the leader of the Union himself. His aim was to turn the Union into a definite negotiating body. This approach was emphasized in his speeches and addresses. Addressing a conference of Superintendents of native Locations in Bloemfontein in November of 1928, he said that,

"he was glad to address people who were in close contact with the natives... The ICU of today he urged, should be allowed to develop on trade union lines. If this were done, they would have an incentive to take their proper place in the civilisation which the Europeans had brought here. The ICU was formed as a mass organisation in 1919--all body with very little head or feet. It developed and became truculent. Natives were told they would get farms if they joined the movement, which had no real leadership.... Today.... the tactics of the movement had been changed.... "Give the ICU a chance to prove itself in the new form with its new methods," said Mr Ballinger. Delegates should not judge the movement by some of its old leaders who went about the country breathing fire and murder." (66)

Kadalie did not take kindly to these disparaging comments and a mutual antagonism developed between him and Ballinger. In a bid to secure his own pre-eminence, he once more launched out on the vituperative tirades which had been his trademark in the early years of the ICU. One such performance occurred at Lichtenburg which dismayed and angered the liberals, who saw all their good efforts

turned to nought. Not being able to contend with the situation, he applied for leave in November which was extended to a year at the Bloemfontein meeting of the National Council in January of 1929. His reasons for seeking this reprieve, he claimed, were domestic.

However, a few weeks later an article appeared in the Johannesburg 'Star' announcing Kadalie's resignation from the ICU. He stated that he objected to the policy of "servitude as conducted by those now at the head of affairs." (67) Subsequent to this a verbal skirmish between Kadalie and the officials of the ICU took place which rapidly deteriorated to a violent cross-flow of personal abuse. Kadalie quickly changed into the militant and condemned the right wing take over of the Union. The Union officials, defending their stand, in their turn enumerated the numerous occasions on which Kadalie had stood in the way of negotiations with the government. (68)

A memorandum, much influenced by Ballinger, which was issued in response to Kadalie's resignation, did not question the stance and the drift of the Union to the liberal moderate camp at all. This association, which Kadalie had always been wont to underplay, was accepted as normal by the Union's reigning officials, and any deviation from it was considered to be retrogressive.

The Union had set as its goal, the acceptance and recognition by the government, and even a luminary like Kadalie was not going to be allowed to stand in the path of its objective. In Ballinger, the liberals, initially accepted by Kadalie, found a person in whom they could place a greater trust, someone who would lead the Union away from the mercurial nature which Kadalie had bestowed on it.

The ICU thus splintered even further. Kadalie set up his own Independent ICU after attempting a ridiculous coup d'etat of the parent body. (69) He also established a newspaper called 'New Africa' with the help of some people who were less interested in the 'black' workers, than in earning a quick fortune through speculative land deals. He sought the help of the British Labour Party, as well as the League Against Imperialism and was rebuffed from both sides. His newspaper carried lengthy harangues against Ballinger; "Ballingerism has failed in South Africa in spite of the backing it receives from the Chamber of Mines organs." (70)

Indeed, with Kadalie's disaffection, Ballinger was left with a depleted and undertalented staff which, apart from enthusiasm, hardly had the ability to survive. He had won over the whole-hearted support

of the moderates in the Joint Councils, as well as many members of the ANC (Ka I Seme amongst the more prominent.) Ka I Seme wrote to Champion extolling the virtues of Ballinger and urged him to throw in his lot with the original ICU. (71)

Ballinger remained with the original ICU for a couple of years, heading a small but persistent band of old and some newly recruited members. Kadalie retreated to East London with Henry Tyamzashe and there conducted the affairs of his version of the ICU which continued to exist well into 1940. He was involved in a very large strike at the East London Docks not many years after he had moved to the Border town. This strike manifested all of Kadalie's bravado and ended rather ignominiously when he allowed himself to be fooled by the trickery of the authorities. At the end of 1929 Ballinger verified the existence of eight different independent versions of the ICU. ICU bodies sprang up all over the country, in the OFS, the Eastern Cape (where there were two in one location), Natal and the Transvaal. The disintegration of the original Union was perhaps necessary by the end of 1928, its presence was responsible for the dissemination of a great deal of confusion amongst the African workers. The manner in which the ICU succumbed to its contradictions was not very savoury though.

Meanwhile, Champion was ruling over a relatively active Union in Durban. He managed to involve himself in countless pleas to the government, to the Native Commissioner of Natal without much success. In June of 1929 a large riot took place in Durban prompted by the thoughtless actions of government. In the Commission of Enquiry which followed the event, it emerged that the ICU yase Natal had been responsible for high-lighting African peoples' grievances. Despite the evidence that Champion had actually attempted to stop the rioting, it was said that he had effectively sown "the seed of discontent in the minds of his fellow native, less favoured than himself, and in causing much friction between employer and native employee, and between the Borough Council and the Natives." (72) A number of people were killed in the riots which brought a great deal of 'white' acrimony on the Union. Champion, despite the efforts he had made to ingratiate himself with the Government at the expense of the Durban Local Authorities, was banished from Natal in 1930.

The final two years of the original ICU, 1928 and 1929, passed in relative calm. The Union, controlled by Ballinger, was properly constitutional in its approach and enjoyed cordial relationships with the other major organisations. Membership, however, was not enchanted with the lack-lustre performance of the ICU. With an

obvious failure in the rural areas and a similar inability to meet or realise the expectations of the urban workers, the ICU was no longer able to command the mass support which it once had.

N O T E S

1. J Shuba 18/12/1927 Read by Mrs Pearse at the Congress
2. TUCSA Papers Wits. 1928 minutes of SATUC. See meeting held on 15/1/1928
3. B/UCT See BC 347 A5 VII 1
4. Ibid
5. Kadalie, My Life pl68
6. King versus Clements Kadalie 29/5/1928, B/Wits
7. Kadalie. Op Cit pl69
8. Umteteli wa Bantu 14/4/1928
9. Lewis to Holtby. Dated 12/12/1928, which must be mistaken. This letter was probably written in 1927. B/Wits.
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Wickins, The ICU p466
13. See Simons. Race and Class. Note their comment on the ICU's inability to realise its reformist aims. p 365
14. Wickins Op Cit p469
15. Workers' Herald 12/5/1928
16. Parliamentary General Elections, 1929. A policy for the ICU to be submitted to the Congress by the National Council. B/UCT
17. Ibid
18. Ibid
19. ICU Economic and Political Programme for 1928 by Clements Kadalie... to be submitted to the Congress by the National Council. B/UCT
20. Ibid

21. Ibid
22. Ibid
23. The Workers' Herald 12/5/1928
24. ~~I~~bid
25. Ibid
26. Ibid
27. Ibid
28. Investigation and Report: Natal Provincial and Durban Offices of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. Forman Papers.
29. Ibid
30. Ibid
31. Ibid
32. Ibid
33. Ibid
34. See letter written by Batty to Champion 18/4/1928 in the Forman Collection
35. Wickins Op Cit p486
36. Ibid p488
37. Natal Witness 28/4/1928 in Forman Papers
38. Natal Mercury 28/4/1928 Forman Papers
39. Ibid
40. Manifesto written by Kadalie 9/7/1928 in B/Wits
41. R de Norman to Champion 28/6/1928. Forman Papers
42. Natal Advertiser 20/6/1928. Forman Papers
43. Ibid

44. Natal Advertiser 13/6/1928. Forman Papers
45. De Norman to Champion 28/6/1928. Forman Papers
46. Manifesto written by Kadalie. Op Cit
47. Ibid
48. See Rand Daily Mail and the Star for 29/6/1928 and Star for 21/5/1929 and 29/5/1929
49. Rand Daily Mail 17/5/1929
50. Star 30/1/1929
51. Rand Daily Mail 7/2/1928
52. Rand Daily Mail 28/1/1928
53. Wickins Op Cit p515
54. Umteteli wa Bantu 28/7/1928
55. Ibid
56. Pim to Holtby 30/9/1928 B/Wits
57. Memorandum ICU. Undated B/UCT BC 347 A5 VIII 12
58. Wickins Op Cit p515
59. Roux, Time Longer than Rope p179
60. C Kadalie My Life p178 - 179
61. E. Roux ; What is the ILP doing in South Africa, from the Saffery Papers. B Weinbren, letter to the editor of the Labour Monthly 15/6/1929, B/Wits
62. Winifred Holtby and Africa by W Ballinger in B/UCT
63. Roux Op Cit p179
64. Roux Op Cit p180, Wickins Op Cit 524
65. Wickins Op Cit 530
66. From Forman Papers
67. Roux, Op Cit p185

68. To the President, Provincial Secretaries, Branch Secretaries and Committees, and all members of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa. 13/2/1929. Re - Clements Kadalie and his resignation. B/UCT
69. Roux Op Cit p187"
70. Wickins Op Cit p550
71. Seme to Champion, no date B/Wits
72. Commissioner de Waal's Report into the Durban Riots p4 Forman Papers

CHAPTER TEN :A CONCLUSION

After looking at the working class in South Africa and those bodies which have come into being to speak for it, one is certainly left with a great heap of incongruencies and inconsistencies. The element of incongruousness reveals itself most strongly in the process of bifurcation which took place inside the organisations which came to represent the working masses. This process was most marked in the ICU, where a specific disjunction of interest between the leadership and the membership pervaded the organisation for much of its life. The outgrowth of mass organisations was a natural and logical consequence of the consciousness of the workers. During the high protest period of 1917 to 1920 it was inevitable that organisational forms would be sought to give a coherence to what the workers were saying and demanding. However, as soon as organisational control over the workers was achieved, workers input into the definition of protest, and even struggle was reduced. Protest became structured in terms of the definitions of leadership.

To suggest that the ICU betrayed the workers is putting the matter too strongly. However, the ICU can to some

extent be regarded to have failed the workers, to have missed the cues which the workers were providing. The initial success of the ICU was owed to its ability to perceive and articulate the workers most pressing grievances. The 1919 Dockworkers strike could only have occurred because of the apposite manner in which the ICU had managed (albeit at another organisation's instigation) to pinpoint causes of dissatisfaction. When it became apparent that the ICU and the workers in their grimy locations were travelling on two different paths, the workers - the lifestuff of the ICU's existence - became disenchanted with the ICU.

The objects of the ICU in its middle and mature years began to move adrift of the interests of the workers. During the high protest period and immediately after it, the organisation managed to hold the interest of the workers on the specific wage issue; yet when wages were seen not to have increased significantly, if they had been increased at all, and when the economy took on a healthier form, such enthusiasm began to pall. The ICU survived only because of its ability to shift attention from one area to another, to move the gospel-wagon along. When Cape Town was in the ascendancy as far as the ICU was concerned Johannesburg never existed as an area of support. By the time the 'Good News' had reached Johannesburg, it had already grown stale

in the mouth of Cape Town. A similar shuffle took place between town and country. The ICU was not quite able to sustain worker interest at a regular and consistent pitch. Although a real worker based opposition did not grow inside the ICU, membership showed their disagreement by simply deserting the ranks of the ICU.

It is possible that the lack of a definable trade union structure, the absence of work-floor committees, shop-stewards and the sectionalisation of the Union into visible industrial sections gave impetus to the oligarchal control of the Union. The goals of the leaders were able to gain dominance over those of the rank and file because of the inadequate transmission mechanisms which existed in the ICU. There hardly existed channels to translate the interests of the workers into actual policy. This was partly due to the fact that literacy skills and administrative expertise remained outside the reach of the ordinary membership. More important though, was the custom that important decisions could only be decided at National Executive level. People on the floor at branch level were thus impotent to influence the overall Union policy. Even the conference, where major decisions were achieved by the domination of the platform, offered the Union but little opportunity for the active participation of its

rank and file.

The ICU was thus essentially undemocratic, in both the passive and active senses. (1) Because a visible rank and file front, vis-a-vis the leadership, did not emerge in the ICU, a conflict of goals inside the Union was not explicitly articulated. Such a problem scarcely appeared to arise and was never considered. However, the fact that membership fell off, and that at the worker level, outside the framework of the ICU's organisational structure, action was being undertaken without organisational sanction, indicated a real conflict of goals.

The nature of the conflict interest problem in the ICU was certainly not independent of the institutional entrenchment of the Union. It is a characteristic of organisations, reminds Hyman,

"that they are more or less deliberately created, and are created to achieve some specific purpose. But it has long been recognised that original goals are often supplemented and extended; procedures devised for the efficient attainment of these goals become sanctified as ends in themselves; institutional goals develop, reflecting the needs of the organisation itself (or its leaders), which may conflict with its overt objectives." (2)

The Union's goals and interests had taken on a character which reflected the priority of institutional needs.

Recognition and acceptability came to be built into the

value structure of the ICU, to the subjugation of the more elementary trade union functions of the organisation. It was with this complexion that the ICU began to develop an independent character, and drifted away from the functions which determined and encouraged worker enthusiasm. Concomitant with the desire for recognition and acceptability there went the policy of moderation; and along with the institutionalisation of these ends came the establishment of a dichotomy between workers and leaders. Workers themselves were being distanced from the Union by its non-democratic policy and by those strategies and actions which it had adopted; most of which excluded the participation of the rank and file.

The impetus for this development in the ICU came from the reformist nature of trade unionism itself. The leadership of the ICU was schooled, right from the beginning, in constitutional and non-revolutionary behaviour. Objectives were to improve worker conditions, employer-employee relations and so on. Leadership, despite the fact that the ICU had numerous instances of intractable militance to its credit, became absorbed into a praxis of 'sensible' moderation. Such a stance was the result of the apparent failure to make an impression on the authorities either through sheep-like ingratiation (the Hertzog alliance) or vociferous

militance (the CP axis). The ICU could have successfully continued to exist well beyond its early death had the rank and file given encouragement to this policy of expediency of the Union. However, the preoccupations of the working class and those of the ICU were significantly divergent. It was, it can be posited, of little value to the rank and file that the ICU receive the sanction of the government.

The rank and file in their material situations, and the consciousness which was created in this environment, appeared to be considerably in advance of the goal entrenched in the ICU's range of objectives. The workers showed an understanding of their situations which was designed to modify and improve their miserable conditions. The workers themselves were not revolutionary. They could not have developed a revolutionary consciousness in a vacuum. The consciousness revealed itself to be progressive though; their common subjection to the ravages of bad living conditions, low wages united them in a combination of resistance. This was the most progressive characteristic of the working people during this period. The leadership on the other hand produced an ideological character which reflected the prevailing condition of the working class as a whole, in its divided character.

The ideological outlook of each generation in a capitalist society is determined by the development of the relationship between the forces of production. Social formations in the South African setting had evolved to the stage where the race variable impinged and determined a specific division of labour; the 'white' (franchised and free) workers were divided from the 'black' (unfranchised and unfree) workers and both sections responded to their situations in predictable ways. The 'white' workers sought the preservation of existing arrangements whereas there were 'blacks' who sought its abolition. The ICU clarified and institutionalised the object of gaining and securing the status of the 'white' working class. It is possible that all 'black' workers sought to achieve the status of the 'white' worker; however, the ICU reified this object and made it the raison d'etre of its existence. (How far the leadership actually perceived this process taking root in the ICU is unclear.)

It was at this point that the disjunction between the leadership and rank and file membership emerged most clearly. Leadership continued to believe in the ability of the system to restructure itself and to allow the 'black' workers a part of the political and economic cake. It acted in the belief that the ruling class

would redress its grievances and make a special dispensation for the black workers. In this light the leadership failed to perceive that the society could not be readjusted to absorb it on the same basis as the 'white' worker, nor would it even relax some of its more odious legislation. If the Union had enflamed bourgeois aspirations in its members, it was scarcely by the means to effect a realisation of these aspirations. The ruling class maintained its dominance in South Africa with the explicit assistance of the 'white' section of the workers who were awarded special rights in the society. The enlargement of the privileged working class would have imperilled the status quo in South Africa and on this basis alone, the absorption of the 'black' workers into the privileged order was an illusion.

If the ICU was unable to open the ranks of the bourgeoisie for its aspiring bourgeois members, if it was incapable of bringing about a substantial transformation of the society, and if it was not even capable of adjusting and reforming the more obnoxious aspects of the society, what was its role in the society? The ICU had come into being on the wave of discontentment

and protest. It had attempted to harness and give direction to the workers, but had failed to keep abreast of the thought and resulting strategy patterns of the workers themselves. The ICU and the leadership were cast aside because they failed to adapt the ICU's strategy to the changing needs of the people. Instead the shibboleth of acceptance and recognition by the 'white' structure continued to govern the outlook of the ICU. This very shibboleth permitted the Union to entrench its oligarchal authority structure, and thereby excluded the potential for developing a sustained popularly based militancy. By the end of the 1920s the ICU had basically developed into an anachronism, its purpose and its whole ideology was out of tune with the workers themselves. On the Rand, the workers began to find more meaningful organisations which they could turn to. The ICU no longer served a useful function, it had outlived its purpose.

The political character of the ICU was due to the failing power of the ANC and the need for the availability for such an organisation within the African community. In numerous instances the ICU simply came to serve as a substitute for the ailing ANC. The political assault of the ICU, because of its ostensible worker membership, was a threatening one at the

best of times. However, it is crucially important to acknowledge that the ICU could not sustain political demands permanently; the union was primarily a trade union with the function of satisfying worker demands and interests. Nor could the challenge to the political system be premised on anything but economic and trade unionist lines. The trade union function was thus the determining one in all instances.

Even at the revolutionary level, the ICU could never have fulfilled the function of being the vanguard of the oppressed in South Africa. This was impossible within the parameters which were accepted by trade unionism (see introduction). If Kadalie had rallied the ICU together and brought it out in a general strike, it could have wrought severe damage and weakened the capitalist system somewhat. It is in this sense alone that the ICU could have hastened the fall of capitalism. As we have seen though, the Union did not possess the analytic perception to follow through such action, and nor did there exist a revolutionary party which could have given coherence to such a contingency. Furthermore, such action would probably have killed the ICU because it had neither the inspiration and insight nor the finance to sustain this action. This is probably something which was realised, and therefor constitutionalism as an alternative had

to be stressed. It cannot be substantiated that the ICU was a period of promise for revolutionary change in South Africa. Such a view fails to take stock of the ideological impediments (both inside and outside the ICU) which stood in the way of a revolutionary consciousness in South Africa.

The legacy of the ICU for South African history is a questionable one. However, that the structural formation of the Union and its imprecise trade union character contributed to its failure ought to be acknowledged. The major lesson to be learnt though, is the necessity for resistance organisation - no matter how broadly such a term is used - to root its actions within the fabric of its source material, its support base, and to develop its strategy from this point. A successful movement would require the prescience to articulate the grievances of its members and at the same time to remain a step ahead of its support base by being sensitive to the direction in which history could propel itself. The ICU did not possess such exceptional prophetic ability, which was forgivable, however, it failed to even stay abreast of the needs of the workers. This shortcoming was most damaging to the fortunes of the ICU; it is this lesson which cannot be ignored.

NOTES

1. See R Hyman The Workers' Union p207
2. Ibid 195

The Howard Pim Papers. The University of the Witwatersrand

The Saffery Papers. The South African Institute of Race Relations. Johannesburg

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The Burger

The Cape Argus

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The Star

The Umteteli wa Bantu

The Workers' Herald

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INTERVIEWS

John Gomas - September/October 1976

ARTICLE.	PRE-WAR RETAIL SELLING PRICE.	PRESENT RETAIL SELLING PRICE.	PRESENT RETAIL GROSS PROFITS PER CENT.
Bread - 2 lb. White Loaf - per dozen.	6/-	{ 6/- 2 lb. Meal and flour. { 12/- 5 lb. white Loaf	17 29
Sugar - 100 lbs.	33/4	37/6	23
Flour - 98 lbs.	24/6	31/8	21
Meat - per lb.	6d.	6d.	23
* Tobacco - gross	72/-	72/-	37
*. Box of Matches given with every 6d. worth.			
Dongas - dozen	6/-	6/-	12
Boots - pair	10/-	15/- to 17/-	15
Tweed Caps - dozen	6/-	NOT UNOBTAINABLE.	
" " "	12/-	12/-	12
Blankets - 2½ lbs.	5/-	7/6 to 8/-	11
" - 4 lbs.	6/-	12/6	20
Singlets - dozen	12/-	12/-	10
Shirts - dozen	24/-	30/-	12
Overalls - dozen	30/- to 36/-	60/- to 72/-	20
" "	48/-	60/- to 72/-	10
Kaiungas - dozen	48/-	78/- to 84/-	11
Bedspreade - dozen	48/-	1/2½d.	14
Print - yard	8d.		
Lustre Rugs - each	10/-	25/- to 32/6	41
Knives - gross	72/-	144/-	10
Pipes - gross	72/-	216/-	24
" NOT ON MARKET BEFORE WAR.		72/-	25
Mufflers - gross	72/-	72/-	15
" Larger - dozen	12/-	12/-	19
Milk - 12 oz. Dozen	6/-	12/-	12
Milk - 15 oz. Dozen	9/-	15/-	20

HEELANG, HEELANG, BASEBETSI.

WORKERS OF THE BANTU RACE: why do you live in Slavery? Why are you not free as other men are free? Why are kicked and spat upon by your masters? Why must you carry a pass before you can move anywhere. And if you are found without one, why are thrown into prison? Why do you toil hard for little money? And again thrown into prison if you refuse to work? Why do they herd you like cattle into compounds? - W H Y?

Because you are the toilers of the earth. Because the masters want you to labour for their profit. Because they pay the Government and the Police to keep you as slaves to toil for them.

If it were not for the money that they make from your labour you would not be oppressed.

But Mark: You are the mainstay of the country. You do all the work, you are the means of their living.

That is why you are robbed of the fruits of your labour and robbed of your liberty as well.

There is only one way of deliverance for you, Bantu workers. Unite as workers, Unite: Forget the things that divide you. Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu or Shangan. You are all labourers; let Labour be your common bond.

(Here insert Sesuto par, rough translation as follows:-)

WAKE UP; And open your ears. The sun has arisen, the day is breaking, for a long time you were asleep when the great mill of the rich man was grinding and breaking the sweat of your work for nothing. You are strongly requested to come to the meeting of the workers to fight for your rights. Come and Listen; to the sweet news, and deliver yourselves from the Bonds and chains of the capitalist. Unity is strength. The fight is great against the many Passes that persecute you and against the low wages and the misery of your existence).

"WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT YOUR CHAINS. YOU HAVE A WORLD TO WIN."