JOHANNESBURG 1917 TO 1930: A PRELIMINARY
STUDY OF THE PROTEST AND CONDITIONS OF
THE AFRICAN PEOPLE

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thanks to Britt, Lyn and others who helped
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A struggle for control of the means of production and surplus is constantly played out between those who 'legally' possess the instruments of production - the bourgeoisie, and those who operate, but are alienated from, the means of production - the working class. This struggle manifests itself in countless ways and never retains the same form: the bourgeoisie always seeks fresh methods to keep the proletariat beneath its yoke, while the proletariat itself always forges new ways of counteracting the bourgeoisie's exploitative measures.

It is the contention of this work that from 1917 to 1920 a phase of heightened class struggle occurred in South Africa between the African working class and the bourgeoisie in the form of its representatives in both government and the employing class. As we shall see in the chapters which follow, labour spontaneously confronted capital; it made certain demands on the capitalist system and the stage seemed set for a long and traumatic battle between the controllers and the operators of capital. Yet, as suddenly as it began, the popular militancy of the 1917 to 1920 period evaporated; in its stead came a period of dominance by petty bourgeois organisations accompanied by a decline of working class protest.

This dramatic change in the quality of working class resistance merits discussion, and to this end a number of questions can be raised:

(i) What gave rise to the growth of militance during and after the First World War?
(ii) What happened to this militancy after the War, and what caused it to go into decline?
(iii) If militant class confrontation disappeared, what form did the conflict then take, and what new relations between the differing classes came about?

In formulating answers to these areas of enquiry, there are three major factors which influenced the nature of popular
protest and must be considered. These factors are the following and will occur as major threads throughout this work:

(a) The African working class, still very much a fledgling working class, experienced a crisis due to lack of leadership.

(b) The miniscule but highly potent African petty bourgeoisie contributed to the enervating forces which acted upon the workers.

(c) The state effectively disorganised and defused the popular militancy of the African workers and the Africans in general through its legislative and controlling abilities.

The rest of this chapter is devoted to a brief discussion of these factors. We shall, however, return to the working class and the petty bourgeoisie in the next two chapters, since they require more precise definition.

The lack of leadership crisis within the African working class grew from the very inexperience of this class. (see Chapter Two where the determination of this working class is examined.) Only recently and partly proletarianised in places, this working class did not have the depth and quality of leadership to oppose exploitation on a long-term and continuous basis. It lacked the experience of collective struggle, its chief experience being that of atomistic resistance unaided by a wider perception of the mechanics of its own oppression. The methods used to resist the system ranged from avoidance to desertion and, occasionally, striking. Desertion became an acute problem for the Chamber of Mines after the South African War. At mines such as Simmer Deep, Geduld Proprietary Mines and Durban Roodepoort, where conditions were worst, rates of desertion ranged from five hundred and sixteen per 1000 to over six hundred and eighteen per 1000. Mineworkers rarely resorted to striking. The most significant instances of African workers going on strike in the early history of labour occurred soon after the turn of the century. Peter Warwick has records of striking incidents on several mines and locations on the Reef in 1902.
This particular form of behaviour anticipated the rapid strides made by the working class from 1910 onwards. After 1910 the African workers were behaving more and more as a class. As Marx said: "collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois (take) more and more the character of collisions between classes... (when) now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time." The strategies adopted by the workers contained distinct limitations and in a sense were destined to encounter far more sophisticated responses on the part of the bourgeoisie. Lenin argues:

"The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop trade union consciousness i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers..." (5)

Progressive though this may be, he stated that this "spontaneous (own emphasis) development of the working class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology...

Our task is to... bring it (the working class) under the wing of Social Democracy" (6, 7) The struggle could only develop as far as its organic experience had formed its consciousness; beyond this stage, the struggle lay prey to the influence and superior power of the bourgeoisie and its allied classes. As Moroney's work proves, the resistance put up by the workers was sharply countered on each occasion. (8)

The development of the African working class cannot be viewed independently of the emergence of a 'white' working class. Indeed, the question arises why, in the face of the conflict-generating contradiction between labour and capital, the working class in South Africa is a fragmented one. The answer is contained in the role played by ideological and political structures as against that of the economic. Where a basic disjunction is wrought in economic relations between capital and labour, the system reproduces itself through political and ideological structures. (9) In the South African social formation, ideological and political structures divided the working class into 'white' and 'black' (and other) sections. (10)
The division developed from historical production relations where 'whites' held skilled jobs and 'blacks', by and large, occupied unskilled positions. Jon Lewis describes the origin of the division between skilled and unskilled workers in the following way:

"high wages were necessary to induce skilled workers to come to South Africa, whilst continued subsistence production in the reserves allowed the mineowners to pay Africans (who constituted the majority of unskilled labour) a wage below the necessary level for the reproduction of their labour power." (11)

This division, or racial system as Johnstone calls it,

"may most adequately be explained as a class system - as a system of class instruments - (referred to as class colour bars) generated and determined in its specific forms and in its specific nature and functions, by the specific system of production and class structure of which it formed a part..." (12)

These 'colour bars' came about through the demands of the 'white' workers who feared, and legitimately so, that their jobs would be turned over to ultra-exploitable African workers. 13

Colour bars were thus crucial in forming a relation of interdependence between the 'white' workers and the bourgeoisie. By absorbing the 'white' working class, the bourgeoisie was able to forestall a combination of the divided class and could thereby reproduce the basic economic relations essential to reproduce the social formation. Ideological and political structures thus overdetermined the essential antagonism between labour and capital by limiting the class struggle through its absorption of one fraction of the working class. (This specific form of overdetermination through ideological and political structures arguably holds less validity today, especially in view of the diminishing importance of the 'white' working class to the bourgeoisie.) 14

The two sections of the working class have separate, but not autonomous, histories; their phases of development proceeded at different rates. In this work we specifically focus on the 'black' working class in order to examine its role in class struggle. The term 'African community' refers specifically to
The black 'petty bourgeoisie' is a concept which is gaining currency in literature on South Africa. It is clear, however, that there exist many shortcomings in the debate which has grown round the subject. Many of these shortcomings no doubt take their origin from a lack of research into the historical class determination of this group. What is beyond question is that such a group existed; it is certain that the members of this group perceived certain needs and acted in a manner designed to meet those needs. As one of their eminent leaders stated:

"...The Bantu cannot be successfully administered as one homogeneous population. Opportunities must be given for those who have advanced in civilisation to obtain suitable outlets for their capability. To repress them is impracticable." (15)

In striving to gain these 'suitable outlets' it is our point of view that this group, because of its ambivalent class position (as we attempt to show in Chapter One), sought to achieve dominance in mass organisations in order to use them as a means of political leverage. To this extent the class deepened the problems of the working class due to lack of leadership, and effectively contributed to disorganising mechanisms brought to bear on the working class. Before we introduce the concept of disorganisation, it is necessary to clarify that we shall use the term 'elite' when referring to this petty bourgeoisie, without the ahistorical connotations found in some of the modern bourgeois literature. (16)

The actions of the state are crucial in determining the outcome of worker struggles. This work views the state as the controlling medium of the bourgeoisie. It contains several ideological apparatuses. (17) Because these apparatuses are not always consistently representative of single dominant groups within the state, but of several dominant groups, the state has an inherent contradiction. This contradiction is exacerbated by the constant movement in capitalism, by uneven development in
and in its global operation. It takes its nature from the contradictions which emanate from within the bourgeoisie itself. The state therefore has a special function with regard to these classes - that of organising the dominant classes in society into a unity (albeit a contradictory unity.) With respect to the dominated classes, the state has the special function of disorganisation. Disorganising strategies are specifically undertaken to defend the political and economic rights of the bourgeoisie from the (inherently antagonistic) working class.

In 1910, a crucial advance for capitalism took place in the formation of the South African state. This advance served to bring together conflicting elements of capital in a unity against the subordinated classes. However, "this unity failed to dissolve all the contradictions which existed between all the different capitals." Mining capital held a position of dominance with respect to other capitals and thus asserted the primacy of its own interests and needs. As a result of the crisis of class struggle in 1922, this dominance shifted to national capital at the political level. This change in political dominance brought with it structural changes in the economy, encompassing a shift from laissez-faire policies to protectionism in favour of national capital.

Despite these shifts in the dominance within the bourgeoisie, the nature and the form which the policy of disorganisation took in respect of the subordinated classes remained the same. Arguably, this continuity from mining capital to national capital proceeded from imperatives very much larger than the contradictions within the bourgeoisie itself.

Measures of disorganisation are not always consistent in their application. Examples of disorganisation at which we shall look are physical control and manipulation of the working class, and legislation aimed at achieving control of the working class. We shall, however, argue that changes were made towards rationalising these methods after 1920. Thereafter, a greater
degree of consistency appeared in the intentions and scope of
the state's disorganising strategies.

This work is divided in the following manner: The first
chapter attempts to trace the emergence of a 'black' petty
bourgeoisie. It is a preliminary outline to the extent that
it draws only on the existing literature. It hypothesises
that this group played a political role which was determined
by its ambivalent class position.

The second chapter, in describing processes of
proletarianisation, prefigures and lays the basis for a
description of worker conditions in early Johannesburg in
Chapter Three. Chapter Four is a discussion of the protest
which developed out of these conditions. The important point
contained in this chapter is that protest reached a high level
during 1917 to 1920. Observations leading from this are that
worker protest was vitiated by the disorganising strategies of
the state and the inhibiting attention of the petty bourgeoisie
and a lack of leadership within the class itself.

Chapter Five argues that the events of 1917 to 1920 led to
policy changes with regard to 'native' administration. These
actions, accompanied by action on the part of liberals allied
to the interests of mining capital, gave greater scope to the
role of the 'black' petty bourgeoisie. The cumulative effect
of the new 'native' policy and the elevated status of the
petty bourgeois served to disorganise the African community
even further.

Chapter Six examines the effects of this disorganisation. It
argues that, although advances were achieved with regard to
unionisation of workers by SAFNETU, these were outweighed by
the disorganising structures of state legislation.

The conclusion sets out to review
(1) The development within African organisations and the
status of the African petty bourgeoisie in the late twenties.
The development of the African petty bourgeoisie was not without
certain contradictions. These contradictions stemmed from the nature of the class struggle.
(ii) the rhythm of African (both working class and the petty bourgeoisie) protest in distinct periods.

The reason for our focus on Johannesburg is that the class struggle, in all its complexity, took its clearest form in this city. In no other centre in South Africa were concentrations of either capital or labour so highly developed. Johannesburg, in a sense, prefigures capitalist relations elsewhere in South Africa.
NOTES


4. R. Freedman op cit p185 extract from the Communist Manifesto.

5. VI Lenin, 'What is to be Done?' Selected Works Vol 1 p 114

6. Ibid p122

7. An explanation of the term 'spontaneous' as it is used by Lenin is necessary. "There is spontaneity and spontaneity" Lenin argues. He refers to the massive wave of strikes which swept through Russia in the 1890s as the "spontaneous element... (expressing) nothing more nor less than consciousness in an embryonic form" (Ibid p113) However, he inveighs against those who 'bow' to spontaneity and do not see the need for investing the organic struggle of the workers with a theoretical base.

8. Moroney loc cit.


10. See M. Legassick, 'The Mining Economy and the White Working Class' where this division is accounted for.


13. See R. Davies, 'Capital, the State and White Wage Earners in South Africa. An Historical Materialist.
Analysis of Class Relations in South Africa, 1900-1960; R Davies. 'The White Working Class in South Africa'.

14 Carchedi op cit

15 DDT Jabavu, 'Native Unrest' in The Segregation Fallacy. p84

16 See TB Bottomore, Elites and Society, for a discussion of this concept and its application by various 'elite' theorists.

17 N Poulantzas, 'On Social Classes' p47

18 R Davies, 'The 1922 Strike on the Rand and the Political Economy of South Africa' p11
CHAPTER ONE
THE OUTLINES OF AN AFRICAN PETTY BOURGEOISIE

The petty bourgeoisie forms a crucial area of interest in this work. In the early parts of the twentieth century and for decades thereafter, the petty bourgeoisie within the African community was numerically weak. The number of lawyers, doctors, teachers, small traders, priests and other professionals remained small. In 1921 there were only 9,756 professional Africans, most of whom were technical and related workers. Yet the class, in the total absence of a black bourgeoisie, held and wielded enormous influence and power within the African community.

Theoretical work on the South African black petty bourgeoisie is rare. Apart from passing addresses, the major attempt to account for this group has come from H. Wolpe. On the other hand, a flourishing debate on the subject has recently emerged with regard to other African countries, especially Uganda.

The literature which has developed with regard to Africa is, however, not without certain problems. While Mandoph and Saul extend the debate on the petty bourgeoisie in Africa, their work, as Leys has argued, is not defined in a Marxist way. Whereas Marx was specific in his reference to a petty bourgeoisie, in that it occupied an essentially ambivalent class position, and that this ambivalence was reflected in its political consciousness, the understanding of Saul and Mandop is restrictive, their notion of a petty bourgeoisie being that of small owners of agricultural capital, the richer peasantry and white collar workers. This new gloss on the petty bourgeoisie holds implications for political practice, for "Whereas Marx's petty bourgeoisie played an ambivalent political role corresponding to its contradictory class interests vis-a-vis the developing bourgeoisie and the proletariat, this seems less likely to be true of the 'petty bourgeoisie' as the term is used by both Murray and Saul." (6)

Leys argues that to gain any real significance of any statement
about the petty bourgeoisie we need an analysis of the
capitalist mode of production and its "relations with commodity
production, and thus of the development of the relations of
production and the class struggle." Williams' criticism is
similarly motivated. He points out that the implicit theory
of petty bourgeoisie politics inherent in Saul and Mamdani's
works is tautological.

"Political conflicts are explained by showing their class
basis in the petit bourgeoisie. The petit bourgeoisie are
defined by the very conflicts which the concept is used to
explain. This absence of any theory leads Mamdani to a
schematic reduction of political conflict to instances of
conflict among classes."(8)

On this basis, argues Williams, "there is no theory of petty
bourgeois politics."(9)

We are thus faced with important shortcomings in the discussion
of the petty bourgeoisie. Be that as it may, we have to
establish a theoretical framework within which we can account
for the formation of an African petty bourgeoisie in South
Africa. In view of the confusion and the dearth of penetrating
work, especially with regard to South Africa, this theoretical
overview will, of necessity, be limited.

The major theoretical positions which concern us here are those
of Poulantzas and Carchedi, who discuss the emergence of a new
petty bourgeoisie as distinct from Marx's traditional petty
bourgeoisie, consisting of small-scale producers, handicraftsmen
and peasants. In brief, Poulantzas argues that social class
is determined at the economic, ideological and political
levels. While the economic instance has the determining role
in any social formation, political and ideological structures
may dominate as well. For Poulantzas, the working class is
distinguished from other categories of wage labour in the
difference between productive and unproductive labour.11 "...In
the capitalist mode of production, productive labour is that
which directly produces surplus value, which valorizes capital
and is exchanged against against capital." Thus wage earners
in banking, commerce and insurance, who "...contribute towards
redistributing the mass of surplus value among the various
fractions of capital according to the average rate of profit" cannot be described as being productive.\textsuperscript{13} Even wage earners who deliver services to the working class, such as teachers, doctors and lawyers remain unproductive.\textsuperscript{14} This unproductive group becomes a class which Poulantzas calls the "new petty bourgeoisie" because

"we must give proper recognition and attention to their specific and distinctive class interests... Even if we recognise that as a consequence of the transformations of contemporary capitalism they are objectively polarised towards the working class: it is nevertheless important that we understand that this is never an automatic or inevitable process."\textsuperscript{(15)}

Furthermore, supervisory staff, scientists and engineers are assigned places in this new petty bourgeoisie because they occupy places defined in ideological terms

"more on the mental than the manual side of the mental/manual division of labour, and/or on the grounds of their involvement in the reproduction of the political relations of domination/subordination between capital and the working class."\textsuperscript{(16)}

Carchedi follows Poulantzas in assigning the determining role in class formation to the economic structure "and within this structure, to the production relations... Social relations and the superstructure (i.e. the political and the ideological) are thus determined.\textsuperscript{17} He uses Lenin's definitions of social classes, which appear in the pamphlet 'A Great Beginning'. Classes differ from each other

"(i) by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of production, 
(ii) by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, 
(iii) by their role in the social organisation of labour, and 
(iv) consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it."\textsuperscript{(18)}

While capitalists and proletarians divide distinctly within each of the four criteria, there exists for Carchedi a group of people who perform supervisory roles as well as tasks of collective labour (i.e. workers). In terms of Lenin's definitions, these people are

(1) non-owners of the means of production,
(ii) performers of both supervisory and surplus value labour, (iii) both labourer and non-labourer and (iv) both the exploiter (oppressor) and exploited (oppressed). This group is called the 'new middle class'.

The major distinction between Poulantzas and Carchedi arises in the importance assigned to ideological and political levels. As Davies says, "Carchedi is in principle prepared to acknowledge that political and ideological relationships may play a role in class determination, but in actual fact they play almost no part in his analysis." Furthermore, he does not regard the mental/manual division as being important in producing divisions among wage earners. Davies argues that this is again in contrast to the position taken by the Marxist classics. Marx himself argued that manual labourers would become the deadly foes of mental labourers. Poulantzas, on the other hand, pays the same acknowledgement to the economic level, yet critically under-emphasizes this level relative to the ideological and political levels. Furthermore, as Carchedi points out, wage earners cannot be identified as members of the new petty bourgeoisie simply by being unproductive.

As Davies shows, other writers on the new petty bourgeoisie, such as Braverman, also have problem areas within their analyses. We then enter the fray with methodological handicaps. For our purposes a working solution exists in accepting the basic structure provided by Poulantzas, but not without certain reservations: In the first instance, Poulantzas fails to give the economic instance the primacy which he purports to do and, secondly, because of this failure, there has to be an element of imprecision in locating and establishing the structural determination of classes. Furthermore, we should note the time periods under discussion. Poulantzas and Carchedi situate their discussion in the monopoly capital phase of economic development, whereas during the early decades of this century the economy of South Africa was dominated by 'imperial' capital, but also undergoing an important transition to nationally dominated capitalism.
In our examination of the African petty bourgeoisie we will identify a 'traditional' petty bourgeoisie, representing inter alia the elite peasantry and the chiefs, which by and large emerges from the pre-capitalist mode, such as originally designated by Marx. We will also identify a 'new' petty bourgeoisie consisting of the new professional and small business class which sprang up in the urban areas. Consistent with the factors which determine the formation of class, in this case the formation of a petty bourgeoisie belonging neither wholly to the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat and which therefore has an ambivalent class position, we will argue that this class manifests ambivalent class practices.

TWO

The formation of classes, as we shall see with special regard to the working class in the next chapter, pivoted on the articulation of pre-capitalist with the capitalist mode of production. In the course of contact between the colonists and the indigenous peoples the capitalist mode of production gradually asserted its dominance. Legislative measures and the manipulative powers of mineowners subverted the forces which kept the African on the land and pushed a whole generation of people into the capitalist nexus. As a result of this the bargaining position of the African was reduced compelling him to accept new positions on the mines and 'white' farms.

In the light of this disintegration of the traditional fabric of African society, a black petty bourgeoisie could not come to birth in a manner comparable to similar social formations in Western Europe, for example. The formation of classes within the South African community occurred within a far shorter time span, and in a manner peculiar to South Africa.

We can identify a distinct 'black' petty bourgeoisie within the South African social formation today. On the political and ideological levels this class performs the essential function of shoring up the homeland policy. A high degree of co-optation
of this class exists to ensure the reproduction of the social relations of production. Within the class struggle, this co-optation serves to reproduce the historical relations necessary to maintain the low costs of labour power, especially in the context of homeland development.

Parts of the African petty bourgeoisie grew out of stratifications developed in earlier economic periods. In the pre-capitalist phases, the Nguni society supported headmen, chiefs and paramounts who were not simply administrative officials but extractors of surplus labour. The powers held by chiefs and headmen evolved out of their role as regulators of the productive process. This process pivoted around the ownership of cattle.

"In cattle there was the possibility of direct control over material goods and the status of persons...

There were two aspects to cattle as an elite good. First there was cattle patronage that might be enjoyed by any wealthy commoner and might become the basis for building a following in the lending out of cattle. Second there was cattle as the primary means of tribute and imposition of fines in the chief's court, as gifts and deprivations... The result of the system was that chiefs and headmen could be seen to benefit directly from their position in the handling of material goods and in the disposing of official ranks."(30)

During the transition period, the relationships and characteristics of the pre-capitalist modes of production underwent certain changes. These changes, impelled by colonial imposition (see Chapter Two), subverted the political, ideological and economic structures of the pre-capitalist modes of production (resulting in peasantisation and proletarianisation.) Bundy states, moreover, that once these capitalist relations were introduced, they "provided the basis for maintaining that (capitalist) penetration..."(32)

While Cape Native Policy was by turn either politically hostile or receptive to the African chiefs, in its early dissolution phases it tended to favour the chiefs economically. Beinart remarks that

"...traditional leaders were in a strong position to benefit from the increase in barter trade and the increase in
production during the nineteenth century...paramounts also collected tribute from passing ships and tolls on the ground passing through Pondoland...

Chiefs had control over the distribution of land in the area under their authority and they could and did reserve the best and largest fields for themselves."(33)

More significantly, when the chieftainship was abolished after 1846, structures of co-optation of chiefs and headmen were established by the colonial authorities. Chiefs became the paid proxies of the colonial authorities in areas formerly under their own official control. This co-optation, however, did not always proceed smoothly, for, as Cooper says in her Honours dissertation, during the implementation of the Glen Grey Act, the

"chieflty class... perceived the Act to be further destroying their independent political and economic power... It is in the context of the above effects on the classes of the African society, that their determined resistance to the Glen Grey Act needs to be seen."(35)

Despite the hostile effects which the Glen Grey Act held for the chiefs, their place in the reproduction of the social formation was crucial, and the Government made use of them in this regard. According to the Native Administration Act of 1927, chiefs were considered to be

"...the Government's representative in the areas concerned and as such have to ensure, in general, that effect is given to all laws, instructions and requirements concerning the administration and control of Bantu in their own areas."(36)

The power which chiefs wielded was thus considerable. In the movement from pre-capitalist dominated economies to capitalist dominated economies, they came to act as the middle-men between capital and labour. These situations of vantage presented them with opportunities for personal gain such as participation in recruitment programmes. As their pre-capitalist sources of wealth were exhausted, the chiefs took advantage of the financial inducements provided by the mine owners. They were not averse to taking bribes from recruiting touts in return for which they sent workers to the mines. In other areas, they even demanded tribute from returning migrant workers who
had to pay the chiefs a portion of their wages.38

One other 'elite' fraction to emerge out of the pre-capitalist
reserves was a small group of peasant farmers. As Bundy states,
"Often but not necessarily, 'mission' or 'school' Africans,
they sought to become independent small-scale commercial
farmers...they sought to break with tribal holding practices,
to increase their lands, and, ideally to establish security
of tenure by lease or purchase."(39)

Tensions divided these fractions of the early elite in the
rural areas. In the Shepstonian period, chiefs, who were
normally appointed, occupied the favoured position.40 This
position, however, was not always automatic; there were times
when the colonial authorities gave more prominence to the rich
peasant, whom they played off against the chiefs.41 Chiefs,
rich peasants and other collaborators such as touts, did,
however, constitute a rough elite vis-a-vis migrant workers or
ordinary peasants. They participated in political practices
designed to achieve the oppression of the workers; they gained
their income from processes which extracted surplus value,
were often employers of labour themselves, and finally,
they were strategic components in an ideological process.
Expressions by the flourishing Eastern Cape peasants testify to
this, viz: "they would not allow squatters unless they work or
are a profit to him", they urged others to adopt "modern
methods of profit making".42 This group, constituting the
traditional petty bourgeoisie, had its interests represented in
distinct organisations such as the Bantu Union and the upper
chamber of the SANNC.

Numerically, these groups were miniscule relative to the rest
of the population. In the whole of the Cape (rural as well as
urban) in 1891, 0.02 percent of the African population was
engaged in buying, selling, exchanging or insuring, or
property.43 Similarly, only 0.13 percent of persons among the
Fingo and 0.35 percent among other 'blacks' in the Cape held
what the census described as positions of 'property and rank'.44
By 1911, the situation had changed somewhat, yet hardly enough
to warrant a drastic increase in the percentile: there were only five hundred and eleven people occupied in commercial enterprises and/or speculation in 1911. In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, where feudal relations existed alongside other pre-capitalist modes of production, and where capitalist economic development was slow and tardy until the 1880's, class divisions within the African community could not be said to have proceeded very far.

Much as we have had to proceed tentatively with regard to the rural petty bourgeoisie, we are faced with similar inhibitions in discussing the emergence of an urban black petty bourgeoisie.

Central to our discussion is the role of the educational institutions, for the authorities failed to lay down a general official policy for dealing with elite Africans right up to the end of the First World War. Educational institutions, generally administered by missionaries, were responsible for creating an educated class of Africans which saw itself as apart from traditional Africans. Amongst these institutions, Lovedale easily held the greatest prestige. The second principal of Lovedale, the Rev Dr Stewart, felt that "with special regard to the wants and conditions of Native Africans", his institution had the "distinct aim of raising a special class, namely Native preachers and Native teachers." Educational authorities said quite explicitly that Lovedale was "probably the greatest educational establishment in South Africa" in the 1880's. It was thus felt that "Lovedale and all similar institutions must sooner or later tell upon Native character." The influence of these institutions quickly manifested itself. Apart from those Lovedale products who moved into commercial agriculture, the Census for The Union of South Africa in 1911 revealed the existence of one hundred and nine ministers of religion and eighty-three teachers. There can be no doubt that many of these people had a mission background. As David Coplan remarked, this elite consisted of "the relatively small groups of 'mission-school' Africans from
the Transkei, Eastern Cape, Rustenburg and Natal areas who worked in Johannesburg as clerks, (umabalane) teachers, preachers and tradesmen.° In 1921 this element constituted 0.8 per cent of the whole African community.

The sparse statistics available emphasize one important fact; the minute size of the educated elite relative to the rest of the population. We choose to characterise this elite as a petty bourgeoisie for the following reasons: economically it was situated between the workers and the bourgeoisie, occupying positions of an unproductive nature; furthermore, and of crucial significance, the ideological and political orbits circumscribed by this elite conformed to ideological and political practices found within the bourgeoisie. As Coplan remarks, this group soon formed "social, cultural and religious associations and regarded themselves as an elite cultural vanguard of African society, and attempted by word and deed to direct the processes of acculturative modernization affecting their more backward brothers." In a community where education of any degree was a scarce commodity, the influence which this group wielded was enormous. (Upto the present day position and status in the African community are almost synonymous with education.) This group stood apart from the traditional petty bourgeoisie. It owned no capital resources and received its definition from its place in the urban milieu. This group can be described as the new petty bourgeoisie.

In keeping with some of the concepts which we discussed earlier we can see a clear distinction between a traditional petty bourgeoisie and a new petty bourgeoisie. Yet as Poulantzas argues, although these two hold different positions in the economic and productive spheres, their actions ultimately have the same effects at the political and ideological levels. They present the same political and ideological characteristics for different economic reasons; "petty bourgeois individualism; attraction to the status quo and fear of revolution; the myth of 'social advancement' and aspirations to bourgeois status; belief in the neutral state above classes; political
Our discussion below should illuminate these characteristics more clearly.

Organisations and associations were not peculiar to the urban elite. Early political organisation, rallied by John Tengo Jabavu, formed around the 'Imvo Zabantsundu' to mouth the grievances of the Eastern Cape elite. Much of this organisation relied on lobbying and the use of deputations. Herein emerged the earliest instances of political practices destined to become part of the political equipage of petty bourgeois Africans for many decades thereafter. The major development of political organisation came in 1902 when the South African Native Congress was founded in the Eastern Cape to co-ordinate African political activity. In controversial issues of the day, such as the South African War, Unionisation, the franchise, this body found much needed rallying points, and by 1911 had become the acknowledged voice of the African elite. The most significant aspect of this development emerged in the manner in which the South African Native National Congress (as it became to be known) accommodated several diverse fractions of the petty bourgeoisie. The Congress was divided into houses after the manner of the British Parliament, consisting of an 'upper' house for chiefs, and a 'lower' house for elected representatives. This division reflected the differing interests of the traditional petty bourgeoisie and the new petty bourgeoisie numbering among them the highly visible sprinkling of lawyers, doctors and other professionals.

Amongst other things the SANNC sought to record "all grievances and wants of the Native people... To all and everything directly or indirectly to maintain and uplift the standard of the race morally and spiritually, mentally and materially; socially and politically." The constitution of the organisation stated that these aims would be achieved by "(a)... means of resolutions, protests, and a constitutional and peaceful propaganda; by deputations and other forms of representations..."
This brings us to the question why the petty bourgeoisie played such a crucial role in influencing the outcomes of the struggles of the fledgling African working class. We will try to show in this work that petty bourgeois politicians made use of organisations to steer the direction which working class ideas and actions would take. The clearest example of this occurred during the First World War, in the context of malleable African and worker protest when elite led organisations found ready audiences.

THREE
Let us briefly consider these organisations. The oldest, as we have already indicated, was the SANNC. We will attempt to show and prove that this body in fact, while purporting to speak for all Africans, only represented the interests of a very narrow section of that community. From its inception it existed to extend and protect property rights for Africans, to seek new Pass Law dispensations and ways of making the authorities accommodate the African elite. In the period of high protest (see Chapter Four) the organisations played an inconsistent role. The SANNC's chief historian said of it, that "with hindsight it is possible to see that the African National Congress had failed to take advantage of the widespread discontent of these years (ie 1917-1920). This work attempts to move beyond Walshe to argue that the SANNC accentuated problems within the working class. In the first instance it heightened the lack of leadership crisis within the working class and secondly, it brought an element of instability into the working class via the organisation. The events of the period 1917 to 1920 bear this out, when the SANNC movement adopted several differing and inconsistent stances.

Another important organisation which emerged in the early twenties was the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. This Council had strong bonds with the SANNC but had a narrower
focus than the other body. The Joint Council movement championed the cause of the educated and the trained African right from its inception. A spokesman for the organisation said, "It is these two sections of the 'educated' and 'trained' natives who feel the injustice of the so-called colour bar, and their feelings towards the European population and the Government will certainly have great influence in deciding the future attitude of the huge untrained and uneducated mass of the population." 64

Three other organisations also existed during this period. They were the Industrial Workers of Africa, the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union and the Bantu Union. Of the three the Bantu Union held the least significance. It had been started in 1919 to promote the specific interests of the chiefs. 65

The IWA and the ICU had far more distinct working class origins than the other organisations of the period. However, neither could resist the contradictions of their times. The IWA does, however, stand apart from other organisations because it did not have the same degree of petty bourgeois penetration into its leadership, but drew its leaders from workers (not exclusively though since both Bud Mhelle and Msane who were not workers were members at one time or another.) The organisation's development proceeded on the basis of an antagonism to the petty bourgeois nature of the other organisations. The dominant feeling about the SANNC movement in the IWA was 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..." 66

The IWA was started by members of the International Socialist League, the precursor of the Communist Party, who felt that their mission was "to agitate among white workers for solidarity with blacks...there was a danger of violence if Africans were left to assert themselves without organisation and guidance." 67

They organised lectures and meetings at which they taught political economy and the principles of socialism. The
organisation itself came into being in September of 1917.

The IWA proved to be unequal to the task which its founders had set for it. Having started in 1917 only its leadership lacked the experience to deal with the crises situations of 1917 to 1920 and fell an easy prey to the strength of the authorities who infiltrated the organisation, destroyed and arraigned it in front of a court of law at a stage where it hardly had the mettle to withstand such an onslaught. Weak leadership, defection of some of its members to the SAANC movement and an inability to handle police subversion brought the IWA to its knees within a short period.

The ICU, on the other hand, had advantages with which the IWA was not favoured. It had a large membership right from its inception and in Clements Kadalie had a leader of some dynamism. The major downfall of the ICU emerged in the contradiction between leadership and rank and file. This contradiction assumes such large proportions that in the documentation of the Union it becomes extremely difficult to trace the development of the rank and file, although no such problems exist with regard to the leadership.

The ICU was established in 1919. Within its first year of existence it became involved in major industrial action, the Dock Workers Strike. The ICU marshalled and channelled workers' demands for increased wages. It became clear though that the ICU leadership could not cope with such a large undertaking. In addition, the authorities held too much power for the strike to succeed. As a result the strike failed to bring real wage increases. Subsequent to this, amid expansive moves to other parts of the country, the leadership led the Union away from trade union activity, and instead distinct political manoeuvring became the order of the day. As a result of this manoeuvring, the organisation of rank and file structures of representation was neglected.
It was precisely within such an atmosphere that the articulate petty bourgeoisie could impose its unchallenged guidance upon the working class. This guidance consisted of making several diverse alliances, including shifts from radicalism to conservatism. The ICU flirted in turn with segregationism, communism and socialism, liberalism and irregularly with Garveyist entrepreneurial capitalism. In the meantime its membership underwent several changes shifting from Cape Town to Johannesburg and finally to the rural areas where it ultimately came to grief.\(^7\)

We can thus see that none of the organisations which functioned within the African community escaped the contradictions of the society. How these contradictions played themselves out we will see in the chapters which follow.

In summary then, this chapter looks at a particular class in the social formation, and how this class stands apart from other classes. It consists of a traditional fraction comprising chiefs, headmen and wealthy peasants among others, and also of a new petty bourgeois fraction consisting of the urban professionals engaged in both collective labour and supervisory functions over the working class. In addition, this chapter has attempted to situate the petty bourgeoisie within those organisations which drew, claimed or even spurned the support of the workers. An observation arising out of this relationship and reinforced by objective class relations, is that the petty bourgeoisie through its leadership carried an attitude of ambivalence into working class organisations. The SANNC movement in the 1917 to 1920 period and the ICU from its inception until the end of the twenties emerge as prime examples of this process.
NOTES

1 Union Statistics for Fifty Years, pA-33

2 See Statistics from the 1911 Census. In the Annexure to the General Report Part V, it is indicated that there was one 'non-European' capitalist. There existed a sizable group of shopkeepers and retailers, numbering 1 025.

3 See H Wolpe, 'The Changing Class Structure of South Africa: The South African Petit Bourgeoisie'.

4 See J Saul, 'The Unsteady State; Uganda, Obote and General Amin', Review of African Political Economy (RAPE), no 5, Jan/April 1976;
   M Mamdani, 'Class Struggles in Uganda', RAPE, no 4, Sept/Dec 1975;
   C Leys, 'The 'Overdeveloped' Post Colonial State; A Re-evaluation', RAPE, no 5, Jan/April 1976;
   G Williams, 'There is no Theory of Petit Bourgeois Politics', RAPE, no 6, May/August 1976.

5 Leys, op cit, p46

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Williams, op cit, p89

9 Ibid, p84

10 R Freedman, 'The Struggle of the Bourgeois and Proletarians', Marxist Social Thought, p184, an extract from the Communist Manifesto

11 N Poulantzas, 'The New Petty Bourgeoisie', Class and Class Structure, p121

12 N Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes p211

13 Ibid, p212

14 Ibid, p213

15 N Poulantzas, 'The New Petty Bourgeoisie', op cit, p116

16 R Davies, 'Capital, the State and White Wage Earners in South Africa. An Historical Materialist Analysis of Class Relations in South Africa 1900-1960', p7

17 G Carchedi, 'On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class', Economy and Society, p2
18 VI Lenin, 'A Great Beginning', Selected Works, v3, pp164-185 passim

19 Carchedi, op cit, p51

20 Davies, op cit, p9

21 Ibid, p11

22 Davies, op cit, p9, citing Carchedi

23 Ibid, pp10-12

24 See B Bozzoli, 'A Comment on Capital and the State in South Africa'

25 Freedman, op cit, p184

26 S Moroney, 'Industrial Conflict in a Labour Repressive Economy: Black Labour on the Gold Mines 1901-1912', p xiii

27 Carchedi, op cit, p7, where he discusses how superstructural relations overdetermine economic relations: "For example, the capitalist economic structure, being based as it is on antagonistic production relations (exploitation), generates class struggle. This conflict could jeopardise the reproduction of the economic structure itself. Thus, the political and ideological structures, by limiting class struggle, make possible such a reproduction." Arguably, the importance of this class has increased relative to that of the 'white' working class.


29 Ibid, p16

30 Ibid, p16

31 D Cooper, 'The Glen Grey Policy of 1894. An Attempt at Dissolution', p23

32 C Bundy, 'The Response of African Peasants in the Cape to Economic Changes, 1870-1910: A Study in Growth and Decay', p24

33 W Beinart, 'Peasant Production, Underdevelopment and Stratification: Pondoland c.1880-1930', p10

34 Lewis, op cit, p22
35 Cooper, op cit p60
36 F Molteno, 'The South African Reserves' p124
37 Moroney, op cit p28
38 R Moorsom, 'Colonialisation and Proletarianisation: an Exploratory Investigation of the Formation of the Working Class in Namibia under German and South African Rule to 1945' p40
39 Bundy op cit p25
40 TRH Davenport, South Africa - A Modern History p88
41 Ibid p103
42 Bundy op cit pp25-26
43 Cape of Good Hope Census 1891 p275
44 Ibid
45 Cape of Good Hope Census 1911
46 CC Saunders 'The New African Elite in the Eastern Cape and some Late Nineteenth Century Origins of African Nationalism' p45
47 R Shephard, Lovedale, South Africa. The Story of a Century 1841-1941 p157
48 Ibid p199
50 The attitude and ideas of Lovedale's founders influenced the character of future 'liberal' policy with regard to Africans. Prominent liberals, such as Merriman and Pim, came to propagate a policy geared towards recognising the status of the 'exceptional' and 'civilised' African. (See Legassick: The Rise of Modern Liberalism p3) This attitude played a great part in leading 'touched' Africans to believe that they would ultimately be absorbed into what they saw as the superior 'white' society. (See T Karis and G Carter, From Protest to Challenge, Vol 1 'Protest' and Hope 1882-1934' by S Johns 111 p7)
51 Bundy op cit p25
52 Union of South Africa Census 1911
One can only speculate, but there may have been a connection between the impoverished but once wealthy peasant farmers and the new urban petty bourgeoisie. Having suffered setbacks in the rural areas, they may have been compelled to trek to the cities where they could use their education.

H Wolpe, 'Class, Race and the Occupational Structure' p113

Coplan op cit pl

N Poulantzas, 'On Social Classes' pp27-28

Karis and Carter op cit p5

Ibid p9

M Wilson and L Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, pp443-444

Karis and Carter op cit p78 from the 'Constitution of the South African Native National Congress'

Ibid

P Walshe, Black Nationalism in South Africa. A Short History p20

The Pim Papers University of the Witwatersrand

SNA Box 86

SNA Box 213 Constable Jali's Report 16/8/1917

Simons and Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950 p211

SNA Box 213 Jali's Report 27/9/1917; Constable Moorosi's Report 11/10/1917


PL Wickins, 'The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa' p62

Cape Times 29/12/1920, 30/12/1920

The socialists in the International Socialist League were observing this shift in the ICU's activity. They were also critical of the ICU's inconsistency. The International commented that in one article of
The Workers Herald (the ICU organ) the Union could affirm its 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 their true meaning and significance for the race and oppressed class in general, are they capable of any leadership worth the name." In the International 18/5/1923

73 See S Jingoes, A Chief is a Chief by the People; H Slater 'A Fresh Look at the ICU'; G Coke, 'The Story of Gilbert Coka' in M Perham, Ten Africans; also see the Farmers' Weekly for 1926 and 1927
CHAPTER TWO

THE MAKING OF A BLACK WORKING CLASS

This chapter is an attempt to account for the emergence and development of the urban African working class. It thus serves as a background chapter to Chapter Three where we discuss the material conditions of the African working class during and after the First World War.

The creation of an urban labour force stemmed from the process of interaction and contact between African indigenous people and 'white' settlers. This interaction was defined in its simplest form by the erosion of the pre-capitalist modes of production and the rise to dominance of the capitalist mode of production within the social formation. Class formation and the definition of the social formation proceeded from the special kind of relationship evolved in this interaction.

Before we examine this interaction, we need to reflect briefly on the literature which has stimulated this discussion. The outpouring of Marxist scholarship over the last ten years, while constituting an essential advance on bourgeois developmental theory and analysis, has revealed and also sharpened important controversies. Beyond AG Frank, whose seminal work has provided the springboard for the discussion on underdevelopment, has arisen the sophisticated analysis of Althusser and Balibar.¹,² This analysis has in turn generated several important discussions, of which the most relevant for us is the discussion about 'articulation of modes of production'.³ In one of its earliest formulations (although the word 'articulation' is not used) it is posited as a 'structured differentiated whole'.⁴ The capitalist mode of production within this 'differentiated' whole, has a special relation to other pre-capitalist modes of production and not only co-exists with them, but buttresses them, and even on occasions "devilishly conjures them up ex nihilo".⁵ This special relation reveals important contradictory impulses in the behaviour of the capitalist mode of production, which
have been described in terms of conservation-dissolution, or more recently in terms of 'articulation'. We quote extensively from Poulantzas to illustrate the point:

"...Capitalist societies at the start of the nineteenth century were composed of (i) elements of the feudal mode of production (ii) the form of simple commodity production and manufacture (the form of the transition from feudalism to capitalism) and (iii) the capitalist mode of production in its competitive and monopoly forms. Yet these societies were certainly capitalist societies. This means that the capitalist mode of production was dominant in them. In fact, in every social order, we find the dominance of one mode of production which produces complex effects of dissolution or conservation on the other modes of production and which gives these societies their character."(7)

The most useful understanding of 'articulation' is found in the work of P Rey (summarised briefly in Foster-Carter) where this concept of articulation - consisting of a linkage between modes of production -is periodised and thus specifies the contradiction between modes of production.

Alavi has rejected the term 'articulation' on the basis that one cannot talk of 'articulation', but rather of a single mode of production being inserted into several social formations. Roxborough argues that the ultimate inclusive unity of the world capitalist system needs to be asserted above elusive entities such as 'semi-feudalism' or 'colonial mode of production'.

The discussion is not an easy one to pierce. However, there are a number of observations which one can make. In the first place there is a tendency amongst certain theorists to concretise crucial abstract conceptions; the clearest example of this is the practice of making a mode of production a subject of history rather than using it as a conceptual device for analysing history. This has had the effect of shifting the attention of our analysis away from the people struggling against exploitation within a social formation. In addition, the debate conducted in terms of modes of production is rather suggestive of the bourgeois theory of dual economies. It is perhaps here that Alavi, Roxborough and even Wallerstein are correct in suggesting the primacy of analysing the world system.
The material is thus fraught with difficulties. It is not, however, our task to enter the debate. It is sufficient that we have drawn attention to it and outlined, if only very cursorily, the aspect of the debate pertinent to our interests. For our present purposes, we will employ a concept of articulation, for lack of an alternative approach, for the purpose of explaining contact and linkage between the capitalist mode of production and the pre-capitalist modes of production in an ongoing process. The concept will have to account for the manner in which mining and agricultural capital demanded labour and how this demand was met, and what changes occurred as a result of this in the pre-capitalist mode of production. We turn our attention to this below.

Beinart clearly states that,

"It is misleading to talk of a 'traditional' economy in Pondoland, or in any Nguni chiefdom, before colonisation. Far reaching and inter-connected changes took place at least from the sixteenth century with settlement, sporadic trade with passing ships and neighbouring chiefdoms."(13)

This point is crucial to our examination of changing structures, because it emphasizes the degree of restructuring which had taken place in the pre-capitalist modes of production prior to colonisation. Having said that, these economies were, nevertheless, geared towards internal consumption rather than production for external trade.

This internal consumption in most chiefdoms within Xhosa society was based on hunting, herding and cultivation and was controlled and regulated by chiefs who held political control over all who lived within a chiefdom. (See Chapter One where the role of chiefs is discussed more comprehensively.) Chiefs, with the aid of headmen, defined pasturage areas, the extent of open fields and controlled the beginning and closing of seasons of cultivation. These capabilities placed them in a position to control and regulate access to the means of production, but furthermore, also endowed them with considerable economic and political power.¹⁴ In the first place, they received death
duties and court fines from their subjects, they also took tribute in the form of cattle from subjects who had seized the herds of vanquished rivals. Furthermore, they used cattle as an elite commodity by redistributing herds amongst poorer members of the community and in return exacted loyalty and support. A reciprocal relationship thus existed which reinforced the social structure of the chiefdoms. Where departures from this balance of forces occurred, for example when a chief failed to fulfil his reciprocal obligations or when he extracted excessive tribute, political alternatives presented themselves to subjects. They could withdraw their allegiance and could seek the protection of a more just ruler elsewhere.

This system was undermined as contact with the colonists grew in intensity. The colonists, preceded by traders and early merchant capital, played a crucial role in affecting even greater restructuring of the pre-capitalist modes of production than had been experienced earlier. G Kay remarks,

"where the destructive depredations of merchant capital were controlled in their homelands by the state and the powerful social classes represented within it, there was no force to withstand it overseas." (16)

This restructuring took place simultaneously with massive upheaval in the pre-capitalist social formation. Internecine battles, as well as continuous friction with trekking Boers, introduced severe strains into the pre-capitalist social formation. The battles and resultant changes of allegiance within and above paramountcies exposed the Xhosa chiefdoms to the very much stronger power of the colonists, who were gradually extending their range of control by making political alliances with important chiefdoms. As a result of this process, annexation of British Kaffraria took place in 1848 leading to the abolition of the chieftancy and the redivision of chiefdoms into districts administered by paid headmen and sub-headmen. Chiefs were co-opted into the system of colonial government and were required to swear their allegiance to "the Laws and Commands of the High Commissioner as great chief and representative of the Queen of England...discontinue witchcraft..."
abolish the practice of selling of wives..."18 In addition, the concentration of people into districts (mentioned above) proceeded on a basis of individual tenure, in direct contrast to the preceding communal system of occupation.19

The major feature of this change was the increase in peasantisation which occurred. Two related but distinct responses could be discerned. The first, but perhaps the general response to new commercial stimuli within the community, took the form of sale of surplus production.20 A second and more distinct response arose in the form of a group of peasants who took far greater advantage of the new "economic opportunities and needs."21 These rich peasant farmers accumulated capital, improved their methods of cultivation, speculated, employed wage labourers, and as Bundy pointed out, identified ideologically with 'whites'; not only did the progressive farmers support the colonial administration against the 'reds and rebels', but they "displayed capitalist values and attitudes at variance with those of their tribal background."22

Most peasant production had its origin in the need to produce food. This pressure made it necessary to capitalise the agricultural division of production.23 Progress moved rapidly once capitalisation processes had been set in motion. In the Peddie district in the Eastern Cape, at an agricultural show in 1864, "it had been universally remarked that the Fingo exhibition far excelled that of the Europeans, both for the number and the quality of articles exhibited."24 The same reports of growing African industry elsewhere reached government archives. By the 1880s extensive diversification and crop intensification brought African farmers wealth and prosperity such as they had never experienced before. In certain areas this response to commercial farming carried over into the general prosperity of the entire area. "There is good evidence that Kingwilliam's food was supplied almost entirely by African peasants, and that in turn their purchases supported the town's many traders."25 In Queenstown, Africans
were the "largest producers of grain in the division; without them the trade of Queenstown would not be anything like what it is at present."26

Yet this age of prosperity soon caved in. Late in the 1880s symptoms of disintegration of peasant production came to the surface. Peasants who had once been wealthy were struggling in poverty. As Bundy cites, an "experienced official said in 1893 'these men are far worse off than twenty years before'"27 The Magistrate of Xalanga wrote, "...the natives as a body are growing poorer."28 This disintegration took place in the context of breakdown in Xhosa society.29 Bundy argues that peasant progress gave way to shortfall and failure because "...the structure of economic and social relations created in the rural areas was not merely the product of penetration by the capitalist economy but that the structure, once established, provided the basis for maintaining that penetration and hence for perpetuating those relationships."(30)

Penetration of capitalist relations, as Bundy describes them, not only stimulated progress but also perpetuated deprivation and failure.

The interaction of a number of factors ultimately guaranteed the destruction of peasant production. As Bundy states, "The most fundamental, most telling single cause was the expropriation of land, the peasantry's basic means of reproduction."31 Other critical factors came into play such as the subdivision of land, the practice of monoculture and conservative agricultural methods, physical disasters such as drought and stock diseases and the antagonistic class interests of white settler communities.32, 33 In the light of these multiple setbacks, overpopulation and overstocking of the reserves depressed productivity levels even further.

Even though deterioration had set into peasant production, further political measures were deemed necessary to undermine more thoroughly the pre-capitalist modes of production so that adequate supplies of labour could be set free to satisfy the demands of mining capital; and also so that white agriculture
could develop free of African competition. As we shall see below, the Glen Grey Act constituted the thrust of Cape Native Policy with respect to the labour demands of mining capital. Let us first examine the nature of capitalist relations of production on the mines and perhaps this will give us a better insight into the linkage and articulation between the capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production.

The discovery of diamonds in 1866 and that of gold in the 1880s entrenched capitalist relations of production in South Africa. The Kimberley diamond fields and the Rand became the real growth centres of South Africa, points where capital and labour interacted to produce surplus. As an index of the rapid development of capitalist relations, by the 1890s, a powerful "and well organised mining capitalist class had emerged with the ownership of both the gold and the diamond mines in the hands of a few groups of capitalists." This centralisation of mine ownership moved a step further when the Chamber of Mines and the recruiting agencies for labour were formed in 1887... This act of forming a monopsonistic structure enabled mineowners to pursue "best their aim of minimising labour costs." We shall see below why this was so important.

The relation of class interests in profit accumulation on the gold mines was determined by important geological and economic factors, "which in turn determined the specific profit accumulation problems and imperatives of the mining companies. These were the low average grade of gold and the high level of development and overhead costs." This created two fundamental imperatives for the mine owners, (i) costs had to be minimised and (ii) output of ore had to be maximised. With regard to the first imperative, labour was the only factor which could be minimised. The imperative of output maximisation led in two directions, the maximisation of supply of low cost labour, and the maximisation of the productivity of the labour force. The solutions for both (i) and (ii) demanded "the most profitable utilisation of labour which served both to minimise cost and maximise output." These general imperatives of cost
minimisation and output maximisation thus became four specific imperatives:

(i) the ultra-minimisation of labour costs
(ii) maximisation of the supply of ultra-cheap labour
(iii) maximisation of labour productivity and
(iv) the most profitable utilisation of labour.38

The success of mining capital rested heavily on the labour factor. It is in this respect that the setting up of the Rand Native Labour Association in 1896 (which later became the Rand Recruiting Corporation and the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association [WNLA]) can be seen as a specific response of capitalism to its own imperatives. The response, however, demanded compliant sources of labour. As such sources were not automatically forthcoming, they had to be created. There was, in any event, a critical shortage of workers on the mines in the 1890s. Economies of scale demanded that increases in the size of plant be accompanied by increases in the size of the labour force.39 Furthermore, the mineowners perceived the possibilities of increasing their profit margins by increasing the supply of labour. They argued that the fact "that our natives are unduly overpaid is undesirable... The rate of pay is not only disastrous to the interests of the shareholders, but pernicious to the native himself..."40 The Chamber of Mines complained in 1889 that "there can be no doubt that the supply of Kaffirs is at present totally inadequate; and this most difficult question has been engaging the most serious attention of the Chamber."41

The Chamber of Mines stood in no doubt as to why labour was not forthcoming. Peasants from Pondoland had told their recruiting officers that they saw no reason why "they should... work, is not the country ours, and have we not lots of land and women and children to cultivate it? We prefer to remain as we are..."42 The Chamber of Mines thus felt that the bond tying the African to the land should be severed. A deliberate effort was necessary to undermine the viability of the reserve areas where peasant farming was taking place. This would compel
able bodied men to take up work on the mines.

Mining capital had its interests well represented by Cecil John Rhodes who was then Prime Minister of the Cape. The influence which mining companies exerted was clearly evident in the Glen Grey Act which the Cape Government promulgated in 1894. The Glen Grey Commission which had been established prior to the passage of the Act had stated that

"We believe that the issue of individual title will help materially to solve the labour difficulty...when a man's children grow up they will be compelled to seek service as the land will be insufficient for the support of more than one family." (43)

Rhodes had felt, moreover, of the need for a 'gentle stimulus of a labour tax to remove them from a life of sloth and laziness; you will thus teach them the dignity of labour.' (44)

Native policy in the Cape thus firmly dictated a path of 'dissolution' for the pre-capitalist modes of production so that the demands of capital could be met. This dissolution complemented styles of recruiting which had been devised by Chamber of Mines labour touts. As production went into decline, money lenders stood by to forward impoverished cultivators either money or subsistence goods on condition that they recruit to work on the mines. (45) This collusion between the Cape government and the mines, exacerbated by crippling natural disasters in the reserves, had the desired effect of pushing labour onto the market. By and after the turn of the century almost eighty per cent of the Africans working on the mines came from the affected Eastern Cape. (46) The figures which are quoted below indicate this growth in the new migrant labour force from the Transkei after the turn of the century.

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Other labour supplies were drawn from a wide range of areas. Through the useful intercession of chiefs, recruiters brought workers onto the Rand not only from the Cape, but also from the Northern Transvaal and Mocambique. The South African War, however, resulted in many workers leaving the Rand, causing a grave shortage of labour on the Mines. The immediate solution which the mineowners resorted to was the importation of Chinese workers. The shortage also compelled recruiters (then the WNLA) to scout more forcefully just beyond South Africa's borders. It was only in 1907 (under the Government Native Labour Bureau) and in 1912 (under the NRC) that serious recruiting took place inside South Africa again. By 1909 the total number of workers on the Rand had reached the figure of 150,000. Between 1909 and 1919, this figure fluctuated between 150,000 and 190,000.

The expansion of the mines encouraged the development of a service sector, commercial enterprises and later secondary industry. As a result, the population of Johannesburg increased from 3,000 people of all races in 1887 to a huge mining metropolis of 105,000 inhabitants by 1899. This population brought with it a demand for many kinds of services. High amongst these demands was the need for domestic workers. This service began as the monopoly of 'white' maids. The volatile nature of this group—"they drifted in and out of domestic service between jobs as tearoom waitresses, barmaids or prostitutes"—caused an increase in the demand for more docile servants. African males filled the breach adequately. Their suitability created a great demand which reached a high point during the 1890s. With this increase in demand went the increase in wages of servants. An 'untrained houseboy' earned between three and four pounds a month in the 1890s. Rising wages seemed, moreover, to elicit a steady flow of new recruits to this service. This particular increase gained momentum with the deliberate reduction of mineworkers wages in 1896. Further push factors arose in the natural disasters which struck agricultural production in 1897. Rinderpest and other
cattle disease caused people living in areas adjacent or near to the Rand to enter domestic service as a means of earning their subsistence. Having little experience of mine work, Zulus came to make domestic work their special preserve to an increasing extent after 1897. By 1904 there were 20,000 domestic servants in Johannesburg alone.

This easy availability of domestic servants at a time when labour shortages on the mines had become a recurrent theme brought on the jealousy of the mineowners. As a result, several efforts were made to reduce the wages of domestic servants. Assisted by an economic recession after the turn of the century, increasing numbers of Africans came onto the domestic servant market. As a result of the availability of a surplus of workers wages began to fall. This, however, failed to solve the problems of the mineowners.

As more workers came into the market, the symptoms of over supply took on a more serious colour. From 1907 to 1909 growing indications of stress appeared amongst domestic servants. As Van Onselen points out, "Under these circumstances the wages of the single largest group of servants, the 'houseboys', could move only in one direction - down." This circumstance and further rural decline in 1912 to 1914 pushed even more Africans onto the labour market. As a result, significant changes took place in the character of the domestic service sector. The latest waves of prospective servants included massive numbers of women and children who served to drive the cash wage of the servant population even further down.

While over two thirds of the non-mining workers on the Rand worked in domestic service, the remainder held jobs spread between the commercial and secondary industry sectors. The majority of those employed in the latter held unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, since 'white' workers, particularly so on the Rand, held a tight monopoly over skilled employment.
Particularly before the turn of the century and in the first decade of the twentieth, manufacturing had not developed significantly in South Africa. The increased spending power generated by mining expansion did not at first stimulate manufacturing industry, but instead gave rise to large-scale importing of essential goods. Employment of Africans in secondary industry such as there was, was thus minimal. It was during the First World War that this sector began to make rapid progress. As Lewis indicates, statistics for employment in private industry "reveal a distinct pattern of labour recruitment in secondary industry" from 1915 onwards.

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As the statistics indicate the African labour force had more than doubled itself during the fifteen year period beginning in 1915 and ending in 1930. Since the Reef constituted the centre of South African industrial growth (and because Coloureds and Indians would have filled most of the places in secondary industry in the Cape and Natal) it followed that the majority of African workers went there. This expansion of the labour force in private industry can thus be construed as a distinct response of labour to expansion in secondary industry.

This chapter has attempted to place the emergence of an urban proletariat in some perspective. In summary the following general remarks can be made: Merchant capital and processes of colonisation stimulated drastic changes in the social formations. The changes resulted in forms of peasantisation accompanied by a weakening of traditional political structures. This restructuring of the social formation constituted a sharp rupture in the process of historical development. The changes which had taken place, however, laid the basis for an even more thorough revolution in productive relations. The discovery of minerals from the 1850s onwards drastically
changed the nature of capitalism in South Africa. Vast supplies of labour were needed to work the mines on the Rand and in Kimberley. This demand brought about the large-scale proletarianisation of the recently formed peasantry. This proletarianisation was characterised by deliberate dissolution of the productive relations of the pre-capitalist mode of production, compelling peasants to sell their labour in order to subsist. It was in this context that an urban labour force came into being in South Africa. We should keep in mind therefore, that proletarianisation was not a process distinguished by the 'bright-light' syndrome, but occurred against a background of compulsion and impoverishment.

This brings us to a discussion of the conditions which this new working class encountered in Johannesburg.
A 'mode of production' is defined in the following way in Althusser and Balibar:
"It is itself a complex structure, doubly articulated by the productive forces connexion (the real appropriation of nature) and the relations of production connexion (the relations of expropriation of the product) and containing three elements: the labourer, the means of production, and the non-labourer." (Althusser and Balibar p317)

Also see Cutler et alia, Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today, Vol I pp222-240 passim.

The 'articulation of modes of production' concept has generated an interesting debate with regard to the reproduction of labour power in South Africa. While this debate is not immediately pertinent to our discussion above, it is relevant as an application of the concept. The discussion takes its origin from the seminal work of H. Wolpe. (H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa' Economy and Society 1972.) Wolpe argues that "...Capital is able to pay the worker below his cost of his reproduction. In the first place, since in determining the level of wages necessary for the subsistence for the migrant and his family, account is taken of the fact that the family is supported, to some extent, from the product of agricultural production in the reserves..."(Ibid)

Williams on the other hand, questions, "How can Wolpe classify the Reserves as a distinct
mode of production when the basis for its reproduction is lacking, when on his own admission, the labourers are unable to maintain any existence apart from the sale of their labour power?" (Williams, 'An Analysis of South African Capitalism' p31)

Morris approaches the debate in terms of the imperatives surrounding the cheapening of labour power. He argues that specificity has to be brought to the concept of a 'capitalist mode of production'. We quote extensively:

"...it is necessary to understand that in any particular capitalist mode of production in a particular historical moment in time, there is also a dominant branch of capitalist production...

...Capitalism in South Africa in the early stages was dominated by the production of diamonds and gold...neither commodity is a means of producing or is a constituent of, the subsistence requirements of labour power. Therefore subsistence requirements could not be satisfied through the sale of these commodities. Nor indeed could the value of labour power be lowered as a consequence of increasing productivity...

...Therefore, given the non-relationship of gold and diamonds to the value of labour power, and the absence and/or low development of capitalist agriculture and manufacturing within that nation state, the value of labour power could only be maintained at a low level or decreased through the maintenance of pre-capitalist relations of production." (M Morris, 'Capitalism and Apartheid: A Critique of some Conceptions of Cheap Labour Power' pp59-60)

12 Foster-Carter op cit pp70-74 passim
13 W Beinart Op cit p3
14 Lewis, 'A Study of the Ciskei...' p15
15 Ibid p17
16 G Kay, Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis p98
17 Lewis op cit p23
18 Quoted in Cooper, op cit p25
19 Lewis op cit p23
20 Bundy op cit p25
21 Ibid
The example of Pondoland is striking in that conditions of peasantisation and underdevelopment differed to those encountered elsewhere in the Eastern Cape. (See Beinart op cit p6)

Expropriation took place most conspicuously in Zululand. As JJ Guy remarks, by 1889, Zululand, "which only a decade previously had been politically independent and economically self-sufficient no longer existed." (JJ Guy, 'The Destruction of a Pre-Capitalist Economy And the Origin of Labour Supplies: the Zulu Case' p13)
It is necessary to draw attention to the fact that statistical material on the division of labour within the African working class in manufacturing industry is extremely hard to come by.

48 Kay op cit p99
CHAPTER THREE
THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE IN JOHANNESBURG

The major purposes of this chapter are to describe the material conditions in which the fledgling proletariat, and the African community in general, grew, to show briefly how these conditions fitted into the structure of capitalism, and, finally, to argue that these conditions generated contradictory thrusts in the social formation. As far as our last objective is concerned, we wish to argue that the social conditions, determined, inter alia, by Pass Laws, housing problems and low wages, served to hasten the baptism of the African people into new proletarian conditions and thereby a form of awareness of their situation, and yet at the same time provided the very mechanism for the state to disorganise and manipulate the African working class.

There were three factors which stimulated widespread protest in the years 1917 to 1920. These were (i) the high cost of living, coupled with low wages, (ii) housing conditions, and (iii) the Pass Laws. We will examine each factor separately in this chapter. Our hypothesis is that, while each factor represented a reason for protest, each also represented a different method of securing wage labour ever more effectively to the control of capitalism.

In a later chapter we hope to show that the militance stimulated by these factors was also weakened by them. Thus, while the social and material conditions primed the African community's consciousness for protest, within these very conditions lay some of the instruments which the state used, both actively and unwittingly, to disorganise the working class.

PASSES AND WAGES
The Pass Laws (Ordinance 50, 1828, of the Cape Colony and a plethora of provincial pass regulations) served to regulate the flow of African people into and out of the urban areas. In this way, the government authorities had a powerful controlling device
at their disposal. The municipalities admitted workers and the Native Affairs Department issued permits (passes) to them as and where their services were required within the centres of production. Similarly, as their utility decreased, they were ejected from the zones of production. With this tool, the authorities (with the active assistance of the employers) devised an effective way of maximising the utility of their workers.¹

We must recognise at the same time, though, that while the Pass regulations were an organising device for the ruling class, the very same regulations acted as a disorganising device as far as the working class and the African community were concerned. Passes militated against independent and spontaneous organisation by the workers. Subjected to the control and inhibiting routine which the authorities imposed on their movement, the workers were denied freedom of movement.

Disorganisation revealed itself in the punitive effects which the pass law had on the African people. James Makgatho, the leader of the African Congress movement in the Transvaal, described the pass situation in the following way:

"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 Marabastad Location. The chances are that, if the Police find him at Marabastad with the Pass from 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 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..."(2)

The stringent dependence which the African had on his employer permitted the latter to exercise maximum control on the mobility of the African. This severely curtailed mass political organisation, and ensured the security of the dominant classes.

Yet, while serving as a way of optimising labour utility and securing the utter disorganisation of the African workers politically, the Pass Laws caused the African people to rise up in periodic rebellion against them. The African workers recognised the effect which the law had on their ability to sell their labour freely. This restriction emerged as a powerful source of dissatisfaction in the Transvaal.

The wages of unskilled labourers varied throughout South Africa. According to Van der Horst, a pioneer scholar of the liberal school, 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...)"3 The Congress movement contended that the average wage of the African worker in Johannesburg was one shilling and eight pence a day. They claimed that rare exceptions existed where some Africans earned between two and five pounds a month.4 The workers employed by the Town Council of Johannesburg earned from two pounds one shilling and nine pence (£2.1s.9d) to two pounds ten shillings and six pence (£2.10s.6d) as their wage.5 This contrasted with the wage of three pounds (£3) per month paid to workers on the mines.

It is certain that the cost of living had climbed dramatically during the War years. During the 1910-1919 period, the price index had risen from 1000 to 2249.6 Articles of clothing, such as boots, which could have been purchased for between fifteen and twenty shillings had doubled in price. Generally, commodities
which Africans were accustomed to buying increased over seventy-five percent in price.7

The wages of African workers, unlike those of their 'white' counterparts, remained largely unaltered during the War years. This meant that, relative to the price index, they actually experienced a decline in their real incomes. The price spiral, however, curtailed not only the purchasing power of African workers, but also affected their very ability to live and survive unscathed in the urban environment. As we shall see in chapters below, this reduction in real wages encouraged the growth of an extensive informal network in Johannesburg when it became clear that formal organisation through political movements would bring about little change in the economic structure.

A further important consideration to take into account when considering the question of wages is the degree of structural under-development of the Reserves which took place during the War years, aggravated by a series of natural disasters. Bonner recounts "...the process of capitalist penetration was firmly compounded by the East Coast Fever epidemic of 1912, which left thousands of families impoverished and which led to an annual exodus of around 60 000 labourers to the Rand. Increasingly these workers had to remit part of their earnings for their families to survive, and this was particularly true of periods of epidemic or drought, and so were exposed for the first time to the vagaries of inflation."8 This relation between the reserves and the urban areas in its totality was thus important. Several years of either drought or torrential rain, plus plagues and waves of fatal epidemics, served to deepen the wage dissatisfaction which emerged during the War years and contributed substantially to the mood of militancy on the Rand before 1920.

HOUSING
This section on housing intends to provide a general overview of accommodation facilities for Africans in Johannesburg during 1917 to 1920. Furthermore, it intends to describe the condition of these facilities. The purpose of this examination is to place
the life of the new African into perspective and to see how this lifestyle was determined within the capitalist economy.

It is only in the years preceding 1920 and in the twenties, when a change in hegemony in the state occurred, that real debate was entered into on the question of segregating African from 'white' residential areas. And as Paul Rich suggests, one can see a policy taking shape during this time in response to the proletarianisation and the growing propensity of African workers to use the strike weapon. In the course of this work we will briefly chart this policy in its bare outlines. Housing then falls into place as a key element in the ruling class' apparatus for maintaining its ascendancy.

Prior to 1919, when the Western and Eastern Native Areas were developed as locations for African people, the only location under the jurisdiction of the Johannesburg municipality was that of Klipspruit. Freehold rights existed in two places; Sophiatown and Alexandria. For the rest, African people lived in and among 'whites' in Johannesburg. Large numbers of workers also lived in employers' compounds and backrooms. It was only in 1932 that Orlando, the precursor of Soweto, came into existence.

The Joint Council of Europeans and Natives made a valuable survey of housing conditions for Africans in 1923, with retrospective validity. The report broke the African population into the following three groups:

Class one: "Natives for whom housing accommodation is provided by their employers upon their premises, including: (i) domestics (ii) 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 residents, and of native families in the town."
The Joint Council felt that the first group received adequate provision, but that the other two groups lived in highly unsatisfactory conditions. The findings of the Council reported the existence of totally unsatisfactory conditions within the second group. In accord with the findings of the Government Housing Commission of 1919 and the Housing Committee of the Federation of Ratepayers Association, the Joint Council reported that the failure and absence of planning and the lack of sanitation generally made these sites unfit for human habitation.

(1) Locations

One can argue that, in conjunction with the Pass Laws, the rules governing housing and the methods adopted in the implementation of these rules were important instruments in controlling the mobility of the African population. Under Government Notice 63 of 1909, the Johannesburg Municipality prohibited Africans from living outside such locations and compounds as had been set aside for them (except for the defined class one which we have defined above). This meant that the Municipality could institute punitive measures against people who ignored these regulations. However, during the War years the situation defied control. Although the authorities had the ability to prosecute offenders, there was simply not sufficient accommodation available for African people in the townships. As a result, they overcrowded the 'white' and 'coloured' suburbs of the town, living mainly in backrooms.

The Joint Council's survey into the locations revealed important details. It had the following to say about the Malay Location which, it had felt, was in an anomalous position because

"...there has always been considerable doubt as to the powers (one) can exercise with 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. It remains, largely owing to overcrowding, bad arrangements and structural defects, a festering menace to the community." (16)

The Joint Council quoted the Medical Officer of Health in the Asiatic Commission of Enquiry of 1921 as 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."(17)

A further description of Vrededorp in a leading newspaper went thus:

"At present the...location consists of four hundred and fifty stands with nine and a quarter rooms to each stand. There is a total population of 7572, which works out to about sixteen and a half persons to each stand...and the crowding of population is constantly increased by the ingress of natives from other parts of the town. The location has been the starting point of the plague epidemic in 1904, and nearly every smallpox outbreak since then and the incidence of the recent influenza outbreak was specially severe therein."(18)

It appeared that a large number of African people in the townships were employed on neighbouring mines. Police reports averred that African workers kept women in the location for the purpose of making and trading in illicit liquor. A priest, Rev W Meara, described a scene which had left a great impression on him:

"In one yard in Ferreirastown he saw about fifty people drunk on a Sunday afternoon, fighting and quarreling."(19)

Up to this time there were only two locations under the jurisdiction of the Johannesburg municipality, Klipspruit and Western Native Township. The latter had only come into being in 1919 and Klipspruit had been set up in 1904 as an emergency camp after the bubonic plague which struck the areas known as Coolie Locations in the town.20

Klipspruit Location was situated twelve miles from Johannesburg adjacent to a sewerage farm. A railway which operated only once in the early morning and once again in the late afternoon provided the only transport facilities for the location. The water supply both for washing and for drinking purposes was inadequate. The dwellings themselves resembled 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."21
The Medical Officer of health for Johannesburg reported in 1929 that the location was a grave health menace. In December 1929, of the forty-four deaths reported in the location, seventy-two percent were due to enteritis. Of all the deaths for the previous year, thirty-one percent were due to the same illness. The Medical Officer reported that the "high death rate from enteritis is not therefore a NEW feature." (His emphasis). In 1929, the infantile mortality rate rose to the incredibly high rate of nine hundred and fifty-eight per thousand. The damning factor at Klipspruit, the report continued to say, "...is the flies and the vicinity of the sewerage farm."

The flies, which were infected because they were breeding and feeding on soil and manure infected by sewage effluent, or on sewage farm sludge, were the chief carriers of disease. The Medical Officer felt that "Klipspruit Location is, and will continue to be, an extremely insanitary property, utterly unfit an dangerous for human habitation and should accordingly be abolished."

These conditions contributed to the largescale dissatisfaction of the 1917 to 1920 period, as we shall see in the chapters which follow. The inhabitants nurtured grievances against their frail security of tenure, especially where they had leased their stands and erected huts upon them. In cases of arrears, even negligible ones, the occupants had to forfeit their houses, for which they received no compensation.

Conditions were appalling even in areas where people had freehold rights, such as Alexandria and Sophiatown. A newspaper reporter described Sophiatown 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." In Alexandria, dwellings ranged from real brick material to corrugated iron and mud.

(ii) Compounds
The Joint Council Committee also gave extensive attention to the condition of compounds. It reported on what it was felt was the
worst compound, i.e. the Natal Street Compound:

"This compound adjoins the destructor and has from three hundred to three hundred and thirty boys. The area of the building is given as five hundred and fifty-four 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 deathtrap for the natives living in the upper storeys of the building."(28)

Other compounds were marginally better. A handful, such as the Smit Street Compound, had excellent facilities. 29

Together with workers holding regular jobs, the compounds held

"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 three pence per night...only about half of these (night visitors) are legitimately employed natives, the other half coming there for a jolly old carouse."(30)

The beer-brewing and skokiaan (an alcoholic beverage) trade, especially at the Salisbury and Jubilee Compounds, was an exceptionally intensive business. Weekly confiscations of brew amounted to five hundred gallons on average. The 'Ricksha Boys', who were permitted free entry into compounds, acted as the couriers for the 'beer-businessmen'. These 'Ricksha Boys'

"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."(31)

Newspaper reports in this vein were legion. Often they drew gloomy pictures of endemic drunkenness in compounds.

(iii) Other Accommodation

The Joint Committee found that the "crux of the question lies in the housing of large and increasing numbers of natives", especially 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."32
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 or to let it at an exhorbitant rate 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."(33)

The outlook was a very grim one. The average size of rooms was twelve square feet, resulting in the unbelievably high number of twenty families occupying a yard. The health aspect in general left much to be desired. Sanitation facilities were poor and garbage collectors seldom collected refuse, with the result that garbage piles grew high in the yards. The structures themselves ranged from dilapidated brick to tin shanties, for which an average rental of thirty shillings a month was charged. An advancement or promotion at work was normally accompanied by an increase in rental. In these conditions the infantile mortality rate soared, and reached an average of three hundred and fifty per thousand in the years immediately after the Great War.35

One can hardly say that these conditions bypassed the attention of the government authorities. Indeed, several Commissions of Enquiry commented on these conditions and even criticised the Johannesburg local authorities for not taking prompt action. The joint findings of the Local Government Commission and the Commission for Native Affairs in this regard are important. Included in the conclusions and recommendations of these two commissions' discussions were the following:

"...(2) That a statutory duty be placed on municipal bodies to provide adequate housing accommodation for all natives within its (sic) area and that suitable power be given to those bodies to control the ingress of natives into its (sic) 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 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.
(b) The prevention of any native living elsewhere than on his masters 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 a certificate... of the municipality certifying that there is suitable accommodation for the employee."

While the officials of the government recognised the gravity of the situation in its inhumane aspects, their manner of dealing with the matter revealed interests which they held far more dearly. Most significantly, the attention of the Commissions came to bear heavily on control as against the institution of real radical measures. The Commissions viewed it as crucially important that the situation, characterised by the absence of real control, be changed to achieve that control. The bases of the recommendations were mechanically rationalising the labour supply and achieving control over the ingress and outflow of labour units; the effect of the recommendations simultaneously dealt a blow to political organisation of the African people. The policy generated conflicting impulses for the African people: while it brought them more deeply within the experience of capitalism, it carried the power to reduce the manoeuvrability of the African workers. This disorganising ability was to reveal itself in many ways: it gravely inhibited the ability of African workers to organise themselves; in conjunction with the pass laws, it negated the African workers' ability to form themselves into bargaining groups against employers; and, furthermore, where such stirrings emerged, the authorities were able to monitor and destroy them.
Important insights emerge from this chapter. The material conditions of the African community, and especially the African worker, left much to be desired. These conditions received their character from the interaction of the factors which we have mentioned above, and created a final picture of acute impoverishment. As De Kiewiet said: "Here in their airless, overcrowded and promiscuous locations disease and pauperism bred each other in a vicious circle." However, these very conditions also bred resentment and a rebellious consciousness which reared its head periodically. The great weakness of this rebelliousness sprang from the conditions from which it was spawned. The rules which determined the Pass Laws, the housing system and the unwritten laws of low wages had the effect of controlling and immobilising the workforce right within the zones of production. We thus observe the contradictory phenomenon of a situation where laws and economic relations engender a consciousness of protest, which, at the same time, contains elements which vitiate that consciousness.
NOTES

1 See R Moorsom, op cit where he states the same idea about the purpose of Pass regulations in Namibia.

2 SNA Box 85 Deputation of the TNC to the Minister Pretoria 7/4/1919

3 Van der Horst op cit p237

4 SNA Box 215 Meeting between the Mayor of Johannesburg and a deputation from the SANNC

5 The Star 21/10/1918

6 Van der Horst op cit

7 See the appendix for a chart of pre-war and post-war selling prices.

8 P Bonner, 'The 1920 Black Mineworkers Strike' p15

9 P Rich, 'Ministering to the White Man's needs: The Development of Urban Segregation in South Africa 1913 to 1923' p6

10 See A Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfield'

11 Pim Papers 5a 95 University of the Witwatersrand

12 It is hardly true that compounds (class one) administered by mining and industry were satisfactory. The work of C van Onselen, Chibaro, and S Moroney Op cit and others describe the totally insanitary, unhygienic and psychologically depressive conditions of these compounds.

13 Pim Papers Op cit

14 SNA Box 86 333/19/F64 Major Cooke to Commission of Enquiry into Grievances at Klipspruit Location.

15 As we shall see later, the authorities subsequently realised that their controlling mechanisms were insufficient and as a remedial measure set the Urban Areas Act in motion to make up for the legislative deficiencies of the Pass Laws, Masters and Servants Laws and contract regulations.

16 Pim Papers op cit

17 Ibid
18  The Star 20/4/1917

19  The Rand Daily Mail 11/9/1917

20  F Frescura, 'Vrededorp/Pageview: Its Development in Relation to the Organic Growth of Johannesburg', Appendix p3


22  Ibid Memorandum by Dr HL Bernstein, Medical Officer, Native Affairs Department, Johannesburg

23  Although rates at other locations were high as well, averaging three hundred and fifty per 1000 per annum, the rates at Klipspruit were abnormally high.

24  Ibid

25  Ibid

26  The Rand Daily Mail 4/4/1928

27  A Stadler op cit p9

28  Pim Papers op cit Housing Report

29  Ibid

30  The Star 26/10/1922

31  Ibid

32  Pim Papers op cit

33  Ibid

34  Ibid


36  SNA Box 338 1318/19/F1089. Bell's evidence to Local Government Commission 12/7/1920. Also see Memorandum of Conclusions at Conference between Native Affairs Commission and the Local Government Commission. the Native Affairs Department also being present. Johannesburg 11 and 12/8/1921

37  CW de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa p231
CHAPTER FOUR
1917-1920: THE HIGH PHASE OF PROTEST IN JOHANNESBURG

"It takes both time and experience before the workers (learn) to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and therefore to transfer their attacks from the material instruments of production to the form of society which utilises those instruments."¹

During the Great War, a qualitative change took place in the form of the protest of the African people against their conditions. In the past, formal protest had been channelled through the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) (to be called the African National Congress in subsequent years); informal protest and spontaneous actions, especially within the workplace, had manifested themselves through measures such as desertions, boycotts, go-slows and the destruction of machinery.² A new form of revolt now emerged: workers channelled their protest in a collective manner, directly against their employers and the government.

This chapter proceeds from the premise that material conditions gave rise to a special consciousness of militance in the African proletariat in Johannesburg. It will be argued that workers rose in spontaneous protest against the conditions in which they lived. This protest, developing into collective action, invested the relationship between the owners of the means of production and the workers with a crisis dimension hitherto not experienced. In 1920 alone, over 105 368 African workers went on strike, a figure which has never been equalled.

A second premise of this chapter is that organisations, especially the Transvaal Native Congress (TNC) (a provincial wing of the SANNC), followed on and appropriated the spontaneous protest of the people and presented it as their own. They replaced the workers' demands with their own. Although the workers' protest had limited objectives (in terms of seeking a restructuring of society) it carried a danger which the authorities and the
bourgeoisie could not ignore. It became urgently imperative to the bourgeoisie, therefore, to subdue the militancy of the working class and to replace it with the more accommodating orientation of moderate leadership from within the African community. In fact, as we shall see, this moderate leadership behaved in a politically inconsistent manner, actively supporting worker demands on a number of occasions.

Our premises will be examined in the context of a number of important events and protracted phenomena which occurred in the short period between 1917 and 1920. These events were the Native Traders' Boycott of 1918, the Shilling Strike and Pass Disturbances of the same year which spilled over into the following year, the Klipspruit Disturbances of 1919, and, finally, the large Mineworkers' Strike of 1920.

The period which we shall examine in this chapter forms the critical part of a decade of unrest. The first evidence of unrest appeared in 1913, when 'black' miners followed the example of their 'white' counterparts and went on strike at several mines for a period of three days. Even though the strike was put down quickly by the authorities, it won significant improvements for the mineworkers. These improvements, however, failed to stem the tide of discontent which grew in and around the mines. Indeed, chronic inflation coupled with disastrous crop failures and other natural calamities aggravated the feeling of unrest which took root on the mines. By the end of 1915, strikes broke out at the Van Ryn Deep Mines, followed by similar action early in 1916 in the Government Areas South and New Modderfontein Mines. This fresh wave of unrest prompted the sub-inspector of police at Benoni to remark that

"Since the trouble at the Van Ryn Deep Gold Mine Compound the trouble has been spreading from one compound to another, the natives have started holding meetings, resort to picketing and are in fact organising in the same manner as the miners did in the 1913 and 1914 strikes. I take a most serious view of the matter which is (also) held by several General Managers...and I am convinced that, in the event of any further Industrial disturbance, the Government will not be able to count on the loyalty of the natives as they have done in the past."(6)
The prediction of the sub-commissioner took some time to realise itself, because the next phase of unrest took root only at the end of 1917. However, it became clear that a new phase of class struggle was unfolding. The use of the strike weapon had set in as a distinct instrument of confrontation and resistance. Where 1913-1916 saw the introduction of the strike-weapon, 1917-1920 saw it being used in a manner consistent with a heightened class consciousness.

Advances were not the prerogative of 'black' workers; organisations made great strides during this period as well. The most significant advance was that of the SANNC movement. From the South African Native Convention in 1909, the SANNC had progressed to a nationwide organisation representing "provincial organisations, leaders of local vigilance groups, chiefs, and other prominent Africans from throughout South Africa."7 The 1913 Land Act provided the organisation with an early opportunity to test its strength. It sent deputations to the Prime Minister, and, when this had failed, sent another to the King, who failed to give satisfaction either. The antagonism to the Land Act persisted without abatement, and became a regular issue of discontent. The disturbances of the 1917-1920 period, however, provided the organisation and its leaders with a perfect opportunity; for there they, who had no mass base themselves, found a discontented mass without leadership. A better situation could not present itself.

THE NATIVE TRADERS' BOYCOTT

In February of 1918 African mineworkers on the East Rand started boycotting the concession stores from which they bought their supplies. This event marked the beginning of the high phase of the class struggle on the Rand and in Johannesburg; workers who had participated in isolated strike action were now involved in continuous collective action.

Workers had already shown signs of unrest in the middle of 1917. Taberer, who worked for the recruiting company NRC, had visited a number of mines and found workers complaining about reductions
in their wages and also about the abolition of special bonuses which they were accustomed to receiving. In a memorandum to the Chamber of Mines, he warned that the "writing was on the wall". He felt that, if the Chamber continued to resist the demands of the African miners

"The native will take by organised methods more than has been withheld from him unjustly, and will get out of hand.

It is clearly in the best interests of the mining industry to anticipate this position and to get the credit, rather than the native for having adjusted it."(9)

It was in this context that the trouble erupted early in 1918.

The boycott on the East Rand began on or about the seventh 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 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."(10)

The speed with which the trouble spread suggests two things: (i) the feelings about concession store prices were generally held in that entire area (they had, in fact, surfaced late in 1917 already) and (ii) rudimentary channels of organisation existed between compounds, based on rudimentary forms of organisation. These rudimentary forms of organisation could have taken any form, from home-boy associations, to the more complex military-style structures of the amaleita gangs.11

At some places the style of protest advanced from boycotting to actual picketing. The boycotters organised pickets which they 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 victims became converts to the cause..."(12)

At other shops the situation deteriorated sharply. On the twelfth of February, customers going to a shop at Kleinfontein were
confronted by violent and angry assaults. At Modder B and Brakpan, the shopowners called the police when the boycotters began heckling them, "calling upon them to close their shops and making threatening gestures." The boycotting, accompanied by picketing, continued until the middle of February, when the police moved in and decided to arrest a number of the picketers. "The native boycotters at the Kleinfontein received a sharp check yesterday morning, by the arrest of one of their pickets which consisted of boys mostly Shangaan." The action of the police successfully terminated all worker activity on the East Rand.

The boycott on the East Rand encouraged the mineworkers in Johannesburg to pursue the same line of action. Several days after the East Rand stirrings had been put down, the workers in Johannesburg were still boycotting. On the twenty-fifth of February, three to four hundred 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." Some of their picketing colleagues had been arrested, and they thought that they would make their way to the local police station to find out what had become of them. Before the large gathering arrived at its destination it was intercepted by the police, who then arrested seven of the ringleaders.

The discussion and debate which followed in the wake of the boycotting revealed the varied stances adopted by individuals and organisations which had a stake in the resolution of the issue. Since leaflets printed by the IWA were discovered in the compounds, some of the concession store owners deduced that "certain dissatisfied white socialists and alleged pacifists are at the back of this movement."

The Acting District Commandant for the East Rand said that he had received the following impression of the boycotters' argument:

"That if on account of the War effort 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."
Other police reports also warned that:

"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." (20)

The mining authorities saw the nature of the boycott most clearly. Cooke, an official of the Native Labour Department, told Hamel, the Mining Commissioner for the district of "an effective boycott of Indian traders (by the mineworkers) that some years ago took place in the Boksburg Municipal Location." (21) The mining officials established two points for themselves:

(i) that the boycott was a reaction to high prices and/or wages not rising commensurately, and
(ii) that the workers were not ignorant of the use of the boycott weapon in attempts to remedy their grievances. (22)

The boycott issue did not find its resolution for a very long time. For several months, a number of commissions of enquiry pondered the question. Various organisations and bodies were invited to tender evidence before these commissions. The most significant bodies included the Chambers of Commerce and the TNC. (23)

Some months afterwards, when the Cost of Living Commission mooted a co-operative scheme for trading on the mines, both the Chambers of Commerce and the TNC opposed the idea. The Congress movement opposed the idea ostensibly because "they felt that the native will have to pay more than they do today if the co-operative is established." (24) However, in presenting evidence to the Native Trading on Mines Committee, it became clear that their motives went deeper than their concern for the plight of the workers. (25)

The thrust of the Congress' evidence was that the arrangements at the concession stores should be left as they were, but "Let Parliament introduce amendments to Acts 35 of 1908 and 13 of 1910..." (26) Law 15 of 1898, and Acts 35 of 1908 and 13 of 1910 (the Gold Laws) were items of legislation specifically promulgated
to prohibit the granting of stands on ground held under Mining Title (Mynpacht). The object of these prohibitions, claimed the TNC, was to withhold trading rights from the general public.\(^{27}\)

The suggested amendments aimed at providing the African businessman with an opportunity of competing on equal grounds with 'white' businessmen on mining ground.\(^{28}\) They felt that the introduction of free trade on Proclaimed ground or ground held under mining title should 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."\(^{29}\)

The Congress movement complained of the monopoly which certain people wielded with regard to the trading stores. They claimed that a few "uncrowned liquor kings", who sold large quantities of liquor to the workers, had obtained control of the majority of mining stands on the Rand through bribery and corruption.\(^{30}\) In 1896 their monopoly had been threatened when an unsuccessful applicant for a stand had had his appeal sanctioned and passed in the High Court.\(^{31}\) A memorandum which Congress tendered as evidence stated that the 'liquor kings' then "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."\(^{32}\) The 'liquor kings' then contrived through mining officials to vest Mining Commissioners with arbitrary powers when considering applications for stand licences. The Transvaal Volksraad subsequently promulgated Law 15 of 1898 (Section 92) to ratify this move of the 'liquor kings'.\(^{33}\) The Law also withdrew the right of Mynpachten (Mining Titles) to be issued.

The Congress averred 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
"This" said the Congress representatives, "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."  

Contrary to the claims which concession store owners had made, said the Congress representatives, in return for the seven shilling and sixpence stand rental per month, landlords derived as much as three to four hundred pounds a month in income.

In broaching the boycott with as much fervour as it did, the Transvaal branch of the SANNC explicitly indicated their interests. These interests revolved around capital and the access of African entrepreneurs into business. While inveighing against the monopolistic muscle of the concession store owners, they sought the broadening of the commercial base to include and accommodate the African businessman.

It is of crucial interest to us, though, that the SANNC involved itself in the boycott issue, and veered the debate away from its original focus, that of high prices; it stepped in and appropriated the specific demands of the mineworkers and muted and transformed their proletarian character. The issue of prices at mine stores was not solved until the beginning of 1920, when economic conditions improved.

THE SHILLING STRIKES AND THE PASS DISTURBANCES

In April 1918, not many months after the clamour of the concession stores had died down, two hundred skilled, and therefore 'white', engineers downed tools in Johannesburg. Disregarding trade union advice, the engineers encouraged their fellow municipal engineers to join them in a strike for higher wages. With Johannesburg's municipal engineers on strike, the town was effectively paralysed for a number of hours. The Town Council quickly relented and awarded a pay increase to its municipal engineers. This action led to a strike by other municipal workers who, however, did not
receive the same degree of sympathy from the municipal authority as had been given to the first strikers. The strike ended a month later.³⁸

Without a doubt, but to what extent one cannot determine, these events had some catalytic effect on the African workers. Within days of the ending of the 'white' strike, African workers in the employ of the Johannesburg municipality came out on strike, demanding higher wages. The African workers, earning one shilling and sixpence per day, noted the determination and success of the 'white' worker and applied the same action. Furthermore, they had witnessed the example of their fellow workers on the East Rand Mines and in Johannesburg earlier in the year. It is our contention that this fresh wave of activity, following so soon after the concession store disturbances, revived the crisis initiated by the earlier event.

The municipal workers' strike has come to be known as the 'bucket' strike because it was started by the sanitary workers. The Star described the event in the following way:

"...on Thursday the natives in the sanitary department of the Town Council put in a demand for an increase of six pence a day as value of their labour, and their action was followed by the natives employed in other municipal departments yesterday, some of whom demanded four pence a day and others six pence 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 one shilling eight pence to two shillings and six pence per day."(39)

(There is a discrepancy in the quoted minimum wages between those given by the Star's reporter and the one shilling and sixpence given above, which derives from SANNC figures.)

The strike caused the services to the suburbs to be held up. This action sent the Town Council into emergency session where strategy and solutions were discussed. It was mentioned, for instance, that an increase of six pence would add £30 000 to the annual budget of the Town Council. The Council decided that they would not yield to the African workers, and thereby resolved on court discipline for the strikers. The alleged ringleaders were arrested, and forty-nine sanitary workers were charged with
breaches of the Riotous Assemblies and Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1914.40

From trial records which appeared in the newspapers, the following facts emerged: It appeared that the workers had made an appeal for an increase of their wages from one shilling and six pence to two shillings and six pence a day. A witness said that on that day the foreman and the acting manager had come and told them that no increase could 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 had asked for. The night foreman said the increase could not be given. The compound manager came and spoke telling them that they would all have to go to Jeppe Police Station. At no time did they refuse to go to work,"(42)

The compound authorities averred, however, that on the ninth of June the workers had refused to come on duty when they were ordered to and that, as a result, only three out of a possible thirty-five carts went out that night.43

From the court transcripts, it appeared that the compound officials had acted precipitately. In the event, the presiding magistrate imposed severe sentences on the workers. They received prison sentences of two months, in addition to which they had to carry out their employment in the escort of an armed guard. "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..."44 On a subsequent sitting of the court, one hundred and fifty-two more people received suspended sentences.45

The sentences unleashed a flood of public interest and sympathy. The TNC seized the opportunity of establishing a popular foothold amongst the African people. It set about organising a train of public meetings. Congress also gained the co-operation of the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA), although, prior to this event, there had occurred a number of unpleasant incidents between the IWA and the SANNC. Members of the IWA had reacted to the conservative nature of the Congress movement. They had posted
themselves in diametric opposition to the SANNC since they felt 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."46

A measure of co-operation was established through the institution of a joint committee from the two organisations. The alliance was justified by the TNC in the following way: "all they (the white oppressors) 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."47

The International (the organ of the International Socialist League) explained the position of the IWA with regard to the SANNC thus:

"this body in whose more reactionary, middle-class and religious-cum-racial tendencies, socialists can 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."(48)

Through its deliberations, the Joint Committee resolved to ask all employers to give their workers an increase of a shilling a day as from the first of July. They also suggested that, should the increase not be given, a strike be considered.

The public meetings, which began on or about the fourteenth of June, provided a forum for the two organisations. The meetings contained these two elements awkwardly until the tension between them became too great.

It emerged that the people who had attended the meetings had come to understand that a full strike would occur on the first of July. The IWA and the TNC ranged themselves on opposite sides with regard to the strike issue. Although the IWA agreed that times were not propitious for a strike, they took grave exception to a strong feeling in the TNC which dismissed the use of strikes on principle. A group of collaborators who held discussions with the concerned authorities emerged in the TNC. One such person was Paul Msane, who earlier had flirted with the IWA. Msane issued a
pamphlet which read

"Do not let your fears carry you away, when you are living with 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... I am opposed to anything like a strike. Not a single man must leave work..."

The battle between the IWA and the TNC gathered momentum. The TNC brought in influential and prominent people within the African community to announce their unease about the strike. W Msimang (the attorney), Dr Rubusana (the Eastern Cape leader) and M'Belle brought all their influence to bear on the meetings to persuade people to act with caution in deciding about a strike. The major result of this lobbying was the TNC's failure to capitalise on the amenability of the African people and the workers to group around a movement which would act on their behalf.

The stand of the IWA with regard to the strike issue, on the other hand, boosted its image, and as a result its weekly meetings received a large influx of new members. However, this was a short-lived Indian summer before the organisation's final demise. It was vulnerable to all the weaknesses which characterised the African working class itself; it lacked experience, and proved an easy prey for the disorganising attention of the police.

Despite a general announcement by the Joint Committee that there would not be a general strike, workers in a number of compounds downed tools on the first of July. They had not received their shilling increase: the authorities, not only on the mines, absolutely refused to grant the increase. At a number of compounds, about 15,000 workers went on strike, and at two compounds, serious clashes broke out between the police and the strikers. In addition, many workers in the city joined the compound strikers. At Ferreirasdeep, Ferreira and Crown Mines the workers downed tools and took up the cry for the shilling increase. At Robinson Deep, the newspapers claimed that Basutos unsuccessfully picketed other workers to go on strike.
The strikers, in the face of TNC discouragement and the conciliatory gestures of some of their colleagues, imperturbably pressed their demand. They said that they would "rather starve than go back to work." As a result of this stubborn defiance, the police moved in with a show of force and arrested seventy-one of the ringleaders. This action physically ended the workers' defiance and demoralised many who thought to adopt the same line of action. Yet, other workers persisted: laundry and hospital workers in Johannesburg followed the cue of the compound workers; in other parts of South Africa, the shilling call gained momentum. Strikes first erupted in areas dotted around Johannesburg and, later on, in other towns throughout the country. The trouble which originated in Johannesburg entrenched the period as a phase of high protest and sharpened the crisis features of South African capitalism. Never before had the working class, and the African people in general, reacted so definitely to a specific working class issue.

While prompt police action eliminated certain crisis points, it became clear to the authorities that they were dealing with a new situation which had explosive potential. Workers had taken the step of confronting their employers and the authorities on a collective and sustained basis. This action confirmed that the events of February on the East Rand were not flash-in-the-pan events, but evidence of a new attitude in the African community which threatened to disturb the placid relationship between workers and their employers.

Because of the new awareness of the African community, the authorities took counter action. In addition to physically disorganising the protesting workers through violent intervention, the authorities brought Bunting, Tinker, Hanscombe, Cetyiwe, Ngojo and Kraai of the IWA, and Letanka and Mvabaza of the TNC before the court on charges of public violence under the Riotous Assemblies Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1914. The state seemed determined to liquidate organisation amongst the working class. However, it had to withdraw charges when the courts discovered that Luke Messina, a key witness for the Crown,
had been making false affidavits on the instigation of his employers.\textsuperscript{56}

Although the legal charges had failed, the authorities achieved an important objective. Their measures contributed to the range of factors which severely crippled the IWA and caused doubt within the ISL about the wisdom of encouraging the organisation of black workers. Unable to keep pace with the movement of development amongst the African workers, the IWA failed to establish a firm foothold, and in this vulnerability succumbed to the pressures brought to bear upon it. The IWA virtually ceased to function in Johannesburg; with this, the only organisation which gave attention to purely working class demands disappeared. The removal of the IWA also meant that the TNC had a clearer field in which to work.\textsuperscript{57}

Public feeling in the African community for the shilling increase continued unabated. Although their slim leadership resources were being challenged by further deterrents through police action, they pressed on with the call for increased wages. Once more, however, the TNC used all its influence to temper the demands of the workers. At a public meeting in Vrededorp attended by over 5 000 people, they emphasised the necessity for making demands in a constitutional fashion.\textsuperscript{58} Elements in the crowd thought otherwise, though, and vented their feelings on the police, at whom they threw stones.\textsuperscript{59}

During this time of unrest, the TNC sent numerous deputations to the Government. The Prime Minister, General Botha, received the first of a number of deputations soon after the disturbances had begun in Johannesburg. Although the deputation gave attention to the question of wages and the odious colour bar, it seized the opportunity to stress the demands of the 'respectable' elite. In this respect it complained about the difficulties which 'decent' Africans encountered when applying for letters of exemption from Pass Laws, and also about the lack and restriction of educational facilities.\textsuperscript{60}
The Government then appointed a commission of enquiry into the unrest, led by Mr Moffat, who had been a magistrate in the Eastern Cape. Cooke, of the Native Labour Department, in giving evidence to the 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..." The Native Recruiting Corporation, which experienced a labour shortage in this period, felt "that there could be no doubt that the actions and utterances of certain misguided individuals (the IWA) 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."  

When the Moffat report appeared in September 1918, it caused a great stir in the African community. At meetings, workers, particularly mineworkers, expressed their dissatisfaction with Moffat's statement that domestic workers and mineworkers were satisfied with their wages and conditions. This dissatisfaction also contained impatience with the leaders of the TNC. A miner called Samuel stood up at a meeting and said

"...what affects the town natives affects the mining boys as well...they wanted and they still want the increase of pay."

Another said that, since their demands were being ignored "...let them be satisfied if we leave the mines and cause them to be closed down." Yet another advocated fighting because, as he suggested, "they (the leaders of the TNC) always went to see the government and never got his (sic) word "that anything would be changed."  

In any event, the mood of militance could not remain at a high pitch. Even though sporadic outbursts of striking still occurred, sustained failure and the disinclination of the TNC to give support, in conjunction with determined police hostility, caused the fervour to wane. The attitude and manner which the TNC had adopted engendered dissatisfaction amongst the workers. At a meeting in December 1918 a man rose and said "I want all you leaders to be arrested again. We are fed up with you."
Furthermore, a serious influenza outbreak disrupted the normal passage of life in the city:
"Out of a total labour force of 157 614 black workers on the Rand, no less than 52 489 were hospitalised in the space of ...two months, of which 1 082 had died by October 31, with over 1 000 more still under care."(66)
The acting Director of Labour reported, moreover, that employers in secondary industry had increased the wages paid to their employees during the influenza epidemic.67

Despite the inherent weaknesses which permeated the new phase of protest, the militance of the period had not yet spent itself. While the authorities were certainly managing to control the eruptions within the working class, all the conditions which stimulated these eruptions still prevailed. The high cost of living and the incidence of low wages, the humiliation of the Pass Laws and degrading living conditions appeared to force the African community out in protest once more. In March of 1919 the lull ended, and a fresh spell of social alarm began gathering in Johannesburg and many other places in South Africa. The African people in Johannesburg were not satisfied with the response they had received from employers whom they had petitioned for higher wages through the TNC.

The African people held a mass meeting on the thirtieth of March 1919, at Vrededorp. A Star reporter interviewed a 'prominent native' at the meeting, who said that
"whites, such as those at the Power Station could go on strike for their rights and you don't put them in goal. 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."(69)

The people at the meeting decided to go in a body to the Pass Office where they would hand back their passes in protest. They said that they were dissatisfied with their employers' reports about the wage increases 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."(70)

This action set the anti-pass movement in motion.
By perceiving this close relationship between the Pass Law and their conditions, the workers had advanced considerably in their understanding of their social and economic environment. This advance, however, received a sharp counter in the stance which the leadership adopted. While the TNC opposed the Pass Laws, the leadership muted the poignancy of the workers' demands and consistently claimed that the object of resistance by the people 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."

An anti-pass demonstration followed the march on the Pass Office. The meeting took place in the region of the Fordsburg Pass Office. The demonstration, peacefully as it began, presented the police with 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." At a subsequent hearing, a magistrate fined the Congress leaders ten pounds each.

These arrests provoked further demonstrations in the centre of Johannesburg. The trial of pass offenders brought thousands of people into the streets surrounding the magisterial courts. African women in the crowd began taunting their menfolk for not reacting to the presence of the police in their midst and several impromptu meetings sprang to life when the sentences of the offenders were relayed to the people outside. The police decided that the situation had become potentially explosive and forcefully terminated the meetings and ordered the people to disperse.

huge gatherings, sometimes organised by the TNC, continued to take place at Vrededorp. Increasingly large numbers of people gave their support to the anti-pass campaign, which by now rested firmly in the control of the TNC. The rest of the Rand, and even further afield, quickly responded to the cue provided by the people in Johannesburg. Organisers adopted a strategy which prevented the police from intervening. Women, who were
exempt from Pass regulations, divided themselves up into bands of collectors and in this way covered large parts of the Reef. Encouraged by the enthusiastic response of the African people, the meetings became increasingly vociferous. Because of the growing tension, the police terminated one meeting on the second of April where they arrested approximately three hundred people. They intervened at yet another meeting when a riot threatened to break out between the demonstrators and 'white' onlookers. At another time in Vrededorp serious confrontations between African demonstrators and the police and 'white' sympathisers took place which ended in the death of an African man. In the process, the police had apprehended two hundred and fifty-four more people.

Once again, however, the deterrents to which the working class was exposed caused a weakening of working class militance. The disturbances discussed above, which threatened to explode relationships between the authorities and the workers on the mines, were quelled by the appeals of the traditional chiefs who had been expressly imported to the Rand for that purpose. In addition, the TNC's interest in the common people flagged while they paid intense attention to deputation after deputation to Pretoria. To its credit, the large deputation which went to Pretoria on the seventh of April gave extensive attention to the Pass system as it affected the African community generally, and not just themselves. The interest in worker demands displayed at this meeting, however, can be explained in terms of the continued criticism by the workers that leaders were not representing their demands. Despite this interest in the workers, these deputations brought no alteration to the condition of the working class.

A definite pattern emerged in the events which took place between June 1918 and April 1919. The masses initiated protest and the leadership appropriated and countered it. Each advance of the masses was followed by decisive, perhaps sometimes unwitting, counteraction on the part of the TNC. This action of the TNC highlighted the absence of leadership within the working class.
The Klipspruit disturbances

March and April 1919 were turbulent months for Johannesburg. To compound the Pass and Shilling outbreaks, a serious confrontation had brewed and come to a head in the African location of Klipspruit. The residents of the location attacked and assaulted the superintendent of the location as well as a number of policemen. The anger directed at the symbols of authority embraced deep-seated grievances which had been brewing in the location since its establishment. (See Chapter Three for a description of Klipspruit; see map in Appendix)

The Klipspruit trouble differed from other disturbances in one important aspect: whereas the other disturbances had their origin in a work or job environment, the Klipspruit conflict represented a straight confrontation between the residents of the location and the controlling authorities; the municipality and the Native Affairs Department.

The Star published the following description of the trouble:

"Police, acting, of course, on instructions, rounded up a head of cattle, some of which belonged to natives, whose residential quarters were 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 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 tome. In short, they were attacked, their assailants approached them with choppers, sticks, picks and missiles equally effective in a mêlée. 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."(80)

James the location superintendent, claimed that he had acted on a report which had been made to him about ownerless cattle. As a result, he arranged for the matter to be investigated by the police on the twenty-third of March. On the assigned day, he...
and the police 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 the men were in the kraal, numbers six and seven accused (Paul Motsoake 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."(81)

The police decided to return at eleven o' clock that morning and, as per routine, made an inspection visit to the local butcher:

"Three of the accused then entered the shop, one of them spoke to Shabalala (the butcher) in Sesuto and Detective 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 another. One showed fight and tackled Calder, yet another 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"..."(82)

On the following day the location people barricaded the location and permitted no one to leave. Those who attempted to board trains were forcibly removed and brought back. Police surrounded the location and the place "resembled a very martial scene", commented the Star. By nightfall, however, the excitement abated and people were permitted to enter and leave.

Within a few days, the police had arrested the 'ringleaders' and court proceedings were instituted against them. The magistrate found that, although the police had acted wrongfully in taking possession of the cattle, the people had also acted indefensibly by retaliating. The offenders were sentenced to a number of years' imprisonment. The sentences provoked large-scale reaction:

"In several locations the people came together and prayer meetings were the order of the day, collecting 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."(85)
In a manner consistent with past performances, the TNC again stepped in and commandeered the unrest. The organisation held several meetings at Nancefield (adjacent to Klipspruit) and Klipspruit. Early in May, the TNC attracted two hundred people to a meeting. Three major resolutions were passed at this meeting:

(i) A resolution of protest against the treatment meted out to African prisoners in the Johannesburg goal.
(ii) A resolution that delegates at the Queenstown conference of the Congress lay before the Government details of their complaints.
(iii) A resolution that Congress be moved to request the authorities to allow depositions to be taken from prisoners still undergoing sentence touching the matter.

The court trial established that the immediate cause of the disturbance was the action of the police in interfering with the inhabitants' stock. However, many other points of controversy emerged as well. Le Roux, the rent collector in the location, averred that the attitude of James the superintendent was responsible for the trouble in the village. He revealed that during the three or four years before the incident considerable friction and a deterioration of relationships had taken place in the location. Grave reports, said Le Roux, could be made of James' administration of the village. In addition, people submitting evidence to the commission of enquiry into the location not only confirmed Le Roux's allegations against James, but spoke also of the deplorable location conditions. Sibiya, one of the location's elders, said that

"The first sore point is that we are sold like animals by the Government...If they had a good superintendent they lived well, otherwise not. Their cattle were impounded. For one head of cattle they paid 7s. 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 magistrates 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 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."88

Generally, the people complained that, under James' direction, police raided their homes at night and kicked down their doors. They mentioned the unhealthy conditions in the location frequently as a grievance point: the water supply and medical services were totally inadequate. They complained that the sewerage farm polluted their drinking water and that the Rand Water Board occasionally cut off their supplies, which forced them to draw their supplies from the watercourses. A Dr J H Grogham reported in confirmation that deaths due to chest and bowel ailments were frequent in the location.89

James, in his defence, claimed that he had not experienced hostility in the location until the government began recruiting volunteers for the War effort in Europe. As part of his defence James stated that he "...had reason to round up natives who would not work. He also rounded up native women who occupied themselves in liquor selling. The natives resented this."90

James' actions no doubt caused a great deal of unhappiness in the location. Moreover, he acted arbitrarily in his dealing with people in the location. People claimed that he patrolled the location with a loaded revolver at night and had assaulted an old man.91,92

As a result of the criticism poured upon James, he was relieved of his job and posted to another section of the Native Affairs Department. More noteworthy, the Town Council suddenly earmarked funds for expansion and improvement of housing facilities in Klipspruit. In addition, "The Parks and Estates Committee recommend to the Town Council that the natives at Klipspruit location be permitted to elect an advisory board of eight members: that the voters at such an election be registered renters, that such Advisory Boards have no executive power 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."(93)
Furthermore, the municipal authorities took it upon themselves to compensate the owners of huts in the location who had been unduly harmed by the arrangements of previous auction sales.\textsuperscript{94}

The actions of the \textit{Town Council} patently pointed to a concerted effort to \underline{eliminate discontent} within the location. Most significantly, the institution of an \underline{advisory committee} showed that the authorities recognised the potential for the eruption of conflict between the residents of the location and the municipal authorities, and took steps to undermine such potential conflict. One can argue that the inauguration of an advisory committee in the location, (and, subsequently, the Annual Native Conference and Advisory Committee instituted by General Smuts in 1920) had as its object the \underline{promotion of a buffer class to defuse the growth of discontent} within the workers and the masses. As the working class grew in maturity and experience, the existence of a deflective group able to divert potential militancy proved to be indispensable.

In an attempt to stem further public unrest, the authorities relented in another direction as well. Through the connivance of the Secretary for Native Affairs and the Director of Prisons, the authorities recommended that the Klipspruit prisoners be shown clemency and be released.\textsuperscript{95} The Secretary for Native Affairs acknowledged that Klipspruit had been mismanaged and that the municipal authorities had disregarded the wishes of the people, which 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."\textsuperscript{(96)}

The Congress movement claimed a great victory in the release of the prisoners. In December 1920 the movement held a meeting in
Klipspruit to celebrate their release.97 Their meeting generated much bold talk. Sibaya 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 get nothing done for us and we are in despair."98 Other members of Congress made similar speeches. Mabaso, chief spokesman for the TNC, said

"...by your actions you have covered yourselves with glory having made sacrifices for your nation and 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 is an example of the effect of 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 to fight again."(99)

One can call these several retreats on the part of the authorities a form of victory for the African working class and the masses. In none of the other conflicts between the authorities and the workers had any ground been given at all. The outcome of the Klipspruit conflict indicated that the authorities would yield, if only partially. The overwhelming fact, however, was that, while the African masses gained some ground, they also relinquished much to the authorities. The pyrrhic nature of the result arose from the increased domination which the authorities could exercise over the masses through the Advisory Boards. By seeming to yield to the masses, the authorities achieved a larger gain than was then understood. They had introduced a way of securing the presence of their ideology within the working masses. The Advisory Boards, manned by the local African elite to speak on behalf of their communities (and anticipating a distinct move by the state on a national scale in the early twenties), were very suitable channels for propogating the authority of the ruling class within the working class. While the appointment of Advisory Boards appeared to be a concession, it was not understood that it was a concession to the TNC alone, and a brake on the working class. At a time when class relations were critical, the
THE 1920 AFRICAN MINERS' STRIKE

The strike of 1920 was the culmination of three years of crisis-ridden class struggle in Johannesburg. Never before in South Africa had the ruling class (in the form of government authority and employers) been forced to contend with such vociferous opposition from the emerging urban workforce. They had to beat strategical retreats and resort to violent methods of discouragement to put down repeated waves of protest. And now, in 1920, black workers threatened the nation's economic life-blood, the mines. During the unrest which had seethed and abated on the Rand during the preceding three years, the 'mining lords' breathed very uneasily. When the Pass disturbances had broken out, they assembled the most impressive array of tribal chiefs yet seen on the Rand, expressly to warn their subjects to avoid confrontations with their employers. In January 1920, the memory of this visit meant nothing to the mineworkers; they implacably opposed their employers in their demands for higher wages.

On the mines, a feeling of unrest had already become apparent in the closing weeks of 1919. In December 1919, over four hundred miners at the Rose Deep and Simmer and Jack Mines had walked through the gates of their compounds without permission, with the intention of marching on Johannesburg. What they intended to do when they reached Johannesburg is not clear. Within a few weeks, the workers at Knight Central Gold Mines attempted to do the same thing. The Daily Mail complained that they heard a great deal of excited talk "but the natives would not declare the nature of their grievances."

In the town of Johannesburg, remnants of the shilling campaign burst forth sporadically. A strike for wage increases broke out at the Railways and Harbours Depot in the town, which took the Railway Administration by surprise. On the mines the workers started a fresh wave of boycotts of the concession stores. The
African workers protested vigorously against the increase in price of certain articles. In the vicinity of the Simmer and Jack Mine they even threatened to burn a shop down. The Rose Deep Mine concession stores experienced similar trouble.

With this mood of discontent abroad, the strike on the mines erupted and spread very rapidly. 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..."; the mine owners were anxious to avoid trouble likely to cause stoppages. On the seventeenth of February their example provided the cue for the workers on the Cason Mine, who refused to go on shift.

Newspaper reports spoke of tensions developing on 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." (107)

The report said that a careful enquiry had 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." At the Cason Mine, the authorities offered the workers an increase of two pence a day which they accepted, and after which they returned to their posts. In the meanwhile, the workers at the Geldenhuis Deep and New Heriot Mines, prompted by the successful strikes of their colleagues at Cason and Wits Deep, downed tools and demanded that their wages be increased.

These demands came in the wake of wage increases which the gold mines were said to have made in January of that year. The Chamber of Mines said that it had "authorised a bonus of 5s per month to all underground natives who had completed one hundred and eighty shifts on a mine." In addition, wages had been increased by two to three pence per shift underground and two shillings 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 piecework, and consequently it rests with the natives themselves as to the amount of wages which they can earn." (112)

Despite these increases (and incentives), on the nineteenth of February 30 000 African workers went on strike.113 Seven mines were affected: the East Rand Propriety Mines (Cason, Comet and Hercules), Nourse Mines, City Deep, Consolidated Langlaagte, Durban Roodepoort Deep, Langlaagte Estates and Knights Deep.114 According to a Chamber of Mines statement in the press on the twenty-first of February, 40 000 workers had downed tools the day before.115 On the East Rand the position had deteriorated despite the fact that the workers at Princess Estate and Angelo Deep had refused to come out.116 It also gathered momentum in Johannesburg when the workers of Block B Langlaagte and Village Deep joined the strike.117

The strike held dire prospects for the South African economy. As a result, the police kept a wary eye and actively intervened to curb further developments.118 At Knights Deep East Compound, 1 800 workers had broken out of the compound and taken up "positions on the adjacent dumps and other points of vantage... They were anxious to frustrate the desires of the non-strikers."119 The police arrested some of the more aggressive workers. At City Deep they had broken a fence and had congregated on the dumps.

The Government also expressed grave concern. General Smuts (The Prime Minister who had succeeded General Botha) had himself come up to the Rand and had held conferences with the mining authorities Sir Evelyn Wallers and Mr Buckle, as well as with the Native Affairs Department.

The Native Congress held large rallies in Johannesburg where 'houseboys' and 'shopboys' expressed sympathy with the mineworkers and in turn demanded an increase in their own wages. Spurred on by the example of the mineworkers, the Congress decided to hold a ballot to decide whether there should be a general strike or not.120
In the second week of the strike, a see-saw tendency emerged in the rhythm and emergence of strikes. The Rand Daily Mail reported that, while work resumed at four mines, work stoppages had taken place at four mines and a part of another. The whole of the ERPM Estate had gone back to work and at City Deep "with police...providing strong moral effect 3,000 out of 4,500 went back." Trouble spread to other mines on the Far East Rand (Springs and Benoni), though. The Modder B and the State Mines soon fell victim to the strike and it was anticipated that Geduld and Modder East and Randfontein would soon follow suit. Later in the week, the trouble emerged on the West Rand. Almost the whole of the Near East Rand had, however, returned to work. In the central Rand, only City Deep was still out. Similarly, apart from Modder B, all the mines had returned to normal conditions on the Far East Rand. Taken as a whole, the situation had eased somewhat since the first strike took place. The number of strikers had fallen to 34,000.

In the meanwhile a state of tension between workers and employers had developed in the city. The sanitary workers at the municipal compound went on strike. The tension was also fed by threatening gestures from the Congress movement. They warned that if the Government failed to respond 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 pressures for a large strike. In reaction to these developments the Manufacturers' Association recommended to their members that they pay their workers a twenty-five per cent increase on their existing wages; the Builders' Association also recommended a minimum wage of eighteen shillings to their members. Other employers, however, deliberately ignored the demand.

In the event the Congress' threatened strike failed to emerge, largely because the movement had failed to bring any organisation to their rhetoric; where workers refused to obey their employers they were charged with breaking their contracts and for conspiring...
with others to disturb the peace. On the mines no such easy resolution appeared. The mineworkers who persisted with their striking doggedly resisted attempts to make them return to their stations. This struggle between the workers and the employers had become serious for them. Only the violent intervention of the police finnaly secured their capitulation. At the Block B Compound three mineworkers were charged with "geweld". "They drove James Gray Miller, the compound manager and his boys outside the camp." On the twenty fourth of February a flare-up occurred at the Village Deep Mine between police and mineworkers. "A pitched battle lasting twenty minutes between the police and the natives at Village Deep disturbed the decorum of the native strike early yesterday morning." The police claimed that on their arrival at the compound they found the doors barricaded. When they finally managed to make their way into the compound they were beaten up by the strikers. "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." Turfmine and Modder B had prepared and equipped themselves similarly for such a battle with the police and the authorities. At both compounds the mineworkers had carried out their preparations in a quasi-military fashion, performing drill exercises. Police intervention had ensured, however, that the workers would be disarmed as well as immobilized. The confrontation between the police and the strikers signalled the beginning of the end for the strikers.

The strike, in its immediate objectives of gaining a wage increase had failed. Initially, individual mines had relented to their workers demands, but when the movement gained momentum the confrontation had to be brought to a halt. Unlike most of the period's other disturbances, the miners' strike had relatively little contact with the Congress movement. Petty bourgeois influences thus had relatively little to do with the immediate failure of the strike. Rather, the failure could be attributed to a combination of the two other factors which accompanied protest in this period - an inability of the working class to generate leadership from below, and the overwhelming organisational
superiority of the state and the mining authorities through their ability to commandeer police resources and so on. In the light of these two enervating factors, two related observations can be made:

(i) despite an appearance of organisation (for after all some rudimentary form of organisation must have existed to have communicated news of the strike so quickly), hardly any mention was made of the presence of a group of leaders in newspapers or police reports, and
(ii) the strike was ably monitored by the police force right from the start.136

However, despite the strike's failure, the reaction of the working class was impressive. Although the largest number of men out at one time was 42 000, a total of 71 000 workers had taken part in the strike.137 Such mass co-operation signalled an important development within the African working class. The working class had begun to transfer its attacks from machinery to the class and society which legally owned and utilised these machines. The Chamber of Mines had warned the Government that "the native is advancing more rapidly than we had anticipated, and that we should take measures accordingly...at no distant date further attempts will be made to organise strikes among natives."138 The Chamber of Mines recommended therefore, that the force of mounted police stationed on the Rand be strengthened to guard the lives and the property of the Europeans.139 In addition, employers exercised more stringent control on their compounds, and in several places attempted to seal them off.

The troubles on the Rand had not yet, however, exhausted their fervour. Tail-end flare-ups occurred in the beginning of March and again in the middle of July. Domestic workers, or 'houseboys' held a meeting at Vrededorp on the twenty-ninth of February where they indicated their preparedness to strike for higher wages.140 However, the TNC leadership suggested to them that they should wait for information from the Government on the question of a Wages Board. This reply displeased the crowd intensely. It became clearly evident "that there was a strong element of
hostility towards the representatives of the TNC who were the
speakers. This being so, the leaders had to close the meeting...
A suggestion that all Africans should join the Native Congress
and pay two shillings and sixpence subscriptions was met with
opposition...this was the end of the meeting..."141 The enraged
crowd then streamed off excitedly, and en route to the Malay
Location, encountered the police, whom they stoned.

One other event occurred late in July. The African workers
employed in the Gas and Electricity Supply Department of the
Johannesburg Municipality began agitating for a wage increase.142
When it became evident that the Town Council was not going to
give the increase, workers left the service in large numbers.
The Council felt that the situation had become desperate because
"it got the very worst boys...During the last few weeks
these boys have been holding meetings to discuss the
situation and have repeatedly asked what the Council's
decision on this matter (of a wage increase) was."(143)
The solution, the Council decided, was to give the workers an
increase.

This event closed the period of high protest on the Rand. In
the following period, increased measures, proceeding from an
awareness of the danger which the politicisation of the African
workers held, were taken by the bourgeoisie, both within
government and liberal circles.

CONCLUSION
In summing up the 1917-1920 historical period, one can conclude
that the bonds between capital and labour had become intensely
antagonistic. The events which we have examined indicated that
the workers had taken up positions of hostility to the
bourgeoisie and the representatives of capital. Never before
had the authorities and the employing class been confronted so
boldly by the working class. It is because of this new
dimension of confrontation that we can conclude that a crisis
emerged in class relations in South Africa,
It is true that the objectives of the working class were limited, that they exhibited a 'trade-union' form of consciousness, i.e. where their organic awareness grew to a limited ceiling only. This consciousness encompassed a desire for reform of working conditions, but could not perceive of a change in the structure of society. The working class had arrived at the position where it was a class-in-itself; out of economic necessity it had become a class as distinct from a class of capitalists.¹⁴⁴

Although the experience of 1917-1920 brought a wealth of experience to the working class and the African community as a whole, the balance of forces had moved over more strongly in the favour of the authorities and the bourgeoisie. The ruling class had gained a decisive victory over the workers. Their superiority over the workers and the masses was far too great; they commanded resources in the police force and the legislative powers capable of wreaking divisive damage within the working class; they had the assistance of the rising African petty bourgeoisie which disseminated its class ideology within the working class; and, finally, they had an advantage in that the working class did not have the experience, nor had it had time to provide and develop leadership from below. All these factors within an economy where the worker, ab initio, proceeded from a position of dependence on wage labour, and thereby on the capitalists, enhanced the power of the capitalists. In addition, these factors reinforced each other. The deliberate disorganisation which the state brought to bear upon the working class, first emerging in the 'Bucket' strike and culminating in the determined assault on the 1920 striking mineworkers, found its perfect complement in the dominance which the petty bourgeois leaders of the TNC attempted to achieve within the working class. Both factors, especially the latter, in (i) appropriating and muting working class protest for its own purposes, and (ii) acting in a politically ambivalent manner as determined by its own interests, thoroughly weakened the position of the working class. These
factors emphasised the crisis due to lack of leadership in the working class.

Finally, the single most important point of this chapter, which bears repeating, is that the authorities had succeeded in defusing the militance of the working class. In so doing, they terminated the crisis between the antagonistic classes and cleared the platform for the rising petty bourgeoisie. While the state held no distinct attitude towards this petty bourgeoisie, and may even have acted against it on occasion, a more favourable attitude emerged in the next period. In the next chapter we shall examine this development; we shall examine how the state and the bourgeoisie, especially the liberals representing the interests of mining capital, attempted to co-opt this petty bourgeoisie in an attempt to pre-empt and defuse working class protest.
NOTES

1. K Marx, Capital Vol 1 pp554-5
2. Moroney op cit pp93-126 passim
3. Union Statistics for Fifty Years G-18
4. Webster, 'Background to the Supply and Control of Labour in the Gold Mines' in Webster op cit p15; Bonner op cit p5
5. Bonner op cit p5
6. Quoted in Bonner op cit
7. Karis and Carter Vol 1 op cit p61
8. SNA Box 215 Taberer to the Acting Chairman of the NRC 20/8/1917
10. Rand Daily Mail 13/2/1918
11. See Van Onselen, 'South Africa's Lumpenproletariat Army: 'Umkosi wa Ntaba' - 'The Regiment of the Hills'. 1890-1920; also see Moroney op cit. Wilfred Jali, the policeman who was sent to infiltrate and inform on the IWA, reported to his superiors that he had seen one of the prominent members of the IWA, Rueben Kapane, at Ebenoni during the Boycott and the unrest there. Other police informers also reported that Kapane, who was a travelling salesman, had been seen lecturing to workers in the compounds. He had been exhorting them to go on strike. (SNA Box 213 James King to Commanding Officer of Roodepoort.)
12. Rand Daily Mail 13/2/1918
13. Ibid
14. The Star 12/2/1918
15. The Rand Daily Mail 14/2/1918
16. The Star 25/2/1918
17. Ibid
18. The Rand Daily Mail 12/2/1918
19. Secretary for Mines and Industries Box 471 FMM 1483/18
The Chambers of Commerce produced a chart to disprove the charge of profiteering which had been levelled against them. See Appendix One. They claimed that the turnover in this aspect of their trade had not increased. (Ibid) Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce 21/2/1918. They cited the evidence of the Trading stores on Government Mines who claimed that they did not make enough even to pay their rentals. (Ibid Starfield et alia of the Government Trading Stores to Minister of Mines and Industries 19/2/1918) They complained that "We find 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." (Ibid)

The Mining Commissioner contended that in any event, the competition was invariably keen "and the native of today is quite a clever shopper. The dealer who attempts to foist a very poor class of goods on to his native customer will, in my opinion, soon experience that he has the worst of the bargain, for the natives will avoid purchasing from him." (Ibid From the Acting Mine Commissioner to the Secretary of Mines and Industries 8/6/1918)

See Van Onselen's 'Randlords and Rotgut' for an excellent depiction of the history of the liquor trade on the Rand.
Letters and memoranda from African businessmen reached the various commissions which were investigating the situation on the mines, complaining about restrictions placed on their trading activities. (See AJ Msimang, Memorandum to Native Trading on Mines Committee, Op cit Box 471) Msimang wrote, "At present the native does not get scope to sell his own produce to his compatriots on the mines... If a system of co-operative stores be found practicable then there should be no colour bar or any restrictions against natives in that respect.

...These stores were boycotted by natives last year. They were not boycotted because the native takes time to get accustomed to any increases in price, as reported in the press. But because the native distrusts the Jew...nobody believed during the War that the Jew was putting on a legitimate price." (Ibid)

RK Cope, Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of WH Andrews

The Star 28/5/1918

The Star 8/6/1918

Ibid

The Star 12/6/1918

The Star 12/6/1918

The Star 10/6/1918

E Roux, Time Longer than Rope pp130-1

The Star 12/6/1918

SNA Box 213 Jali's Report 19/7/1917

Ibid 19/6/1918

The International 21/6/1918

The Star 29/6/1918;

The International made the following comment about the situation:

"...the remedy is not ripe yet. The black workers are not yet ready to stand by each other and rely
on that weapon...against the claw and fang system. They still look from (sic) aid above. What aid will they get?" (The International 7/6/1918)

50 Cope op cit p197
51 The Star 1/7/1918
52 Ibid
53 The Rand Daily Mail 2/7/1918
54 Ibid
55 The Rand Daily Mail 8/7/1918
56 Ibid Messina was, as we have already seen, but one of a whole number of police informers who had deliberately been sent to keep a watching brief on political organisation. These informers sent detailed reports of activities within these organisations to the police. On the basis of these reports the police had a good knowledge of developments within the working class. The informers, Jali and Moroosi worked undercover in the IWA for over a year before they were discovered. Jali was even elected to sit on the administrative executive of the IWA.

57 The International 22/2/1919
58 The Rand Daily Mail 8/7/1918
59 Ibid
60 The Star 12/7/1918
61 The Star 24/7/1918
62 The Star 30/10/1918
63 The SNA Box 213 Copy of Abantu Batho 19/9/1918)
64 The Rand Daily Mail 12/7/1918
65 SNA Box 213 Copy of Abantu Batho
66 Bonner op cit p9
67 SNA Box 215 Acting Director of Native Labour to Secretary for Native Affairs 27/3/1919
68 SNA Box 85 Meeting between Minister of Justice and a Deputation from the Transvaal Native Congress Pretoria 7/4/1919
Footnote: The ringleaders of the Klipspruit disturbances were on trial on the same day, contributing to the atmosphere of discontent. There was a continuing atmosphere of tension in Johannesburg for several days during the trials. Newspaper reports claimed that the crowds tried to storm the prisons to release their leaders, and that there was an undercurrent of excitement fuelled by enthusiastic speeches. The climax to this activity was a large demonstration outside the court which the police felt had to be broken up to prevent further trouble. (The Star 3/4/1919)
James had in fact generated so much bitterness in the location that a special fund had been set up to support the family of the person who would kill him.

The Star 27/3/1920

SNA Box 186 op cit

Rand Daily Mail 6/1/1920

Rand Daily Mail 15/1/1920

Rand Daily Mail 12/2/1920

Rand Daily Mail 14/2/1920

Rand Daily Mail 18/2/1920

The Rand Daily Mail 20/2/1920

It is clear that these increases had been insufficient.
115 Rand Daily Mail 21/2/1920
116 Ibid
117 Ibid
118 Ibid
119 Ibid
120 The Rand Daily Mail 23/2/1920
121 Diamond, 'African Labour Problems on South African Gold Mines' p44
122 Rand Daily Mail 24/2/1920
123 Ibid
124 The Rand Daily Mail 25/2/1920
125 Ibid
126 Rand Daily Mail 24/2/1920
127 Rand Daily Mail 25/2/1920
128 Ibid
129 Ibid; see also SNA Box 215 Chamber of Commerce to Acting Director of Native Labour 23/1/1920.
130 Rand Daily Mail 26/2/1920
131 Rand Daily Mail 25/2/1920
132 Ibid
133 Rand Daily Mail 24/2/1920
134 Ibid
135 This does not mean of course that this organisation did not try to capitalise on the strike as it did with the other disturbances of the period. At meetings the TNC sought the miners to continue with the strike until their demands were met. The TNC also made their threat to the authorities earlier on the strength of the miners' strike.
136 The police reports, however, do talk of
particular Africans exhorting their colleagues to down tools. (SNA Box 215 Office of the District Commandant Boksburg to the Deputy Commissioner of Police Transvaal South African Police, Pretoria 17/2/1920

137 Diamond op cit p47
138 Johnstone Race, Class and Gold op cit p180
139 Ibid p183
140 Rand Daily Mail 1/3/1920
141 Ibid
142 Rand Daily Mail 21/7/1920
143 Ibid

144 To proceed beyond this point, Marx says that a class must become a class-for-itself, in other words it must raise the class struggle out of its economistic ambit onto what Lukacs calls the level of 'conscious' aim'. (G Lukacs, History and Class Consciousness, p76)
CHAPTER FIVE
"WE RESPECTFULLY SUBMIT"

"In 1920 the immediate causes of unrest were starvation, low wages and the high price of life's necessaries... The causes of the trouble therefore were real, but have since been mitigated... Grievances of another type have now come to the surface (own emphasis), the two chief of which are the land question and the salaries of Native school teachers."(1)

African worker protest had reached a high point during 1917 to 1920. By contrast, the period 1921 to 1925 was markedly tranquil. This chapter looks at such 'protest' as did arise during this period; it intends to argue that conditions had changed in the African community and that the new channels and institutions which came into existence stemmed from the threatening unrest of the previous period. Another objective of this chapter is to posit that the methods of consultation and representation designed by the state for the African community created structures of co-optation and gave precedence to the African elite. However, in concluding this chapter, we will argue that, even though this era could be described as having been the era of the African elite, the position of this class remained ambiguous.

One important feature of African protest during this period is the virtual absence of worker action. Statistics for the six-year period between 1921 and 1926 indicate that during this entire period only seven hundred 'non-European' people resorted to industrial action. Only one incidence of mass protest occurred in this period. This protest took place in 1921 when dissatisfied Africans mildly voiced their unhappiness with the Poll Tax system. For the rest, the only protest of any kind came from the highly articulate African elite.

Our argument in this chapter proceeds from the fact that conditions had changed since after the War. Most importantly, the cost of living had fallen, and removed the inflationary conditions of the previous era. From its apex of one hundred
and forty-four in 1920, retail prices in Johannesburg fell to one hundred and five comma nine in 1923. In addition, housing conditions in the city were improving. The Town Council was devoting more money and attention to the problem and, arising out of this, Western Native Township had been constructed in 1920. This action and the promise of further measures definitely presented a different prospect for the housing situation. In the light of this, while conditions had not improved dramatically, it is our suggestion that the entire crisis element had been removed from the situation in which Africans found themselves, and thus critically influenced working class propensity to engage in industrial action.

While African protest had diminished drastically, 'white' protest reached fever pitch during this period. It is not within the scope of our work to examine this contrast; it needs to be said, however, that 'white' protest played a crucial role in determining the nature of the Government and the legislation of the period. Briefly, the Rand Revolt of 1922 precipitated the Industrial Conciliation Act which severely proscribed worker action and excluded Africans from bargaining procedures, it caused the defeat of the South African Party at the 1924 elections and, most important (not for our purposes, though), its failure endowed capital with the ability to move into a higher phase of capitalism. A number of reflections about the importance of these events pivoted around the Rand Revolt are in order: The political changes which took place as a result of the Revolt caused a realignment of forces, bringing national capital and 'white' workers together, which, while it did not affect the basic policy towards Africans, held implications for the status of the African elite; the Industrial Conciliation Act, in being defined in such a way that Africans were excluded from the definition of 'employee', constituted an attempt at maintaining disorganising procedures brought to bear on the African working class.

The rest of this chapter is an examination of the evolution of government policies with regard to the African community,
especially the African elite.

The Native Affairs Bill, an attempt to unify and rationalise Government policy towards the Africans throughout South Africa, was the first attempt by the state to achieve the co-operation of the African community, if only through the mediation of the educated elite. The Bill itself had a long and interesting gestation period. It first came up for parliamentary review in 1913, when the government sought to unify the four provinces on the question of 'native policy'. The original motivation behind the Bill was vague: "...to divide South Africa into two camps - white and black - and build up specific institutions for whites and blacks."9 This motivation did manage to produce the controversial Natives' Land Act of 1913. It also provided for the Beaumont Commission of Enquiry which reported in 1916 and produced the Native Affairs Bill of 1917. However, as Smuts indicated in a speech to the House of Assembly,

"The impression among some portions of the Native population was that the Bill was not intended to help them, but that it was a policy of repression to oust them from their land."(10)

This, and matters of a party nature, caused the government to abandon the Bill in 1917.

The events of 1917 to 1920 threw a totally different light on the Bill. It became imperative to steer such a bill through parliament. Smuts remarked that, when he came back from Europe after the War,

"He did not think that he was exaggerating when he said that the white man in South Africa was rapidly coming to be looked upon in quite a different light to what he was a generation ago, when the natives used to look up to the white man as a superior being."(11)

Considerations different to those of 1913 applied. He therefore conceded that

"It might be argued by the native that he had no constitutional outlet and mode of expression for his grievances...nowhere were institutions provided by our public machinery where he could express his own views..."(12).

The solution, thought Smuts, would be to

"convince the native that they were taking the proper step and setting up the proper institutions in which his legitimate desires and ambitions could be satisfied."(13)
The 1920 Native Affairs Bill was the introductory bill, preceding, but also laying the basis for, a whole battery of African legislation specifically aimed at making relations between Africans and 'whites' more tractable. The 1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act, which we consider in this chapter, was a direct product of the aims of the 1920 Act.

The Native Affairs Bill of 1920 thus set out to address the specific needs of the 'Native Policy' as they were perceived by the state in 1920. Three major innovations were made to 'native policy'. The first

"was to constitute a commission which would consist of experts, people who could give all their time and all their attention to the consideration and study of the question which circled round this problem. They must try not only to frame a policy that was right, but they must try to make the native realise that it was right (own emphasis)."(14)

The commission, constituted on a standing basis, would, after consultation with Africans, investigate questions of education and territorial segregation, and also the question of urbanisation (hence the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923). The second innovation involved the devolution of certain aspects of 'native local government' to Local Councils.

"These Local Councils would give the native a training in local self-government. It was no use talking about political rights at large unless they had a foundation on which to work."(15)

The final innovation introduced by Smuts envisaged the establishment of an annual conference where Africans could discuss pending regulations with the government. Smuts argued that

"They should avail themselves more in South Africa of that machinery than anywhere else, and keep in touch with the natives by explaining the various steps to be taken of an important nature..."(16)

The responses of the elite Africans to the Bill were significant. Pelem, President of the Bantu Union, and Tengo Jabavu claimed that 'the principle' of the Bill had been accepted by the African and was in no danger. Mahabane, President of the Cape Province Native Congress, on the other hand, felt that the Bill
involved and perpetuated the "objectionable principle of the political segregation of the Bantu races and their exclusion from the political rights of the country." However, even Mahabane agreed with the others that the Bill was a step in the right direction. "Yes, I agree that it (the Bill) is a step in the right direction...as an instrument of government for the natives, it is undoubtedly a step in the right direction." DDT Jabavu saw the Act in broader terms:

"on the one hand Cabinet Ministers refer to it (the Commission set up under the Act) all perplexing questions of legislation when faced by awkward questions in parliament, while on the other hand the Native people utilise it as a tribunal before which to voice their grievances at length, thus obtaining the satisfaction of having their affairs seriously considered. For one party it is a convenient refuge, for the other a useful safety valve for letting off steam." (19)

One can argue that the African elite looked for signals of encouragement in the Act. It considered its own position a precarious one since it felt that

"the better educated Natives cannot be neglected in legislative affairs by reason of their small percentage compared with the masses. If they are allowed to become disaffected their influence will react injuriously to the country." (20)

The Act, however, addressed itself to the 'native problem' in general, rather than to the specific problem of the elite. This notwithstanding, the manner in which the Act operated elevated the significance of the African elite. The innovations which the Act brought to 'native policy' hinged on the existence of an educated elite; since only the elite with a modicum of education could act in an advisory capacity to the Government, and only an elite could really gain access to the Local Councils. Selby Msimang recognised this and hailed the advantages to be gained from the Local Councils since they would be led by the 'advanced' group. (21)

The Liberal component of South African 'white' politics placed far more store on the crucial role played by the elite African in the political and ideological process. Whereas the state simply perceived the 'native policy' to be in need of
restructuring to permit closer consultation with the African community, the 'liberals' spelt out how the African community should be administered to reproduce the social system. They saw the Reserves playing an important conservation role; "...of necessity the principal sphere for the natives in the country was as agriculturalists...(they should) produce(d) food... sufficient in respect of their own requirements."

However, since congestion in the Reserves was creating a problem, the urban areas were crucial in "aiding the natives in the great transition from agricultural and pastoral pursuits." Henderson, foremost among the Liberals, argued that

"the extent to which the native in South Africa could be employed in industrial undertakings was still only partially tested...(Industrialists) could and should develop manufacturing on a great scale in keeping with its great powers of production of raw materials, and in keeping also with the comparatively low cost of labour at its command." (24)

Finally, he argued for a special place in the whole configuration for the class of doctors, teachers, ministers and so on. While he considered it a "speculative question how far the native was capable of contributing to the thought of the country or its scientific advancements...(yet) whether his hearers would smile at it or not, he would say that he had known native men whose presence in the highest legislative bodies of the land would have been a benefit not only to the native people but to the whole state..." (25)

This kind of talk suited the aspirations of the elite African comfortably, for, as Jabavu said to the Natal Missionary Conference in 1920, the cure for South Africa's problems lay "in our being able to produce well educated Native leaders trained in a favourable atmosphere, who will be endowed with commonsense, cool heads, with a sense of responsibility, endurance and correct perspective in all things...Why not give us a chance to rise according to our ability and professional qualifications?" (26)

The Liberals took positive steps to realise their objectives for African policy. While they considered the Native Affairs Act a "welcome sign that the Government at last recognises the need for the organised study of the many phases of native life" they felt it urgent that 'native policy' go deeper. This 'deepening' of 'native policy' emphasised the establishment of
an "African elite that could divert radical African sentiments into more moderate channels." Where government policy differed from their own, they assiduously stressed this point and canvassed with varying degrees of success for the needs of the African elite to be accommodated. One clear example of a success was their persuasion of Hertzog to stall implementation of the law intending to apply Pass regulations to African women and another occurred when they persuaded the Government to reconsider its attitude to the ICU (which by then had become moderate).

Towards their objectives they instituted a new African newspaper, Umteleli wa Bantu. It was established because "no newspaper seemed able to deal adequately with (native questions) from an unbiased standpoint, and with the necessary breadth of knowledge of affairs obtained from like circumstances in other lands." The Chamber of Mines sponsored the newspaper in a deliberate effort to ward off the influence of the SANNC Abantu Batho which took a more radical line (the newspaper was controlled by the more radical wing of the movement). Their second important undertaking was also inspired by Henderson, who mooted the idea of establishing/reviving a 'native affairs' society. He felt that such a body held crucial significance because "they (the Liberals) had often before failed in approaching the government because those concerned about native matters had no unity of action and did not go determined to get an issue." This idea grew in significance when Dr JK Aggrey and the Phelps-Stokes Commission sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation visited South Africa in 1921. Aggrey thought that the need for establishing conciliation groups between 'whites' and Africans, such as existed in the Southern States in the United States of America, was great. As a result, the Joint Councils (JC) movement was established in 1921. The first Joint Council to come into being, and certainly also one of the most important, was based in Johannesburg. It attracted the TNC, the Mine Clerks' Association and the Native Teachers' Association on the African side, and prominent 'white' individuals such as Howard Pim, Rheinallt-Jones and JH Hofmeyr, among others.
The JC movement quickly established an identity for itself. From its inception, it championed the cause of the 'trained' and the 'educated' African. In keeping with the idea of sponsoring a buffer group it released the following statement:

"It is these two sections of the '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 and untrained and uneducated mass of the population (own emphasis)." (34)

Although this outlook (of the Liberals and the JC) regarding the elite Africans coincided with that of the SANNC movement, the Joint Councils pursued their goals far more consistently. They manifested fewer of the characteristics of political vacillation and ambivalence which were part of the makeup of the SANNC. (35) This could in part be explained by the participation of representatives of the Chamber of Mines, such as Rheinhaltt-Jones and Howard Fin, who had no need of mass support to legitimise their views. (36)

The first issue in which the JC took a stand was that of wages and compound conditions. (37) A clear impression emerged from the JC representations that it felt that only educated Africans were sensitive to the colour bar. (38) It drew a sharp distinction between trained and untrained Africans, arguing that the colour-bar inhibited the progress of the former:

"The colour-bar...prevents the employment of natives on much skilled and semi-skilled work...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." (39)

Similarly, the JC made ministrations to the Pass Law Committee on behalf of the educated African. It recommended that the Pass Law be repealed and that a system of registration certificates be used. It also 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) Africans who had passed standard five or its equivalent  
(d) chiefs and headmen  
(e) skilled artisans and persons exercising such business or  
trades "as may be prescribed"  
(f) Africans who had tendered long and faithful service in  
any employment.\(^{40}\)

The Native (Urban Areas) Bill of 1923 was a crucial benchmark  
in African/'white' relationships. It was the most important  
arena in which state and Liberal ideas on 'native policy'  
competed. Because of its importance in prescribing the rights  
of the urban African, it attracted the full interest of the  
JC movement. The Bill covered important questions such as the  
housing of the African community, movement into and out of  
urban areas, the nature of business activity and the question  
of freehold tenure. The Bill provided the necessary authority  
to control:  
(a) the ingress of Africans into urban areas  
(b) the power to repatriate or settle in labour colonies, idle,  
dissolute or undesirable natives  
(c) the construction of hostels to accommodate the "continually  
floating population"  
(d) the power to set up locations for employed Africans  
(e) the demarcation of 'native villages' for "natives who are  
no longer of a semi-barbarous type and have been taught and  
developed", and  
(f) the sale of 'kaffir' beer in the locations.\(^{41}\)

The Bill was drawn up by the Native Affairs Commission after  
extensive consultation with very many people throughout the  
Union.

The Bill ostensibly aimed at improving the conditions of the  
African community in respect of housing, accommodation, and  
finance. For this reason, Davenport argues that the motivation  
behind the "bill had much more to do with welfare than with  
ideology."\(^{42}\) Be that as it may, in as much as the Bill  
concerned itself with the rationalisation of location finances  
and the clearing of slum areas, it ultimately had the control
of the African population as its principal concern. A primary goal of the Bill and, later, the Act, as it was promulgated, was to achieve better "control of contracts of service with natives in certain areas and the regulation of the ingress of natives into and their residence in such areas." In its aim to secure control of the labour force, the Bill had an ideological motive. The ideological nature of the Bill emerged in a speech given by Smuts:

"The whole idea in a proclaimed area was to keep a watchful eye on the population as a whole...unless they took special precautions and exerted special control, the situation must get out of hand. (You need) practically every man to be identifiable so that you may know where you are..."(44)

These concerns bypassed the African elite and the Joint Council. They had expressed their satisfaction with the Bill: "That the principle of the Bill be accepted as fair and a reasonable attempt to improve conditions obtaining in the locations." They took strong exception, however, to clauses in the Bill which limited freehold tenure, the sale of Kaffir beer, and the suggestion contained in the Bill that municipalities take control of leasing and conducting businesses in the locations. The issue of freehold tenure bothered the African elite intensely and frequently surfaced as a grievance in reported newspaper articles. As far as the sale of 'kaffir-beer' was concerned, existing arrangements seemed to suit the African elite. JC Ncayo wrote to the Rand Daily Mail stating that

"In all locations we have well-to-do natives, and a considerable number of them ... are quite respectable and men to whom the municipality might well entrust the privilege of conducting such canteens (beer-canteens)."(48)

In fact, these canteens, as the shebeens were euphemistically called, were already under the control of the African elite. At Alexandra Town a Vigilance Committee appointed to eradicate the trade was discovered to be actively involved in selling illicit liquor. The African elite thus reacted strongly to attempts aimed at undermining their position. They issued a statement of protest which recommended that
"every endeavour be made to get sub-sections ... struck off (which infringe on native rights) ... It is felt that the native 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 (50)

Rich argues that the liberals had indeed made an impression on Smuts and the Government. Loram and Roberts, as associates of the JC movement and also as members of the Native Affairs Commission were crucially placed in a position able to influence the direction which the Bill would take. It had seemed earlier that Smuts had yielded to the JC and the African elite. His speech to Parliament during the second reading of the Bill appears to confirm this.

"Members would see that the Bill made provision for ... a 'native village', a place set aside where the better class native could live, the educated native who had raised himself ....... to the scale of civilisation, and it was not fair to ask that man to live in among the rest of his people who were still in a semi-barbarous state. (hear, hear). In the native villages there would be better houses, and very large arrangements would be made that the natives would acquire their own plot of ground in the village, and put up their own houses." (52)

However, a liberal construction of the Bill collided sharply with other 'white' interests, and as a result the liberals had to give way in their demands for the African elite. Freehold tenure for Africans gravely offended the combined interests of capital and the 'white' working class who saw their position as threatened by the black urban influx." (53) Nicolson, a member of the Transvaal Municipal Association echoed the sentiments of his colleagues when he said that

"One can easily imagine .... a native village being established on the outskirts of a town and ostensibly at the commencement for workers of that town only, but in the course of time the inhabitants far outnumbering those of the town itself and demanding an outlet for their activity, thereby competing with the town's inhabitants in every sort of business, trade and occupation." (54)
As Feetham, a member of the Select Committee appointed to review the Urban Areas Bill said:

"It would have been of no use trying to satisfy native sentiment in favour of ownership ... at the cost of exacting antagonism of municipal authorities and making the bill unworkable." (55)

The Native (Urban Areas) Act in its final form was thus a great disappointment to the African elite. The African National Congress (ANC. The SANNC became the ANC in 1923) saw the Act "as a direct challenge to the loyalty of the Bantu and an insult of the most provocative character to the sense of fairness of the Bantu." (56) An ANC deputation expressed its dissatisfaction to Smuts who defended the abandonment of freehold on the strength of the 'success' of the Bloemfontein location where, although no freehold tenure existed, the most orderly and 'best run' conditions existed. (57)

This disappointment caused the African elite to come out somewhat more strongly than it had done before. It attacked 'segregation' as the cause for its disappointment and used every available platform to voice its unhappiness. In contrast to earlier statements where the Bill had been described as "very encouraging ... They (the Africans) have to live up to that test in order to reach the highest pinnacle of their ambition ...", later remarks expressed totally contradictory sentiments. At a special meeting of the ANC, the membership expressed no confidence in Smuts and "felt that the time has come when the Bantu people should consider the advisability of supporting a republican form of government for this country." (58)

These rumblings of dissatisfaction repeated themselves at the large inter-racial conferences held in Johannesburg and Pretoria in 1923. The Pretoria Conference was organised under the provisions of the Native Affairs Act of 1920, while the Johannesburg Conference was sponsored by the Dutch Reformed Church. The Dutch Reformed Conference, which the JC movement actively supported, conveyed the frustrations of the African middle class more clearly than did the Government
Conference. JC Africans who took part in the conference, along with 'white' members of the movement, moved resolutions pressing for immediate reform. They wanted reform in education, leaseholding (if they could not be allowed ownership they felt that every local authority should at least permit generous leaseholding terms), and the confusing Land Acts where generally Africans throughout South Africa were inadequately provided for; they also expressed
(i) their mistrust of a concept of segregation which sought total division of South Africa and
(ii) their desire to participate in a dispensation where they could administer themselves. 59

The government conferences for 1924 and 1925 expanded and were more meaningful for the African elite. 60 African representation in these conferences increased. The agenda of these conferences remained the same; year after year the issues of the franchise, pass exemptions and so on were aired. A tradition was set for 'black/white' relations in the pre World War Two era, where the general tone was that of cautious supplication on the part of the African elite. 61 Obviously exceptions confounded the general rule. However, these exceptions, such as Gumede in 1927 and Kadalie at unpredictable moments throughout the twenties, were all absorbed into the elite fold or changed in some way or other.

In conclusion, the 1921 to 1925 period was theoretically a period of advance for the African middle class. The emergence of the Joint Council movement was an unambiguous statement of the ideological and political importance of the African elite for some sectors of the bourgeoisie. This feeling even penetrated Government circles and government legislation. The reality of the South African situation, however, prevented this sentiment from being realised. As we saw above, it conflicted with the interests of the local capital and the white working class. These groups certainly held far more influence in determining the ability of the social and economic systems to reproduce themselves. Thus while the situation held more
promise for the African middle class than before 1921, the class remained in an ambiguous situation. None of its major demands was met. Certainly, peripheral grievances were attended to and the JC movement held the respect of the various Governments, but these were only strategic concessions rather than crucial reforms. However, it is important that we recognise that a structural basis for co-optation of the African elite had been laid down. On the other hand it was clear that their demands could not be accommodated during this time; yet on the other hand, allowance was made for granting them distinctive rights within the African community.
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<td><em>Union Statistics for Fifty Years</em> C-18. This figure would need to be deflated were we to talk specifically of (1) the African community, and even more so of (11) African workers on the Rand. This adjustment places the level of striking activity into clearer perspective.</td>
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<td>See D Kaplan, 'Capitalist Development in South Africa: Class Conflict and the State'.</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Karis and Carter <em>Vol 1</em> <em>op cit</em> pp110-115</td>
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19. DDT Jabavu *op cit* p95
20. Ibid *op cit* p86
21. Umteteli wa Bantu 1/12/1923
23. Ibid p6
24. Ibid
25. Ibid p7
26. Karis and Carter *op cit* pp124-125
27. Legassick *op cit* p13
29. Henderson quoted in Legassick *op cit* p8
30. Rich *op cit* p8
31. Legassick *op cit* p8
32. Ibid
33. Rand Daily Mail 5/4/1921
34. Pim Papers, Fa 9/7 Joint Council Memorandum On the Mining Industry Board, undated but probably during 1922.
   Henderson had gone so far as to say that "whether his hearers would smile at it or not, he would say that he had known native men whose presence in the highest legislative bodies of the land would have been a benefit not to the native people only but to the whole state. He referred particularly to the House of Assembly." (Cited in Legassick *op cit* p7)
35. See Legassick *op cit*
36. See discussion on the ambivalent nature of the petty bourgeoisie in the first chapter.
37. Rand Daily Mail 16/6/1922
38. Rand Daily Mail 15/6/1922
39. Pim Papers op cit Report of the Wages Committee 19/8/1921 Fa 95

40. Pim Papers op cit Joint Council of Europeans and Natives. Report of the Pass Law Committee on The Native Registration and Protection Bill 1923


42. Davenport, The Beginning of Urban Segregation, p23

43. Statutes of the Union of South Africa. The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923

44. Smuts quoted in Legassick, The Making of South African Native Policy op cit p9


46. Ibid; also see Rand Daily Mail 21/5/1921

47. The Star 25/6/1918; The Star 1/9/1919; The Rand Daily Mail 26/6/1920; the Star 13/12/1922.

48. Rand Daily Mail 21/5/1921

49. Rand Daily Mail 31/8/1922

50. Pim Papers op cit Johannesburg Joint Council 27/5/1922

51. Rich op cit p9

52. Debates of the House of Assembly of the Union of South Africa 5/2/1923

53. Rich op cit p18

54. Ibid

55. Ibid quoting from the Pim Papers

56. Ibid p19


58. Umteteli wa Bantu 3/2/1923, 14/7/1923
59 Pim Papers Fa 13/1 Conference on Native Affairs
Convened by the Federal Council of the
Dutch Reformed Church, Johannesburg september
27-29 1923; also see Karis and Carter Vol 1
op cit pp227-233

60 Karis and Carter op cit Vol 1 pp166-180

61 The Annual Native Conferences organised by the
Government did not meet for five years from
1926 to 1930. This development is evaluated
in the conclusion. The Dutch Reformed Church
convened another conference in 1927. (Karis
and Carter Vol 1 op cit p233-239)
CHAPTER SIX
CONDITIONS IN JOHANNESBURG 1925-1930

Following the heights of the 1917-1920 period we saw that working class opposition (and even general protest within the African community) had virtually disappeared by the early twenties. During 1920-25, a new phase of African political participation had been set in progress which emphasized the role of the African elite. The nature of this participation left very little scope for real worker involvement. A further development in the late 20s saw the African community thrown into even greater disarray by the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and as a consequence it remained at a low level of resistance. Crucial features, however, distinguished the class as it was found during 1925-1930 from its existence during 1920-1925. Despite the debilitating forces it occasionally came out in strikes against employers in the late twenties; it resisted the municipal authorities in Johannesburg, and parts of the working class even joined the new industrial trade unions. These features constituted a relative advance on the passiveness which the class exhibited during 1920-1925.

This chapter will examine two main concerns; protest, and the application of the Native (Urban Areas) Act. The aim of the discussion on protest is to situate the working class within the class struggle. This protest needs to be seen against the background of the application of the Native (Urban Areas) Act. The application of the Act and the resultant effects are discussed in the rest of the chapter.

Outside of the events which took place directly because of the Native (Urban Areas) Act, we can distinguish three other areas of activity of a political or economic nature which occurred within the African community. These were the outbreaks of dissatisfaction which took place in Klipspruit, the handful of spontaneous strikes during 1926 and 1927 and the planned strikes which came about as a result of the organisation which took place within the South African Federation of Non-European
Trade Unions (SAFNETU) formation.

Before we look at these activities, it is necessary to describe briefly the economic situation of the working class. Secondary industry had grown enormously after the First World War. The number of manufacturing establishments increased from 3,638 in 1915-1916 to 6,645 in 1929-1930. In 1929 in Johannesburg alone, the number of furniture establishments had risen to fifty. Concomitant with this growth went an increase in the number of workers. Total employment figures for secondary industry jumped from 101,178 to 201,180. The number of African workers, which increased the most, rose from 34,682 to 69,216.

Despite this growth in secondary industry, wage, price and GNP levels remained static over the 1925-1930 period:

(1) The annual wage bill for African workers in secondary industry moved within a small range of £3,023,000 and £2,284,000, its highest point having been reached in 1925.

(ii) The price index fluctuated between one hundred and six comma four points in 1925 and one hundred and four in 1930.

(iii) In relation to other periods the rate of growth in the contribution of secondary industry to the national income was tardy; in 1925 it contributed £28m and in 1930 £39,1m.

Furthermore, the entire national income from all major sectors increased only by £18m within these five years. Within this trough of economic growth, the average black wage in Johannesburg ranged from three pounds to five pounds a month. This wage fell short of the minimum subsistence level of six pounds a month which had been defined in 1927.

These conditions generated highly specific responses within the African community. First of all, the absence of inflationary conditions, unlike the situation during 1917-1920 (and again during 1939-1945) played a great part in forming the community's attitude to striking and general industrial action. The tenuous hold which workers held on their jobs, especially in an environment where a high turnover of labour occurred,
discouraged them from striking. Because of this, only two (recorded) spontaneous strikes took place in Johannesburg within this entire period. One occurred at an engineering firm called Maytham's in 1927 where workers struck for a 'breakfast hour break', and another at the Johannesburg Railway Kazerne. Both these strikes, significantly, were appropriated by the ICU and brought to a quick termination.

Concern about job security thus acted as a brake on attempts to engage in strike action. This attitude, one can speculate, might have been heightened by the spectacular failure of the ICU. Yet, certain branches of industry, where fairly high levels of skill were required, presented vastly different conditions. In laundering, bakery, mattress-making and clothing industries, where relatively high levels of skilled work were carried out by African workers, the rate of job turnover was low. It was within these industries that trade unionism (as opposed to the general trade unionism of the ICU) took root on the Rand under the direction of the Communist Party. Unions were formed by Ben Weinbren and Thibedi of the Communist Party in 1927 and brought together in a federal structure called the South African Federation of Non-European Trade Unions (SAFNETU) for which Weinbren claimed a membership of 10 000, in 1928. However, Stein has showed that the organisation could only prove the existence of a combined membership of 3 612. Despite this, the actions of the Federation were significant. They traded on the high demand for skilled African workers, and member unions were not loath to draw their members out in strikes against employers who victimised trade union members, who refused to implement Wage Board determinations and who refused to change conditions of employment hostile to workers. Several strikes revolving around these issues occurred during 1928 to 1929.

No such advances occurred outside these stable industries. Yet even the unions which grew from these stable industries, where the skills of African workers were at a higher premium than elsewhere, folded after 1930. They were in the process of
dying, and after the Depression were virtually totally obliterated. Ironically, the Wage Act, which facilitated the development of African bargaining machinery, played an important role in disorganising the SAFNETU formation. The Wage Act was amended in 1929 requiring all the persons supporting an application for a wage determination "to sign it themselves, which in practice makes it impossible for any large body of natives to make a successful application within the terms of the Act and the regulations, and, since the promulgation of the amended regulations, no application from Natives has been received by the Board." The motivation for the amendment is unclear. Koen, in his Honours dissertation, speculates, however, that pressure to change the Act came from the more "backward" capitalists who "unlike the liberal Wage Board...thought in terms of crushing Black worker organisation."

The outbreaks which occurred in the townships during this period were slightly different. They seemed to represent pockets of militancy which continued to simmer and boil over regardless of the obstacles placed in the path of the working class. Klipspruit was the centre of this activity and was obviously an embarrassment and cause of concern to the municipal authorities. The police claimed that

"this native location has up to the present been a refuge for all sorts of law breakers, but Serg... (no name provided) cleared it out successfully. Some of the natives had been convicted for stealing, others had been wanted in Johannesburg and Krugersdorp." (19)

The manager of the Parks and Estates Department of the Johannesburg Municipality also claimed that the location harboured political agitators. 20

Trouble broke out in Klipspruit Location in March 1926. The correspondent for the Rand Daily Mail wrote that

"The unrest that had been brewing in the Klipspruit Location for some time came to the surface...when two police, a European and a native, were chased by an angry mob of natives and threatened with sticks and stones." (21)

The disturbance, it seemed, was the climax of continuous police
provocation. It appeared, furthermore, that the people's grievances, despite the Commissions of Enquiry which had been appointed during the unrests of 1919, had gone unattended (see Chapter Four). These grievances revolved around the Pass Laws, the continual harassment of the location's occupants and police confiscation of home brewed liquor.

One can make a general comment about the Klipspruit and SAFNETU phenomena during the period 1925-1930. The importance of these events was limited to the people who were involved. This is a fair comment to make in the light of the rising importance of the Native (Urban Areas) Act, for the preoccupations of the rest of the population were with their immediate destinies - where would they finally end up? In a sense this isolated nature of trade union advance and township disturbance was symptomatic of the weakened state of the African community, and more especially of the working class. As a class in opposition to the bourgeoisie, these instances of resistance had occurred almost unnoticed. This was certainly an indication of the deterioration which had developed within the working class. Whereas there were indications during the War and immediately afterwards that the workers were beginning to perceive themselves as a class, such progressive signals were decidedly weak. Only late in the next decade, stirred by rapid inflationary conditions, did the same progressiveness rise to the surface.

In the relative trough of worker action, other expressions of dissatisfaction with the society came from the continuing anti-social behaviour (and not by any means insignificant) of the lumpen-proletariat.

Newspaper reports suggested a dramatic upsurge in incidents relating to lumpen-proletariat gangs operating in Johannesburg. These gangs, Amaleitas as they were called in Johannesburg, constituted the most organised section of the lumpen-proletariat. Their origin dated from the very founding of Johannesburg in the 1880's. The reason for their increase in activity, claimed the
Rand Daily Mail, was the greater availability of liquor and the presence of political instigators.26

"In regard to politics, the opinion was expressed that there were a number of half educated native political speakers who preached the doctrine of equality to them. They appeared to take this dicta as a direct incentive to acts of violence and breaches of the peace. In some instances... the influence of native speakers inspired the attitude of antagonism and assertiveness towards the Europeans."(27)

Where the working class, in its weakened condition, had much to lose by coming into direct confrontation with the bourgeoisie, the lumpen-proletariat, who parasitically thrived on the success of the capitalist system but was not tied to it as directly as wage labour, acted with impunity. Spurred on as they may well have been by the instigation of politicians such as the firebrands found in the ICU, they made frequent burglary raids into 'white' communities which they perceived as the possessing class.28 Striking and spectacular in their daring as these forays may have been, they were ultimately of little significance for the working class, for like the petty bourgeoisie, the lumpen-proletariat had little or no class loyalty to the workers and their class struggle. As they made attacks on 'white' communities, so, on different occasions, were they also impelled to attack the African working class itself.29

A significant interpretation of this kind of activity appeared in the Rand Daily Mail late in 1926. The writer felt that the outburst of crime was part of the larger problem of 'native policy'.30

"Thousands of natives have been separated from their domestic life and their tribal discipline and concentrated on the Witwatersrand; thousands more have grown up in the city and have no knowledge of tribal life. These are the detribalised natives who, without a doubt, constitute the source from which much of the trouble arises. All these have been allowed to live in slum areas that would disgrace many Eastern cities. They have been exploited by unscrupulous traders, and in many cases by unscrupulous employers, they have been forced back to a level lower than their already low economic level. They have been the victims of pernicious agitators, whose doctrines have poisoned their minds and wrecked their simple judgement.

It is no wonder then, that there is a rising class
consciousness among them, that they are attempting to resist the white man's yoke... In South Africa the crime wave is actually the upward thrust of a race." (31)

Charles van Onselen has suggested that a number of inferences may be drawn from lumpen-proletariat activity.

"To the extent that its activities were not directed towards the black working class, the organisation (of the lumpen-proletariat called the Ninevites) saw itself as redressing the balance between the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless in a markedly inequitable society... At the height of its development the Ninevite army - albeit for essentially non-political objectives - succeeded in paralysing the black collaborating arm of the white ruled state. For at least these reasons, if for none other, we should reassess the resistance and revolutionary potential of the lumpen-proletariat in South Africa's historical evolution." (32)

Thus far we have observed that different levels of protest activity were playing themselves out in the African community. These activities, however, were unrelated to each other, and represented different methods of expressing grievance. But, significant though these responses may have been, the community had to respond to a far greater threat which lay in the disorganising effects of the implementation of the Urban Areas Act. This is discussed below.

Along with those factors which were mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the framework for the daily lives of the African community was being charted by the workings of the Urban Areas Act (in close conjunction, of course, with the existing economic conditions which, as we indicated in the beginning of the chapter, were part of the reason for the collapse of the working class militancy). The Urban Areas Act was the great stick which the bourgeoisie was to use on the working class to achieve its complete submission. Although there were obstacles placed in the path of the state in its implementation of the Act, taken as a whole the exercise was a thorough one.

Although the Urban Areas Act (UAA) had been passed in 1923, it
was only brought into operation in 1925. On the first of 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 own location.33

In Johannesburg, the removal of 'illegal' people from the centre of the town was done on a piece-meal basis, but nonetheless with great trauma. The Town Council 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 first been 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 one hundred and fifty houses built by the City Council in the Western Native Township have been specially earmarked."(34)

Notices were served on 1,200 people in the Doornfontein area. In terms of the UAA, the notices were served on 'white' residents and their African tenants by the Johannesburg Municipality. Large numbers of people had already been transferred to compounds at Wemmer, Salisbury and Jubilee and to the Western Native Township. In Johannesburg the first batch of prosecutions under the Act came up before the magistrates. These were to presage countless 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."(35)

Such offenders received fines of £1 each or fourteen days' imprisonment with hard labour. Each time this kind of case came up for judgement, the same complaints were heard.36

By March of the same year the removal programme had shifted to
Vrededorp. The location had become a grave point of discomfort and annoyance to the 'white' ratepayers of Brixton and Vrededorp. Their representative, Dr Visser, and three members of the Vrededorp Ratepayers Committee had gone so far as to petition the Prime Minister on the subject of the location. They protested that the location was a nuisance and asked for its removal under the Urban Areas Act. Although the Prime Minister was sympathetic to their request, he reminded his petitioners that the matter was strictly a municipal one and not within his power.

The Town Council did act soon, though. Much to the relief of the 'white' inhabitants of Vrededorp and Brixton, it was announced that a section of the location had come under the scope of the Urban Areas Act and that by 30 April all the African people in the area had to be out.

Easy as it was to make announcements decreeing that Africans evacuate certain areas, great problems were encountered in finding areas where compounds could be built. This contradiction only exacerbated the plight of Africans, for the range of alternative places of accommodation was slowly being made narrower. The Town Council proposed the construction of a hostel for African women in Norwood. This scheme was vehemently opposed by the residents of the suburb who refused to accept such a 'blight' on their neighbourhood. In the end the opposition was too great and the idea had to be abandoned. Not many weeks later, nearly the same sequence of events emerged in the off-centre town area of Motortown where barracks were being built for African workers. The newspapers, rallying to the defence of the businessmen, described the action of the town council as a threatening menace. A vigilance association was formed for the area to protest against the conversion of Motortown into a slum for 'blacks'. The Association reacted most indignantly to the threat which they felt would be posed to their capital interests vested in the area. The businessmen claimed that the value of their property would decline, as would their overall trading and investment prospects.
The African organisations in Johannesburg, such as the ANC and the ICU were unmoved by the problems which the African people were facing. In the manner in which we have characterised them, they were trying to make capital out of the Pass controversy once more. The State was threatening to extend the Pass system to women because "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." Upon the intervention of the Joint Council, and to the chagrin of the ICU and to a lesser extent the ANC, the Government postponed the proposed enforcement of the Native Pass Ordinance of 1912 until the first of June "upon the understanding that the Joint Council...endeavour to place before the Government an effective and acceptable alternative scheme in solution of the problem." The Joint Council's recommendations were not accepted by the Government and the Pass system was accordingly extended to women. Even though this had occurred, the ICU and the ANC held meetings where the Pass system was vitriolically condemned, as was the Joint Council for its interference "as (it) held no mandate from the natives."

Within the twelve-month period from January to December of 1925 the implementation of the UAA had uprooted over 5 000 people in Johannesburg. The people who were being moved made feeble attempts to resist the Act; in some places there were people who ignored the Act and continued to live in the Affected zones of Doornfontein, Jeppe, Malay Camp and Vrededorp. As soon as an area was cleared, migrant families from elsewhere, and frequently from rural areas, simply occupied the vacated areas. Real resistance, however, came from the slum landlords who tried to avail themselves of loopholes in terms of the Act. The UAA had struck a blow at their lucrative leasing practices, and this they were not going to accept without opposition. In the months following the implementation of the Act frequent test cases were heard where the landlords contested certain sections of the UAA.

In 1926 and 1927 the UAA was applied in a systematic manner, bringing increasing areas under the arc of evacuation. The pace of the operation had, however, slowed down. This allowed
an attorney, AP Benson, who was sympathetic to the African community, to take up the cudgels on behalf of those people who found their lives manipulated and controlled by the implementation of the Act. He 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 demanding that the Municipality provide them with accommodation. This was in direct response to the proclamation issued by the Governor-General and supported by the municipality which stated 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."49

"In terms of this law, therefore," declared 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 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."(50)

In response, the Johannesburg Town Council replied that its application of the UAA was not to be carried out for the whole of Johannesburg, but on a piecemeal basis. And furthermore, it contended, there was sufficient accommodation available to meet the existing demands. Benson was not satisfied with this, and as a result made an appeal to the Bloemfontein Appeal Court which was upheld. The gist of the Bloemfontein decision was that

"unless and until there is accommodation for all of the exempted natives in Johannesburg a proclamation may not be issued 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."(52)

The victory for the African community was merely a technical one. It did not deter the Municipality from applying the Act.
A fresh proclamation was issued in February 1927 aimed expressly at the inhabitants of the Ferreirastown complex. Once again, Benson came to their assistance. Notably, the ICU, witnessing Benson's success, joined the struggle against the Town Council. It held mass meetings in Ferreirastown and adopted Benson's strategy. The ICU planned to 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 the community.

The collected applications were taken to the Town Clerk, who admitted in interviews that the position regarding the application of the Act was a confused one. The municipality, however, was very much wiser since the Appeal made at Bloemfontein. It decided to test the bona fides of the applicants (approximately six hundred of them). After a tour of inspection, a deputation alleged that "the results show that seventy-five per cent of the cases revealed that answers did not agree with information supplied in respect of their applications. Many claim 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." The Council then claimed that according to the number of accredited applications, it could provide accommodation for all of them.

Sam Dunn, the acting general secretary of the ICU, claimed that the matter was handled with great absence of sympathy by the Town Council. The ICU's attempts to provide a solution to the predicament of the evicted people proved to be a failure. Apart from a few Parthian shots, the ICU lost interest in the matter. The UAA only became an issue for it again a whole year later. Meanwhile its interest was focussed on the massive upsurge of rural workers.

The African people in Johannesburg had to fend for themselves once more. They themselves took the situation in hand and on
their own initiative instituted Vigilance Associations to protect themselves from the authorities. They issued demands which reflected their continuing dissatisfaction with urban conditions and particularly the administration of the locations.61 In the gloomy days of working-class impotence these activities brought surprisingly welcome results. The Supreme Court in Pretoria held that the fresh proclamation issued by the Governor-General in February (forcing all unexempted Africans to leave scheduled areas and to go into residence in the locations and the hostels) was impractical and unreasonable. The proclamation was thus declared invalid.62

Once again the Town Council and the Governor-General responded by issuing a fresh proclamation. The proclamation declared that by January 1928 all Africans who resided in the part of Ferreirastown which had been proclaimed must have moved to a village, location or hostel.63 When the time came for the implementation of the proclamation, married Africans were exempted on the condition that they apply for accommodation in the districts to which they were being transferred.64 This mild concession had come after the ICU had led delegations to Mr Ballenden, a superintendent of locations, who had promised on the Town Council's behalf that "where prompt ejections (sic) will create hardship, reasonable time will be allowed to the natives concerned to make the necessary arrangements for moving to their quarters."65

Aware of the Town Council's concession to married Africans, the people of Ferreirastown were reluctant to move. The newspapers saw the matter in the following light: "Natives in Ferreirastown seem to be totally unwilling to vacate the area...(and) are taking advantage of the failure of the authorities to take a firm hand with them."66 Not long hereafter, the patience of the Town Council having run out, scores of people were arrested and charged for illegally residing in the location.67 By the fourteenth of July over one-hundred and forty people had been prosecuted. The residents of the location were powerless in the face of the severity of the prosecutions, and to avoid further
trouble they began the large-scale evacuation. By the end of July, three hundred families were in the process of leaving the area. The exodus was described in the following manner by the Rand Daily Mail:

"Families pushing carts, and with all their goods and chattels carried in bundles, or packed on the backs of donkeys, gradually migrated to Marshalltown, Ophirton, City and Suburban, the native townships and the various compounds." (68)

The heavy-handed action resorted to by the Town Council effectively staved off any further opposition. The attempts to ameliorate or change the effects of the UAA had failed. This failure was reflected in the rapidity with which the rest of Johannesburg was brought under the swoop of the Act. In January 1929, a gazetted notice ordered Africans in La Rochelle and Malvern to vacate the area. A warning was also issued that later in that year thirty-two other townships would be proclaimed as being prohibited for African occupation. Hundreds of houses were, in the meantime, being built in the Eastern and Western Native Townships. Where people treated the ejection orders lightly, as in La Rochelle, fines averaging two pounds were imposed. The rationale was that "there has been no re-influx of natives into Ferreirastown, thanks to the systematic preventive steps taken by the police, both against the natives and the Europeans who harbour them on slum property."71

At the end of 1929, the Town Council reported through the newspapers that its removal of non-exempted Africans was proceeding expeditiously in the Southern Suburbs. More than six hundred families in the area had been moved. With this kind of success, the Town Council announced that the clearance of twenty-six townships would take place from the first of January 1930.

To summarize: The working class reached an impasse in the five years between 1925 and 1930. It had been driven into little pockets where the municipal authorities could monitor and
contain its every move. The conclusion which is inescapable is that the Urban Areas Act, as a disorganising tool, had successfully penetrated the innards of Johannesburg and brought the working class even more completely under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. Whereas before the implementation of the Urban Areas Act one might have said that the working class was spiritually defeated; after its implementation this defeat found its consummation in the physical routing of the working class. The effects of this disorganisation, one can argue, were greater than the advances made by union formation in 1928 and 1929. Relative to the entire African population, the militant union activity (as it is characterised by Lewis and others) held far less significance for the working class struggle than did the imposition of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.
NOTES

1 Unions Statistics for Fifty Years L-3


3 Union Statistics op cit G-6

4 Ibid G-20

5 Ibid H-23

6 Ibid S-3

7 Ibid S-5

8 See Stein, 'African Trade Unions on the Witwatersrand' p11 where he cites the Joint Council's costs of living estimates for 1927

9 Stein op cit

10 Simons and Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950, p363

11 P Bonner , 'The Decline and Fall of the ICU - A Case of Self-destruction?' in Webster op cit p117

12 Stein op cit see Chapter Three

13 Jon Lewis op cit p133

14 Stein op cit p124

15 Jon Lewis op cit p134

16 The Wage Act made provision for applications for wage determinations for certain industries. Unlike the Industrial Conciliation Act, the Wage Act included certain kinds of African employees within its definition. The Act, however, excluded agricultural labourers and domestic servants from its scope.

The ICU and the ANC were incensed at the favourable reception given to the JC by the Government. They also took exception to the proposals placed before
the Government by the JC. The ICU and the ANC held meetings where the JC action was condemned and threatened to take strike action. They condemned the JC because it "held no mandate from the natives." (Rand Daily Mail 14/3/1925; Umteteli wa Bantu 6/6/1925)

43 Pim Papers. D Steyn to the Johannesburg Joint Council 21/1/1925

44 Ibid

45 Umteteli wa Bantu 6/6/1925

46 The Star 11/12/1925

47 The Star 11/12/1925; The Star 28/1/1927. The effect of the Appeal Court decision was "that unless and until there is accommodation in locations available for all of the unexempted natives in Johannesburg, a proclamation may not be issued applying to the whole of the town...The other alternative(sic) is to proclaim certain specified portions of the municipality as areas in which it is forbidden for the natives to reside." (Ibid)

48 Rand Daily Mail 23/8/1926

49 Ibid

50 Ibid

51 The Star 25/8/1926

52 The Star 28/1/1927

53 Umteteli wa Bantu 5/3/1927

54 The Star 5/3/1927

55 Despite this show of strength, the Acting General Secretary of the ICU was at pains to point out 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." (Ibid) The ICU was careful not to antagonise its new allies— the Joint Councils.

56 The Star 14/3/1927

57 The Star 17/3/1927

58 Ibid
Rand Daily Mail 10/7/1928; Amendments were made to the Urban Areas Act in 1930 which circumvented some of the difficulties which local authorities were encountering in the implementation of the Act. Amendment Act of No 25 of 1930 gave local authorities the power "to prohibit female natives from entering proclaimed areas, unless such females obtain certificates of approval from the local authorities concerned,..." (Quoted in Memorandum to the Minister of Native Affairs from the Location Advisory Boards' Congress of South Africa 8/3/1930, in Karis and Carter Vol 1 op cit p 343.)
CONCLUSION

This chapter has the following aims: to review
(i) the development of organisations in which the African elite participated during 1926 to 1930, and to place this development in the context of class struggle, and
(ii) to attempt a periodisation of African protest from 1917 to 1930.

ONE

During the last half of the twenties a distinct move towards uniformity of outlook emerged in the organisations led by or in which the African elite participated. These organisations, the JCs, the ANC and the ICU, adopted common methods and tactics to deal with the grievances of the African elite. This development, characterised by moderate petitioning of government, and the rejection of radicalism, was the result of the penetration and rise to dominance of the modus operandi of the JC alongside the other organisations. Amongst other things, this dominance of JC tactics tended to weaken the leadership of the ICU and the ANC. And, indeed, certain African leaders resented JC involvement in elite African politics. This is reflected in a letter written by Rheinallt-Jones in 1930. We quote extensively:

"...I see in Umteleli that 'Enquirer' (whom I suspect to be one of the Mbelles), charges the JCs with having destroyed native leadership. There is just enough truth in this to make it a dangerous statement and I do feel and have felt for some time that I must give thought and action to this aspect of the JC movement. I have always said that the JC must not eliminate bodies like the Congress, and Tnema could substantiate my anxiety on this score. It was I who urged the gathering together of the native leaders in... Cape Town...But we must help to build up the Congress again, not as a militant anti-white organisation but as a rallying point for Bantu Self-respect...The JCs must become the nurseries of individual efforts on the part of aspiring natives."(1)

One can argue, then, that a particular direction was determined for African politics by the liberals when the JC movement was started, and that by the end of the twenties most strands of elite leadership had been subsumed beneath the guidance of the JC.
This process was by no means a linear one in the sense that simple absorption occurred. When the ICU first came to Johannesburg in 1924 it took a stand in diametric opposition to that of the JC. It had then said of the Africans who worked for the Umteleli wa Bantu and those who were members of the JC

"that these 'Good Boys' are the beloved leaders of all those who have been unfortunate enough to be mesmerised and fascinated by the capitalistic offers of JCs, 'Bantu Men's Social Centres' and the like."(2)

The Joint Council approached the ICU with similar distrust. In one of its pamphlets it stated that

"The JC of Europeans and Natives had always looked with disfavour on the Trade Union movement, 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."(3)

This relationship did not last very long, for within the space of three years it had changed from mutual contempt to amicable accord.

The role played by the ICU's liberal friends, especially Winifred Holtby, Ethelreda Lewis and Mabel Palmer, was crucial in altering this antagonism. The alliance between the ICU and the CP had become a source of grave concern to the liberals and they thought it essential that they displace the CP. Lewis said in 1926

"...that a good labour organisation... is a more excellent thing for the natives... than keeping a docile crowd of unintelligents, who because they are not able to act and organise are always in danger of being hostile to the wrong man...(in the liberals) he (the African) would find better, safer, more stable white friends than the white communists."(4)

As a result of the liberal influence and because the Communists within the ICU were becoming a threat to Kadalie's leadership, the ICU terminated its relationship with the CP towards the end of 1926. Immediately thereafter the ICU made a fresh alliance with the liberals. This alliance produced a totally new attitude to the JC movement and even stimulated the ICU to make overtures to the JC movement. Rheinalit-Jones reported in 1927 that the ICU and the JC were co-operating to prepare a memorandum to submit to the Wage Board for determinations in
a number of industries in Johannesburg. As Jones stated: "The JC has been asked by the ICU if it will co-operate in placing evidence before the Wage Board. This the JC has agreed to do."6

This decision paved the way for more intensive co-operation. The arrival of George Ballinger in 1928 as the adviser to the ICU - Roux described him as the "protege of the Johannesburg JC and the eminently respectable liberals" - brought the association between the ICU and the JC to culmination.7 Thereafter, much of the ICU activity during the time when the body was going through its final death throes - brought on by weaknesses of organisation, personality clashes and desertion by its members - bore the distinct stamp of the JC movement.

In the ANC similar developments had taken place. Its history during the twenties was characterised by close involvement with the JC movement. Except for a brief interlude when JT Gumede, then president of the body, attempted to radicalise the ANC, the body stood firmly in the path of moderate protest.8 In 1928 the ANC had made a pact with the ICU on the basis of opposition to radical politics such as found in the CP.9

These developments within the organisations of the period under review did not occur independently of working class protest and politics. The liberals were motivated by the need to defuse working class militance. As RPA Hoernle, one of the most influential liberals of his day, had said, 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, "wisely on such lines that the creation of a corrupt, discontented, and dangerous industrial proletariat is avoided."10 And as Ethelreda Lewis argued, what better way was there than to supply the African with white leadership first of all,

"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...to be imaginative, to be just, to be pitiful, to be brotherly, but never to be sentimental."(11)
This 'white' leadership "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." This type of 'white' leadership was perfectly epitomised within the principles and leadership of the JC movement.

While petty bourgeois organisation had gained respectability and a certain degree of representation in the late twenties and in this sense had made some headway, and while Hertzog viewed them with less suspicion than when he first became Prime Minister (because of the moderate nature of the organisations), some of the basic demands of the petty bourgeoisie had gone unattended. In the first instance, the African petty bourgeoisie could still not exercise unfettered trading rights. The Location Advisory Board complained grievously about amounts charged for trading licences. The Board felt that

"experience has shown that the scale laid down in the Second Schedule to the Licences Consolidation Act No 32 of 1925 is rather too excessive for people whose trade is confined solely to natives."(13)

Secondly, the Pact Government threatened to make serious inroads on existing political representation for Africans. This applied especially to the franchised Africans in the Cape. Hertzog wished to abolish the Cape franchise for Africans and replace this with a special system of representation:

"My proposal is that there should be seven Europeans in Parliament entrusted with the care of native interests. These will be elected directly by the natives independently of the white vote."(15)

These proposals were contained in the Native Bills published in 1926. Hertzog, furthermore, in his attempt to establish a 'native policy' on the basis of segregation, sought to convert the Annual Native Conference into a

"Union Native Council which will...be charged with very responsible duties in regard to the affairs of natives, what may be described as the Natives' Parliament."(16)
While these proposals gained the support of Pelem of the Bantu Union, the elite Africans were unanimous in their disapproval. As Johns says:

"while (they)...were willing to accept separate African provincial councils as forums to deal with specific regional problems, they were not prepared to abandon the Cape system of national African representation."(18)

The ICU, then in its radical phase, expressed even stronger disapproval. Kadalie had said at the 1926 Annual Conference of the ICU:

"...all workers...pinned their faith on the new bride who was to 'deliver the goods'...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..."(19)

Opposition, not only from the African petty bourgeoisie, and the liberals, but from overseas as well, caused Hertzog to abandon his attempts to implement the Native Bills.20

In the flurry of all this activity, the Government failed to call the Annual Native Conference for four years. The Congress of the Location Advisory Board complained that:

"Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that certain responsible leaders of the Bantu race, rightly or wrongly, have been forced to the conclusion that the Government has abandoned the principle of consultation as far as the Natives are concerned."(21)

Contradiction thus accompanied the advances made by the African petty bourgeoisie. Their co-optation by the state and the bourgeoisie was thus not an unconditional one. We will try to put this into clearer perspective in the next section.

TWO

African protest can be periodised in a distinct manner on the basis of class struggle. While class struggle is never absent from capitalist society it does have a specific historical time.22 One can detect a peculiar rhythm to the different phases of historical time; these phases are the result of a complex intersection of a number of specific factors.
The factors which were of major consequence to the rhythm of worker protest were the absence of a working class leadership, and, as a result thereof, attempts by the petty bourgeoisie to fill that role, and the disorganising strategies brought to bear upon the working class by the state. These factors operated within the context of specific movements in the world economy reverberating in the South African economy: (i) international inflation reaching deep into the South African economy during and soon after the Great War, (ii) a movement towards recovery in the early twenties, and (iii) stagnation in international growth reflected in a conspicuous lack of economic growth in South Africa.

The African working class made important advances during the 1917 to 1920 period. It rose up organically and challenged both Government and employers on a collective basis. This apogee of class consciousness, despite the fact that its organic experience defined for it a limited consciousness, posed a threat to the bourgeoisie and mining capital in particular from 1918 to 1920 and had to be countered by the state. The state thus resorted to disorganising methods to prevent the workers from making inroads on its power. While these methods were not centralised around a particular object, they were devastating in their diversity. They ranged from spying/informer networks and physical disruption to actual attacks on the African working class and, taken in their combined effect, had a severely weakening influence on the character of the workers' protest. This effect was complemented by continuing petty bourgeois attempts to stamp its dominance within the working class. The overall impression one gains is that in spite of worker dissatisfaction with the TNC, this body had determined the character of workers' political representations during 1917 to 1920. It sought to appropriate worker protest for its own ends. The manner in which it dealt with the state and the employers revealed an organisation in search of political, economic and social elevation into 'white' society by seeking to use worker disturbance as a means of political leverage. This attempt by the petty bourgeoisie,
as characterised by the TNC, highlighted but also exacerbated the crisis due to lack of leadership within the working class. Where a working class leadership was being developed within the IWA, the state and the petty bourgeoisie in the TNC made serious attempts to undermine this leadership.

It became clear during this period that a consistent body of legislation was necessary to buttress actions of police disorganisation. In a period of growing industrialisation, the existing Pass and Masters and Servants Laws were insufficient to contain worker disturbances. In addition, the relationship between the state and the petty bourgeoisie within SANNC was moving adrift. Our argument, therefore, is that while a body of disorganising methods existed, these were not rationalised into a distinct strategy. It was during the following historical period that these weaknesses in the state's policy toward the African workers were attended to.

We argued that the interaction of a number of factors had served to temper working class protest during 1921 to 1925. As the international crisis in capitalism abated, so did the character of working class militance go into decline. The economic climate had removed those conditions which provoked working class protest, and allowed the state and the bourgeoisie (particularly the liberal representatives of mining capital) time to establish and consolidate structures able to disorganise the working class. One crucial feature of the following period was thus the establishment of a structured strategy of disorganisation by the state and the liberals. This strategy was a direct response to the weaknesses which had emerged in the bourgeoisie's policies in the previous period.

In the first instance, the state established formal channels with which to co-opt petty bourgeois leadership. The objectives of the 1920 Native Affairs Act were clear in their intention to sponsor a buffer class able to pre-empt and defuse working class militance. This strategy was motivated by the desire to deflect interest away from working class concerns and to focus
them around the petty bourgeoisie. The Annual Conferences between Government and the African elite and the new channels of representation were specifically designed to gain the goodwill of this petty bourgeoisie. The establishment of the JCs constituted another step in this regard.

The state, in the second instance, promulgated legislation designed to achieve the physical control of the working class. The UAA was critical in this objective. Its major purpose was to control the ingress and outflow of African workers from urban areas, and to contain this working class in manageable pockets within the urban areas. Furthermore, in excluding contract workers from the bargaining procedures contained in the Industrial Conciliation Act, the State pre-empted industrial action on the part of the working class. This Act went hand in hand with the UAA in that it proposed to streamline and improve the operation of the contract labour system.

While working class protest had stagnated, petty bourgeois demands increased during this period. This was largely due to the participation of 'blacks' in the channels which had been established by the Government and the liberals. Whereas the previous period took its character from the upsurge of working class protest, the second belonged to the African petty bourgeoisie. However, before we leave this section, we need to qualify that these structures of co-optation erected by the state and the liberals encountered fierce resistance from the white working class and the local bourgeoisie and thus did not yield as many advances to the petty bourgeoisie as they had promised. As we shall see below, this was largely because of the conflicting interests within the bourgeoisie.

While the final period within the scope of our examination (1926-1930) can be described as the period of isolated struggle for the working class, the stock of the petty bourgeoisie had not risen, but in certain respects was even in jeopardy.
During this period, elite organisations were purged of radical taints and brought firmly onto a path of moderation. This development culminated the process of co-optation and partial absorption begun in 1920. The organisations such as the JC, the ICU and the ANC ultimately took their stand from a common base, and this was their belief in the efficacy of moderate methods to canvass Government. The respectability which had come to these organisations as a result of this process, failed to solve the question of the status of the African petty bourgeoisie. As we saw above, the Pact Government threatened to withdraw African representation from the common roll. Even some of the liberals who had assisted in co-opting the African petty bourgeoisie were thinking in terms of a separate system of representation for Africans.

The question became, as Edgar Brookes said, not whether Africans "should have political rights, but what political rights they should have."25

The petty bourgeoisie status was essentially an ambivalent one: It was linked to movements within the working class. In the early twenties the Smuts Government initiated moves to absorb this petty bourgeoisie because of the need to defuse the militancy present within the working class. However, as this militancy abated, the political utility of the African petty bourgeoisie diminished. This in some measure explains why the Pact Government acted with less sensitivity to the interests of this class in the late twenties than in the early twenties.

Furthermore, the division within the bourgeoisie, between Afrikaner nationalist interests and liberal interests, determined the future of this petty bourgeoisie to a large extent. While a small minority of the liberals supported a policy of segregation the majority rejected it. In support of the latter Rheinalt-Jones wrote,

"The effect of the 'policy of differentiation' so assiduously preached in recent years has been to weld the native races into one class conscious people."(26)

This was precisely what the liberals had striven to avoid. They felt that alienation of the elite held dangerous consequences.
Fear of African unity - of the petty bourgeoisie being hurled into the working class - prompted them to stress the identity of 'civilised' Africans' interests with those of Europeans in a common political system. "...We again emphatically repudiate the view that native interests are necessarily hostile to European interests..."27

Hertzog who drew his support from the 'poor whites' - who were in competition with the 'civilised' Africans - had to tread carefully so as not to offend his political base and thus had to limit the advances granted to the African petty bourgeoisie. The ambivalent status of the African petty bourgeoisie thus rested heavily on the character of the class struggle as it played itself out between the African working class and the bourgeoisie as a whole, as well as between the different fractions of capital.

The other feature distinguishing this period was the existence of isolated incidents of worker resistance. This resistance, which took the shape of strikes, developed from new formations (inspired by the CP) which took root in small sections of industry where workers held semi-skilled jobs and thereby commanded a certain degree of bargaining power. These sections of industry contrasted to others where high job turnovers were experienced, critically diminishing the bargaining power of workers.

The factor of overwhelming importance in this period was the implementation of the UAA. Over and above the demoralising conditions in industry, the Act thoroughly disorganised the working class. The implementation of the Act brought a specific character to working class protest in this period; it counterbalanced the advances which had been gained from unionising workers in certain industries. This disorganisation was so thorough, that with the help of the Wages Act, as it was amended in 1929, working class organisation remained dormant until well into the middle of the thirties.
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4. Lewis to Smuts in B/Wits 4/1/1927
5. The Workers Herald 12/1/1927
6. Rheinallt Jones to JC and Native Worker Societies in Pim Papers 13/10/1927
7. Roux, Time Longer than Rope p159
8. Umteteli wa Pantu 14/4/1928
10. M Legassick, 'Social Change in South Africa' African Affairs Vol 75 no 299 April 1976
11. Lewis to Anglican Synod 1927 B/Wits
12. Lewis to Smuts op cit
13. Karis and Carter op cit p343 Memorandum to the Minister for Native Affairs from the Location Advisory Boards' Congress of South Africa 8/9/1930
14. Ibid p149
15. Ibid Proceedings and Resolutions of the Governor-General's Native Conference, 1925 p175
16. Ibid p174
17. Ibid p149
18. Ibid
19. Workers Herald 27/3/1926
20. Ibid
22. Althusser et alia op cit p100
23. Clough et alia, The Economic History of Europe; Twentieth Century
25 Ibid p20
26 Ibid p22
27 Ibid p23
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## Glossary of Terms Used

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>IWA</td>
<td>The Industrial Workers of Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>The International Socialist League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICU</td>
<td>The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANNC</td>
<td>The South African Native National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Transvaal Native Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>The African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>JC</td>
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<td>The Communist Party of South Africa</td>
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<td>SAFNETU</td>
<td>South African Federation of Non-European Trade Unions</td>
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<td>UAA</td>
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## APPENDIX A

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<th>Article</th>
<th>Pre-war Retail Selling Price</th>
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<th>Present Retail Gross Profit per cent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bread - 2lb.</td>
<td>6/-</td>
<td>6/- 2 lb.</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>white loaf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per dozen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar - 100 lbs</td>
<td>33/2</td>
<td>37/6</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flour - 98 lbs</td>
<td>24/6</td>
<td>31/8</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Meat - per lb</td>
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<td>6d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco - gross</td>
<td>72/-</td>
<td>72/-</td>
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<td>(box of matches given with every 6d worth)</td>
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<td>Dongas - dozen</td>
<td>6/-</td>
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<td>Boots - pair</td>
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<td>12/-</td>
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<td>8/-</td>
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<tr>
<td>lbs</td>
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<td>- 4 lbs</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Milk - 15oz doz</td>
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(Secretary for Mines and Industries Box 471)
APPENDIX: B

Population of South Africa:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1936</th>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>1 276 000</td>
<td>1 521 000</td>
<td>2 003 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>4 019 000</td>
<td>4 697 000</td>
<td>6 596 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>525 000</td>
<td>545 000</td>
<td>769 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>152 000</td>
<td>164 000</td>
<td>220 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 973 000</td>
<td>6 927 000</td>
<td>9 588 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Urban Percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1936</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59,7</td>
<td>68,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>50,4</td>
<td>52,4</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>52,8</td>
<td>60,4</td>
<td>69,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25,9</td>
<td>28,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of South Africa 1964 ppA-7, A-8, A-14)

Census figures for Johannesburg:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>122 071</td>
<td>150 286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>103 922</td>
<td>115 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14 588</td>
<td>17 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>240 581</td>
<td>282 906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Compiled from Union of South Africa Census 1911 Returns, Preliminary Reports and Annexures, p17 and from Union of South Africa Census 1921)

Increase in population from 1911-1921

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europeans</td>
<td>30 538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>15 410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2 647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48 415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source UC 40/1924 px)
Urban percentage of population in the Transvaal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1936</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africans</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloureds</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asiatics</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Union Statistics for Fifty Years A-10)

Distribution of African workers on the Rand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mines</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924 (Jan)</td>
<td>57,851</td>
<td>53,722</td>
<td>111,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dec)</td>
<td>55,839</td>
<td>51,597</td>
<td>107,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925 (Apr)</td>
<td>55,087</td>
<td>56,089</td>
<td>111,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Aug)</td>
<td>51,741</td>
<td>56,402</td>
<td>108,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926 (Jan)</td>
<td>53,261</td>
<td>54,608</td>
<td>107,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nov)</td>
<td>56,880</td>
<td>57,584</td>
<td>114,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Secretary for Mines and Industries)

Average Number of African Workers on the Mines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>18,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>42,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>64,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>68,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>91,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>85,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>106,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>140,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>162,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>183,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>189,912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(From Robertson HM '150 Years of Economic Contact Between Black and White' p 15 South African Journal of Economics vol 3 no 1 March 1935)
Historical
MAPS OF EARLY JOHANNESBURG 1886 AND 1897
NOT TO SCALE.
AREAS SOUTH OF JOHANNESBURG MUNICIPAL AREA
GEBIEDE TEN SUIDE VAN MUNISIPAAL GEBIED VAN JOHANNESBURG