

Returning to the Rand Revolt:

Centering Settler Colonialism and Racial Capitalism in Labour History

Daniel Coleman, CLMDAN001

A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfillment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Theories of Justice and Inequality

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2021

COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: D.C.C. Date: 14/09/21

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Acknowledgements

This minor dissertation was undertaken between January 2020 and September 2021, coinciding with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The completion of this project amidst closures to universities, libraries and national archives depended on the dedicated support of a range of individuals. My supervisor, Asanda Benya, has been both a mentor and an intellectual companion who has pushed me to be more self-assured, robust, and rigorous in my writing. Faisal Garba was instrumental in the initial conceptualisation and planning of this project. Ruchi Chaturvedi, Bianca Tame and Trevor McArthur, the programme coordinators, have provided consistent support throughout.

I would like to thank my family, Libby Dreyer, Natasha Coleman, Gareth Coleman, and Nicholas Coleman for their emotional and intellectual support throughout this process. It would not be possible to present this thesis without our insightful discussions and your thoughtful reviews in the final stages. A thank you to the librarians at UCT, for doing their best to make resources available during intermittent lockdowns. To the staff at the National Archives in Pretoria, this project has been facilitated by your attentive assistance. This final submission has been made possible by all these contributions.

Part One: The Rand Revolt in Context

Chapter 1: Introduction	11
1.1. Context and Overview of the Rand Revolt	13
1.1.1. The Racial Labour Hierarchy and formation of a ‘Labour Aristocracy’	14
1.1.2. The Dispute over the Status Quo Agreement	16
1.1.3. The Basic Outlines of the Strike from Declaration to Suppression	19
1.1.4. The significance of the Rand Revolt in understanding the racial development of capitalism	24
1.2 Method: Investigating the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission	26
Chapter 2: Literature Review	30
2.1. Introduction	30
2.2. Challenging the Rand Revolt Orthodoxy	30
2.3. Engaging Whiteness Studies and Transnational Histories	34
Chapter 3: Theoretical framework: Settler Colonialism and Racial Capitalism in The Making of the White Working Class	38
3.1. Introduction	38
3.2. The invention of the ‘Native’ as an essential condition of capitalism in South Africa	38
3.3. The ‘figure of the Native’ as a feature of class consciousness among the white working class	43
3.4 Poor Whites, Class Struggle, and the Racial Contract	44

Part Two: White Society's Wounds and Plasters

Chapter 4: ‘Genuine Mineworkers’, ‘Hooligans’ and ‘Native Trouble’ – Managing the Lower Orders through Difference	50
4.1. Introduction	50
4.2. Monitoring ‘Native Trouble’ to Suppress a White mineworkers strike	50
4.2.1. Enforcing the Native Zone During the Strike	51
4.2.2 ‘Should Similar Trouble Arise in the Future’: A Permanent State of Trouble	61
4.3. The Hooligan Element: Locating and Disciplining Rebellious Whites	63
4.3.1. Constructing Racial Distinctions Between Hooligans and Genuine Mineworkers	64
4.3.2. Racial Marking and the Rationalisation of State Violence	70
Chapter 5: Standing Guard – Deputised Whiteness and the Reification of the Settler State	74
5.1. Introduction	74
5.2. ‘To fundamentally establish this country as a white man’s country’	75
5.3. The Terrains of Racial Anxieties	79
5.3.1. Mapping the Acoustics of White Power	80
5.3.2. Controlling the Gaze	82

5.4. Deputised whites and Sociospatial Struggles	84
5.4.1 ‘A feeling of friendship with the Police’	85
5.4.2 White Civilians, Boundary Making and Enclosure.....	88
Chapter 6: Conclusion	93
Bibliography	96

List of Acronyms

AE – Augmented Executive of the South African Industrial Federation

COA – Council of Action

CPSA – Communist Party of South Africa

ICA – Industrial Conciliation Act

ICU – Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of South Africa

LGM – Low Grade Mines Commission of Inquiry

MLC – Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission

NLD – Native Labour Department

NP – National Party

SAIF – South African Industrial Federation

SALP – South African Labour Party

SAMWU – South African Mine Workers' Union

SAP – South African Party

TCM – Transvaal Chamber of Mines

TIC – Transvaal Indigency Commission

WNLA – Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Witwatersrand.....	8
Figure 2: Map of Johannesburg	9
Figure 3: ‘Mine Labourers’, undated. (Pearson Patrick, Collection of Photographs, Wits Historical Papers, A2638, Film 6 no. 9).....	14
Figure 4: Rissik Street, Johannesburg. Mounted Police clear a demonstration in Johannesburg town centre. (The Star. Through the Red Revolt on the Rand: A Pictorial Review of Events, 1922, 61).....	20
Figure 5: Union Junction, near Johannesburg. Train derailed after sabotage by strikers. (The Star, 1922: 71).....	21
Figure 6: The Trade’s Hall, Rissik Street, Johannesburg. The day the general strike is called. (The Star, 1922: 61).	23
Figure 7: ‘Schematic of typical compound layout’. 1950s. (Moodie, 1994: 79).....	42
Figure 8: Compounds Gold Mines’, undated. (Pearson Patrick, Collection of Photographs, Wits Historical Papers, A2638, Film 6 no. 1).	54
Figure 9: Boksburg, February, 1922. A cycle parade lead by the Brakpan Commando. (The Star, 1922: 66).....	64
Figure 10: Witwatersrand, February, 1922. Newlands Commando. (The Star 1922: 66).	77
Figure 11: Map of Vrededorp.....	84
Figure 12: Ferrierastown, Johannesburg, March 9, 1922. “Natives under escort of S.A.M.R. move their dead from the scene of the fight at Ferreirastown to Marshall Square.” (The Star, 1922: 6).....	85

Abstract

This study focuses on the Rand Revolt, a white mineworkers strike that occurred in 1922, as a lens into the white working class in the early 20th Century, Witwatersrand, South Africa. This strike is significant because the events surrounding its conclusion led to the co-optation of the white working class which in turn contributed to the consolidation of white minority settler rule and the racial organisation of capitalism in the following years. Prevailing historical materialist approaches give primacy to class in explaining these events at the expense of thorough engagements with settler colonialism and racialism. As such, my research question is the following: How can placing settler colonialism and racial capitalism at the centre of analysis reframe the prevailing understanding of the Rand Revolt? Three sub-questions flow from this main question. First, I ask: How did settler colonialism shape the state's response to the 1922 strike? Second, how did racialism structure the consciousness of the white working class during the Rand Revolt? Third, how did racialism shape the character and orientation of class conflict as it unfolded in the Rand Revolt? To answer these questions, I gathered data from the state-mandated commission of inquiry following the strike and analysed the commissioners' final report alongside the oral testimonies given by witnesses. The main argument is that the foundational antagonism between the 'Native Other' and a 'white South Africa' produced by settler colonialism shaped the internal dynamics of the strike. On one hand, state actors' responses to white working-class resistance ushered in broader concerns with maintaining the security of white domination over 'natives'. On the other hand, racialism, embedded in the class consciousness of strikers, saw white working-class militancy and self-organisation subsumed into the reification of the dominant order at the height of class struggle. I demonstrate this argument using evidence of the discourse and practices among both state actors and strikers. These revealed shared racial anxieties between the state and strikers surrounding 'Natives' which were resolved through violence and enclosure aimed at Black subjects in urban areas. Considering the intertwined relationship between race and class reveals that both the affective and material dimensions of white supremacy shaped the character and orientation of class struggle between white labour and capital in the early 20th Century, South Africa.

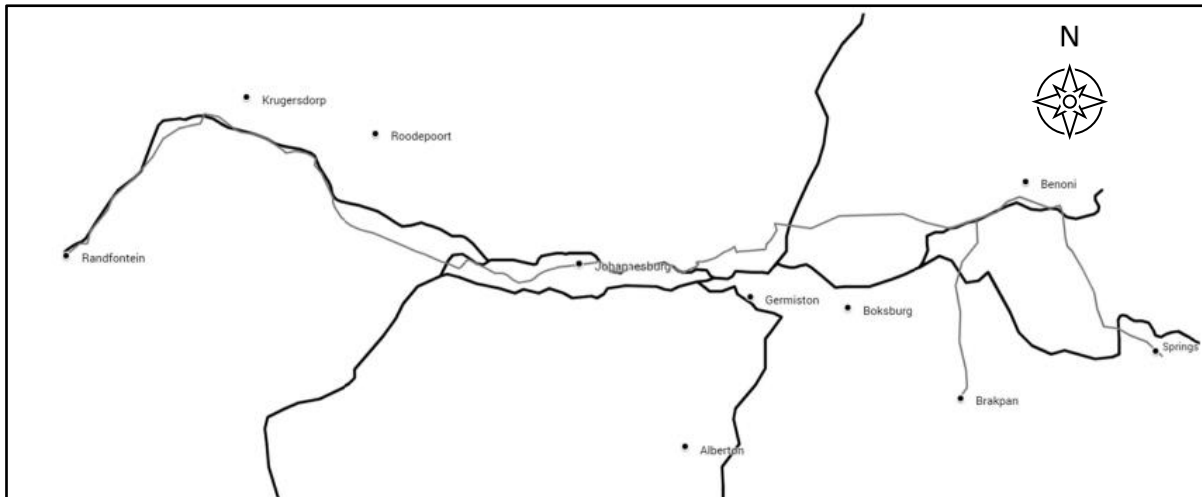


Figure 1: Map of Witwatersrand

Map Key¹

- Railway
- Road
- Town

¹ The maps in this paper have been compiled using a combination of sources including: Jeremy Krikler, *The 1922 Rand Revolt: the 1922 Insurrection and Racial Killing in South Africa*. 2005. Jonathan Ball Publishers: Jeppestown; Holmsden Street Map of Johannesburg and Suburbs, 1912 (Accessed Online: 10 September 2021); Google Maps, *Google MyMaps*, (Accessed Online: 10 September 2021).

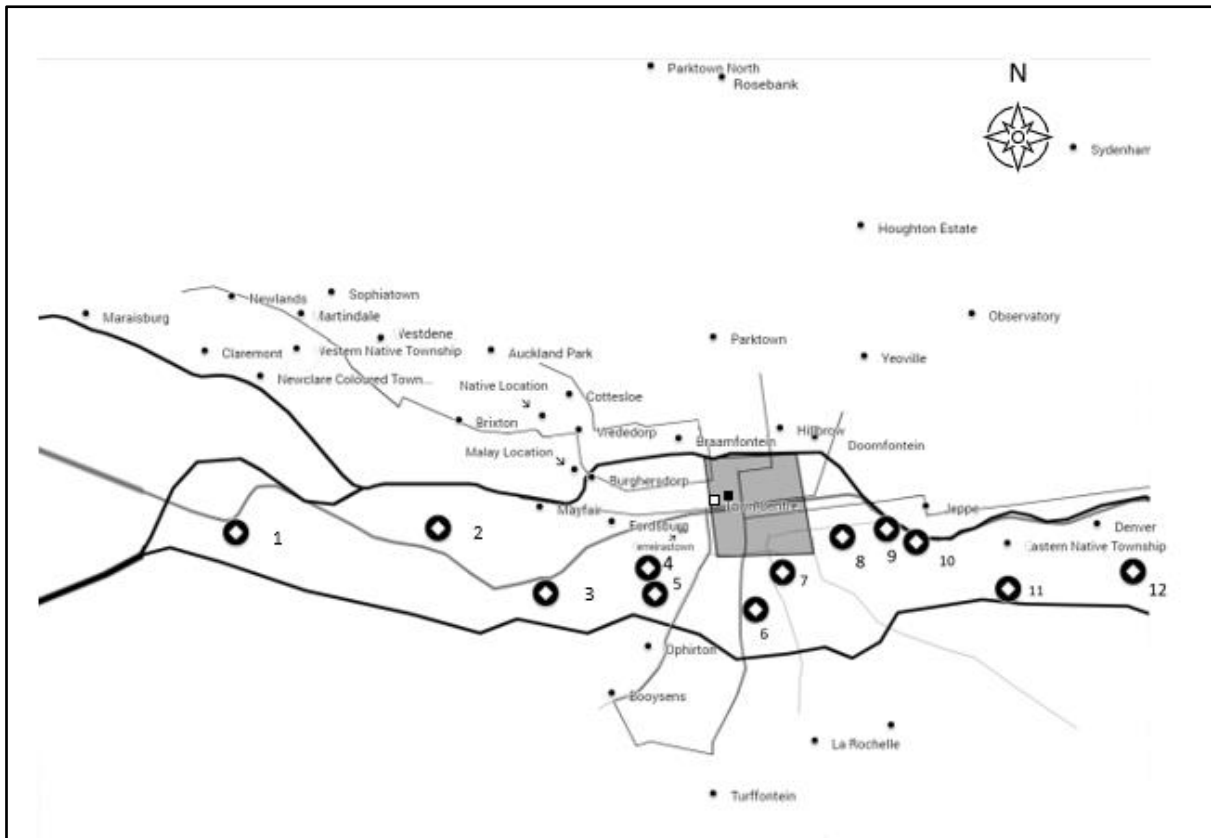


Figure 2: Map of Johannesburg

Map Key²

- Railway
- Road
- Tramway Line
- District/ Suburb
- Mine
- Market Square
- Trades Hall
- 1 Langlaagte Consolidated Gold Mine
- 2 Langlaagte Estates Gold Mines
- 3 Crown Mines
- 4 Robinson Gold Mine
- 5 Robinson Deep Gold Mine
- 6 Ferreira Deep Gold Mine
- 7 Village Deep Gold Mine
- 8 City and Suburban Gold Mine
- 9 Meyer and Charlton Gold Mine
- 10 Wolhuter Gold Mine
- 11 City Deep Gold Mine
- 12 Nurse Gold Mine

² Ibid.

Part One:

The Rand Revolt in Context

Chapter 1: Introduction

Between January and March 1922, white mineworkers in the Witwatersrand, South Africa, embarked on a 3-month long strike bringing the surrounding mining towns to a standstill.³ The strike, organised under the slogan ‘Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa’, focused on white mineworkers’ demand to protect semi-skilled occupations in the mines from ‘cheap’ Black labourers. Commencing as a traditional industrial strike in January, by early March the tide changed when Witwatersrand towns were overrun by rumours that a ‘native uprising’ was imminent. In response, self-organised white collectives, predominantly comprising of strikers, indiscriminately attacked Black people across the Reef (see Figure 1).⁴ On 8 March, strikers’ despatch riders delivered the following note to all leaders of the semi-military formations, established earlier in the strike:

Owing to unrest among the natives all commandants are urgently required at the Trades Hall, Johannesburg at 8pm.⁵

At this meeting, rather than discussing ‘native unrest’, a plan was communicated to ‘commandants’ to take control of Reef towns on 10 March. The plan was to disarm the police and hold the towns for 48 hours until Afrikaans farmers (known as burghers) residing in the Free State would bring military reinforcements. Strike leaders relied on notions of a ‘white South Africa’ and support from farmers to mobilise white workers in urban areas. A strike commando general articulated the strikers’ views in a speech on 9 March stating that:

³ A note is needed on the use of racial categories in this minor dissertation. ‘White’ includes Afrikaans/ Dutch, English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and other Europeans who lived in South Africa in the period of study. I use a Marxist definition of ‘working class’ to mean all those who do not own the means of production in a given society, excluding certain petite-bourgeois sectors. When necessary, this minor dissertation uses the term ‘native’ to refer to the Black population residing on the Witwatersrand at the time of events. This is not an acceptance of the legitimacy of this term, but only used to mark out the political identities constructed by the colonial state, hence the quotation marks. The term generally preferred in this minor dissertation is generally ‘Black’, but at times I use the term ‘African’. I do not suggest a distinction between Black and African when using them at different times. Black and African include the coloured or ‘Malay’ population described by colonial officials. I only use the term ‘coloured’ when there are specific references to it in the sources I am dealing with. When referring to the Black working class, I again am talking broadly, it is not necessary to distinguish between an ‘African peasantry’ and an ‘African working-class’ for the purposes of this minor dissertation.

⁴ ‘Reef’ refers to the geological area where underground ore deposits were located in the Witwatersrand. I use it interchangeably with the ‘Witwatersrand’ to refer to the area where goldmining towns were established.

⁵ Thomas Lynedoch Graham. *Report of the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission*. Pretoria: Wallachs’ P. & P. Co., 1922, 6. Hereafter this source will be referred to as ‘MLC Report’. The Trades Hall in Johannesburg was the central headquarters for white trade unions.

We are fighting for a white South Africa. I have been through the Free State, and we have the whole country behind us.⁶

This speech echoed other strike leaders' promises that a force of 12000 - 13000 burghers would arrive to help the fight against government forces (military and police) and win the battle against the mining companies. Striking a critical blow to the movement, the burghers eventually arrived on behalf of the Smuts led government and mining companies to crush the strike.⁷ In a matter of days, an industrial strike turned to widespread race riots and finally an armed movement against state forces. This event has come to be known as the 'Rand Revolt' and is the focus of the present study.⁸

In particular, I focus on the significant role that race played in shaping how the Rand Revolt unfolded.⁹ Exactly *how* race shaped events surrounding the strike – and the early 20th Century white labour movement in South Africa – has been the source of considerable debate. My study queries prevailing historical materialist approaches to these events. I am concerned with the development of class consciousness and class struggle as mediated by the structural and ideological elements of whiteness during this time. My research question is the following: How can placing settler colonialism and racial capitalism at the centre of analysis reframe the prevailing understanding of the Rand Revolt? In answering this question, I address race as a constitutive element in the development of capitalist relations in the South African social formation. Three sub-questions flow from this main question. First, I ask: How did settler colonialism shape the state's response to the 1922 strike? Second, how did racialism structure the consciousness of the white working class during the Rand Revolt? Third, how did racialism shape the character and orientation of class conflict as it unfolded in the Rand Revolt?

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part sets out the context and key themes which inform studies of white labour in the early 20th Century in three chapters. Chapter One provides context and an overview of the Rand Revolt. In Chapter Two, I critically evaluate the existing literature on the Rand Revolt and white labour in South Africa. Subsequently, in Chapter Three,

⁶ MLC Report, 6.

⁷ Jan Smuts was the leader of the SAP and Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa during the 1922 strike.

⁸ Most historical data on the Rand Revolt that I deploy in this minor dissertation, unless otherwise specified, is drawn from the following two sources: 'MLC Report'; National Archives Repository (K4) "unpublished Minutes of the Martial Law Commission", 1922. Hereafter, this source will be referred to as MLC unpubd minutes. All references to the MLC unpubd minutes, unless otherwise specified are testimonies of the individuals named.

⁹ The 'Rand Revolt' sometimes refers to the period from 10 March that the Smuts' government described as a 'revolution'. In this minor dissertation, I use the term descriptively to refer to the whole period of the strike beginning in January.

I develop a theoretical framework that reads settler colonialism and whiteness into the white labour movements' dominant political culture in the early 20th century. Part Two is divided into two chapters where I investigate how settler colonialism and racialism act as historical forces in the course of class conflict. In Chapter Four, I unpack official discourses around 'Native Trouble' and the 'Hooligan Element' to demonstrate that racial subordination was central to crushing working-class resistance. In Chapter Five, I argue that strikers' discourses and practices mirrored the state's in relation to the 'Native Other'. Further, that the subsequent co-optation of organised white labour depended on these shared racial ideologies and practices.

The choice to focus on the white working class is not at all an omission of Black agency. A detailed account of the responses of the Black working-class to the Rand Revolt would indeed be an important and necessary contribution to the literature, but that is not the current focus. Such work should stand on its own and do justice to the forms of resistance taken on by the Black working-class at the time. I have chosen to focus on the white-working class as one lens into a multifaceted picture of the 1922 Rand Revolt. At the same time, the choice to focus on white subjects may lend certain readers to the view that the argument presented is race reductionist and attempts to homogenise the divergent interests of the white population. However, that is not the case. I have paid attention to divergences in the evidence discussed below. Among others, my argument considers tensions between: predominantly Afrikaans commandos and moderate British union leadership; Afrikaner capitalists and British capitalists; and the white lumpenproletariat and bourgeois society. Across these divergences, my analysis identifies settler colonialism and racial capitalism as central determinants of the white working class's outlook characterising the Rand Revolt. Ultimately, I argue that the racial articulation of the white workers' struggles enabled their efforts to be subsumed into the settler state's structures and operations. To orient the reader, I begin with an overall picture of events.

1.1. Context and Overview of the Rand Revolt

The dispute leading up to the strike arose from the racial division of labour on the goldmines. A priority for the Transvaal Chamber of Mines (TCM) in the early 20th Century was to address recurring profitability crises and labour shortages in the mining industry.¹⁰ For organised white

¹⁰ The Transvaal Chamber of Mines, formed in 1887, comprised the dominant mining companies, and aimed to promote the gold industry's monopoly interests, particularly in the sphere of labour supply. By 1901, a labour recruitment association, the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), was established to recruit cheap Black labour from native reserves, and later from Mozambique. Selim Gool. *Mining Capitalism and Black Labour*

labour, the priority was to protect their privileged position as members of the ‘labour aristocracy’. The Rand Revolt represents a rupture when these two trajectories became momentarily irreconcilable.

1.1.1. The Racial Labour Hierarchy and formation of a ‘Labour Aristocracy’

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal / South African Republic (1886) ushered in a rapidly growing gold-mining industry in the Reef locations containing ore deposits. British workers were imported to make up for shortages in experienced mineworkers. Concomitantly, capitalist transformation, coercive state measures and ecological crises in rural Southern Africa forced increasing numbers of Africans and Afrikaners to migrate to urban areas in search of work. Camps were formed surrounding the mining locations and eventually developed into mining towns and cities making up the Witwatersrand (see Figure 1).



Figure 3: ‘Mine Labourers’, undated. (Pearson Patrick, *Collection of Photographs, Wits Historical Papers, A2638, Film 6 no. 9*).

in the Early Industrial Period in South Africa: a critique of the new historiography. Lund: Ekonomisk-historiska föreningen, 1983, 76-88. See also: Alan Jeeves. *Migrant Labour in South Africa’s Mining Economy: The Struggle for the Gold Mines’ Labour Supply 1890 - 1920*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1985.

The low quality of ore, the high cost of deep-level mining extraction and the fixed international gold price hindered mining companies' ability to achieve profits.¹¹ They responded by suppressing labour costs and increasing labour productivity wherever possible. The division of labour that emerged on the gold mines can be described as a 'racial labour hierarchy' formed out of racial recruitment patterns and racialised proletarianization of groups of people drawn from diverse regional, historical, and social backgrounds.

'British' mineworkers, many of whom were Cornish, took up 'skilled' positions on the mines with the highest pay.¹² A class of mostly Afrikaans 'poor whites' emerged in the 20th Century in rural areas, who increasingly migrated to towns in search of employment. Many of these migrants had been 'bywoners' (labour tenants) or smaller landowners in the country districts. On the gold mines, Afrikaners took up 'semi-skilled' work, a category that was less protected than 'skilled labour' but provided better pay and working conditions than unskilled labour.¹³ Both groups of white workers' racial status and political identities secured their privileged positions in the racial labour hierarchy, forming a 'labour aristocracy'.¹⁴

Black mineworkers, drawn from the Union 'Native reserves' and Mozambique were the lowest-paid workers and performed the bulk of underground labour necessary to extract ore. White workers' jobs increasingly constituted supervisory roles over 'gangs' of lower-paid Black workers who performed 'unskilled', manual labour.

The racial subordination of Black mineworkers determined their location at the bottom of the racial labour hierarchy. The forced displacement of Black people into designated areas called

¹¹ Gool 1983, 75-78; See also: John Higginson. "Privileging the Machines: American Engineers, Indentured Chinese and White Workers in South Africa's Deep-Level Gold Mines, 1902-1907." *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 1 (2007), 1-34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859006002768>.

¹² Frederick Johnstone. *Class, race, and gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976, 56. In the 1910's, a skilled white mineworkers average wage was 20 s a day; semi-skilled white mineworkers average wage was 15 s a day; and Black mineworkers average wage was 2 s a day.

¹³ Elaine Katz. "The Underground Route to Mining: Afrikaners and the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry from 1902 to the 1907 Miners' Strike." *Journal of African History* 36, no. 3 (1995), 467-489, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700034502>.

¹⁴ The 'labour aristocracy' concept has been a matter of considerable debate; I use the concept where it has value in demonstrating white workers place in a hierarchical division of labour. See: Karl Marx. "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels *Selected correspondence*." Progress Publishers, 1975. 9 April 1870, 220-224, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/letters/70_04_09.htm; Vladimir Lenin. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963, V, Preface, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/imperialism.pdf>. For a challenge to the 'labour aristocracy' thesis in South Africa see: Danelle Van Zyl-Hermann. *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 36-38.

‘Native Reserves’ and restrictions on Black land ownership initiated the proletarianization of the Black labour force who entered work on the gold mines. The various laws, recruitment practices and modes of control that were used to maintain African landlessness in the reserves and rightlessness in the city, made up the ‘migrant-labour system’.

The migrant-labour system depended on legal measures to maintain the reserves as Africans’ ‘permanent’ homes and prohibit Africans from permanent land ownership or settlement within designated urban territories. Africans could only enter urban areas with employment and housing provided by a white employer.¹⁵ For employers, the migrant-labour system was intended to provide a stable, ongoing supply of cheap Black labour from the reserves.

Segregation in the Union of South Africa was maintained through various ‘colour bars’ that divided all aspects of society between the ‘white’ and ‘inferior races’. The ‘job colour bar’ enforced a racial labour hierarchy on the gold mines which comprised distinct ‘legislative’, ‘customary’, and ‘status quo’ colour bars.¹⁶ The 1911 Mines and Works Act provided the legislative colour bar and gave the Governor-General powers to ‘grant, cancel and suspend’ blasting certificates.¹⁷ Blasting certificates determined which labourers were qualified to undertake blasting operations (the ‘skilled’, higher-paid tasks on the mines). In practice, the law allocated blasting certificates exclusively to white employees and reserved skilled positions for whites. The ‘customary colour bar’ refers to the protection of white workers jobs based on an assumed understanding that the racial division of labour was ‘natural’ and an ‘established practice’.¹⁸ The ‘status quo colour bar’ was precisely the issue under contestation during 1922 and will be described further below.

1.1.2. The Dispute over the Status Quo Agreement

The racial labour hierarchy set the frame for white labour’s workplace demands in the early 20th Century. White workers in the Witwatersrand area became increasingly organised and

¹⁵ Resolution 159 of 1855 passed by the Transvaal Government; The Squatters Act No. 11 of 1887 passed by the South African Republic; Volksraad Resolution No. 359 of 1891; The Native Reserve Location Act No. 40 of 1902; The South Africa Act of 1909; The Land Settlement Act No. 12 of 1912; The Natives Land Act No. 27 of 1913.

¹⁶ David Yudelman. *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, Capital, and the Incorporation of Organized Labour on the South African Gold Fields, 1902-1939*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983, 144. See also: Elaine Katz. “Revisiting the Origins of the Industrial Colour Bar in the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry, 1891-1899.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999), 73-97.

¹⁷ Section 4(n) of the Mines and Works Act No. 12 of 1911.

¹⁸ Yudelman, 1983: 144.

militant when striking over the colour bar and working conditions in 1907, 1913 and 1914.¹⁹ During World War 1 and until 1921, white workers had achieved various workplace gains and wage increases. It was in this period that the ‘status quo’ agreement was established to protect semi-skilled jobs on the mines. Leading up to the Rand Strike, the TCM identified these gains as a restriction on profits, arguing that the cost of white labour had risen while white labour productivity had declined.

However, previously between 1915 and 1920, mining companies had adopted a cooperative disposition. This attitude was facilitated by the shortage of skilled white workers who had left to fight in the war and the war-time economic boom. During this period, Black workers were employed in semi-skilled work to make up for shortages of white labourers. The remaining white mineworkers resisted these changes. A strike at Van Ryn Deep, situated near Benoni, in January 1917 ended with mine owners meeting white workers’ demands to withdraw Black workers from semi-skilled positions. This incident led to a government-appointed inquiry into the employment of Black workers in semi-skilled jobs on all mines. The inquiry found that ‘some agreement should exist as to the classes of work limited to Europeans only’.²⁰

The TCM and the South African Mineworkers Union (SAMWU) negotiated for several years over white labour costs.²¹ SAMWU wanted to extend the job colour bar, while the TCM worked to limit its scope. A month after the 1917 strike, SAMWU added the demand to exclude coloured workers from semi-skilled positions. After back-and-forth negotiations, SAMWU and the TCM reached an agreement, leading to the implementation of the Status Quo Agreement on 1 September 1918, holding that:

...The status quo as existing on each mine with regard to the relative scope of employment of European and coloured employees should be maintained, that is to say, that no billets which are held by European workmen should be given to coloured workmen, and vice versa.²²

The effect of the agreement was that whoever occupied semi-skilled positions on different mines continued to hold those positions and could not be replaced. This measure was applied

¹⁹ David Yudelma, “The Center Holds: Sovereignty and Violence, 1907-1914.” in Yudelma, 1983: 83.

²⁰ Senate Debates, 1925, col. 680, quoted in Johnstone, 1976: 107.

²¹ Johnstone, 1976: 56. SAMWU was the main representative union of whites employed on mines, including skilled and semi-skilled. It was initially formed in 1902 as the Transvaal Miners Association and was restructured into SAMWU in 1913.

²² Debate of the Joint Sitting of both Houses of Parliament, 10 May 1926, col.18, quoted in Johnstone, 1976: 109.

in a way that maintained the ratio of ‘semi-skilled’ labour on the mines, thereby protecting white workers’ positions. White workers saw the status quo as a stopgap measure to:

Prevent the complete flooding of the white workers’ position until the nation can be aroused to the dangers of the present labour policy of the mines.²³

Due to the rising costs of materials from 1920, a new profitability crisis emerged for the mining companies. Two of the possible policies identified to resolve this crisis were state subsidisation for mining companies or the reduction of white labour costs. Initially, Evelyn Wallers, president of the TCM, William Gemmill, Joint Secretary and Actuary of the TCM, Lionel Phillips and other mining industry leaders lobbied government to support them with state subsidies to recruit Black labour in the Union and Mozambique.²⁴

In response to pressure from the TCM, the Union government established the Low-Grade Mines Commission of Inquiry (LGM) in 1919. The 1920 LGM reports openly identified white labour costs as a hindrance to profits and recommended the removal of the legal colour bar.²⁵ Following these recommendations, the Smuts’ government supported the reduction of white labour costs to address the low-grade mines profitability crisis.

In addition, the racial labour hierarchy was further strained amidst increasing militancy among the African working class. In 1920, 70 000 African mineworkers went on strike over low wages and rising living costs. This impacted discussions over the colour bar in the low-grade mines as the TCM considered hiring more Black people in semi-skilled positions as a potential solution to African workers’ workplace demands.²⁶

Following the 1920 LGM, the TCM took various far-reaching decisions to reduce labour costs. On 19 December 1921, its Executive Committee unilaterally announced that all ‘present underground contracts would be ceased...as from 31st January 1922’ and that the Status Quo

²³ Debate of the Joint Sitting of both Houses of Parliament, 10 May 1926, col.18, quoted in Johnstone, 1976: 110.

²⁴ Yudelman, 1983: 138.

²⁵ National Archives Repository, “Report of the Low-Grade Mines Commission.” SAS, 1285 (1920).

²⁶ Yudelman, 1983: 150. See also: Philip Bonner. *The 1920 Black Mineworkers Strike*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, 1978; Alan Cobby. Why Not All Go Up Higher? ”: The Transvaal Native Mine Clerks’ Association, 1920-1925’.” *South African Historical Journal* 62 no. 1(2010) 143-161, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582471003778409>; For a critical analysis challenging the connections between the 1920 African mineworkers strike and the status quo negotiations see: Jeremy Krikler. “Lost Causes of the Rand Revolt.” *South African Historical Journal* 63 no. 2 (2011): 318-338, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2011.569345>.

Agreement would be terminated on this date.²⁷ This would result in up to 3000 white semi-skilled mineworkers having their contracts terminated and becoming unemployed.

The white working class on the Witwatersrand responded to their increasing economic precarity and social dislocation by adopting a militant response to the ultimatums issued by the TCM. General conditions which reduced the white-working class's livelihoods at the time included drought, the post-World War 1 Subsistence Crisis and silicosis.²⁸ The threat of terminating 3000 white semi-skilled contracts only worsened these conditions. White workers' responses to the privations caused by capitalist alienation centred on maintaining the status quo and responding to the threat of cheap labour competition from Black workers. In the next section, I broadly outline the trajectory of the strike

1.1.3. The Basic Outlines of the Strike from Declaration to Suppression

The strike was declared on 10 January following a successful ballot taken on 9 January 1922. It began as an industrial strike on the Gold Mines, the Victoria Falls Power Stations, and the town Engineering Shops. In February, the strike escalated as Smuts embarked on a public campaign to pressure strikers to return to work while police waged an offensive on the ground. In response, strikers' militancy and use of force increased. On 7 March, white workers declared a general strike, and race riots unfolded across the Witwatersrand. On 10 March, when Martial Law was declared, commandos and state forces entered a 4-day armed struggle. The strike officially ended on 17 March with the white working class suffering a major defeat.

When the strike began in January, the South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) and its affiliated unions led organised white labour on the Rand and were the main force to initiate white workers' response to the TCM ultimatum.²⁹ On 31 December 1921, the SAIF established the Augmented Executive (AE) as a parallel body that included representatives from non-affiliated unions. The AE represented the trade union hierarchy at the start of the strike and had drafted the strike ballot. The second ultimatum on the strike declaration ballot referenced the

²⁷ TCM Archives, Executive Committee Minutes, Minutes of meeting of 19 December 1921, quoted in: Jeremy Krikler. *The Rand Revolt: the 1922 insurrection and racial killing in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005, 47. See also: Keith Breckenridge. "Fighting for a White South Africa: White Working-Class Racism and the 1922 Rand Revolt." *South African Historical Journal* 57, no. 1(2007): 228-243, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582470709464719>, 236.

²⁸ Elaine Katz. *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994.

²⁹ Harold Simons & Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, 186-188. In 1913 the Transvaal Federation of Trades rebranded as the SAIF. Its main affiliates were white unions, and a few unions with Coloured members.

TCM's 'threat to substitute cheap black labour for white'.³⁰ During the strike, as the central body, the AE gave orders to set up branch strike committees in each district. The Branch Strike committees organised local affairs including distributing relief, planning pickets, coordinating medical services, and calling mass meetings.

However, it is the 'commandos', emerging in mid-to-late January, which became the main organisational force in the latter stages of the strike. Commandos were semi-military units of strikers ranging from 20 to a few hundred members. These formations predominantly comprised Afrikaans workers and unemployed poor whites, many of whom supported the National Party (NP). The AE officially endorsed and advocated 'commandos' on 2 February. By early March, a commando was established in almost every town across the Witwatersrand.³¹

On 15 January, the Smuts' government instituted a conference between TCM and SAIF representatives, presided over by Justice Curlewis (The Curlewis Conference) for further



Figure 4: Rissik Street, Johannesburg. Mounted Police clear a demonstration in Johannesburg town centre. (*The Star. Through the Red Revolt on the Rand: A Pictorial Review of Events, 1922, 61*).

³⁰ Ballot Paper, MLC Report, 3.

³¹ MLC Report, 6.

dispute resolution.³² However, it was abandoned on 29 January once negotiations gridlocked.³³ In response, strikers held a mass meeting on the same day with the SAIF executive passing resolutions expressing workers' call to 'defeat the present Government' and 'substitute one calculated to protect the white race in South Africa'.³⁴ It was around this time that the Council of Action (COA) was established by the AE, comprising 5 members to 'deal with the militant side of the strike'.³⁵

These events were followed by an intensification in the struggle. In support of capital, the Smuts' government attempted to force strikers back to work from early February. On 7 February, the Commissioner of Police sent out a notice stating that commandos attempting to pull out officials working on essential services 'constituted the crime of public violence'.³⁶ On 8 February, a few members of the COA were arrested for 'public violence'. On 11 February, Smuts publicly promised police protection for anyone who returned to work by 13 February.³⁷

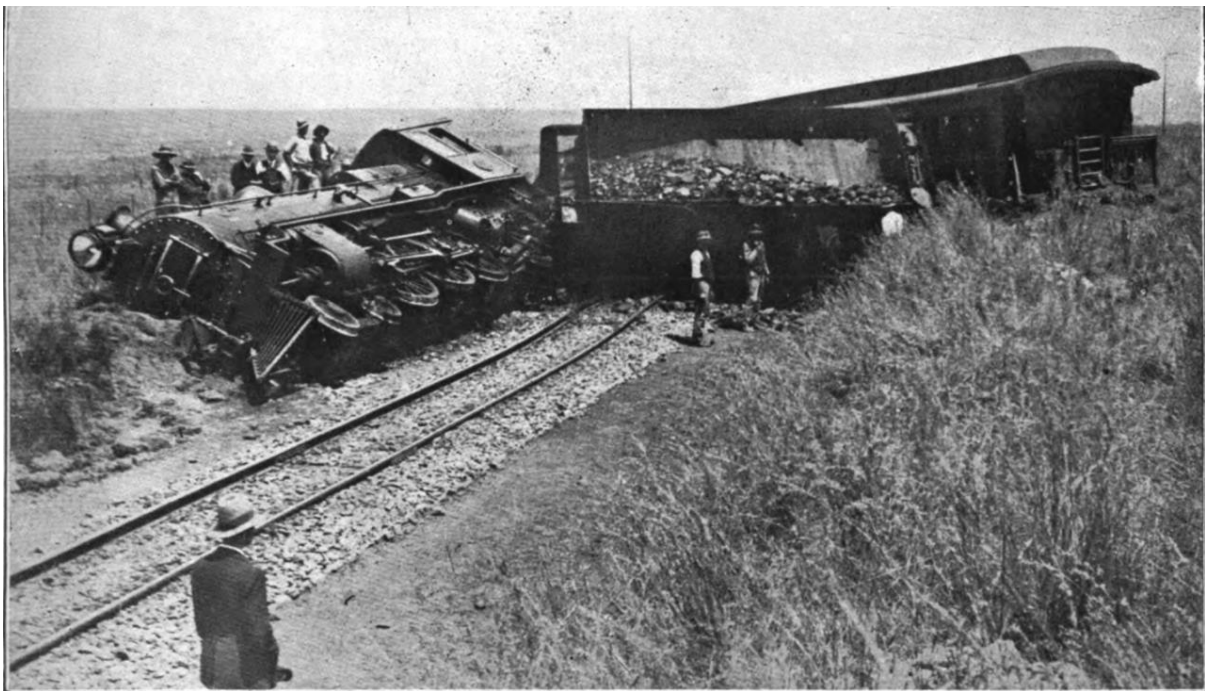


Figure 5: Union Junction, near Johannesburg. Train derailed after sabotage by strikers. (*The Star*, 1922: 71).

³² Ibid, 46.

³³ Following this breakdown, the TCM extended their demands. See "Statement by the Chamber of Mines", Appendix E in Ivan Walker & Ben Weinbren. *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa*. Johannesburg: South African Trade Union Council, 1961.

³⁴ Ibid, 20.

³⁵ Anonymous Miner, Affidavit in Oscar Stern, Police Chief Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 1280.

³⁶ Sydney Bunting and William Andrews. *Red revolt, the Rand strike, January-March 1922: the workers' story*. Johannesburg: Communist Party S.A, 1922, 17.

³⁷ Ibid, 18.

With Smuts' promise of protection and his explicit stance against the strike, police were given a broader ambit to repress strike activity. This led to police raids and further arrests (see Figure 4). On 24 February, 1500 special constables were enrolled, and aeroplanes were flown over the Witwatersrand to parade the government's firepower.³⁸

Following the Curlewis Conference breakdown, white workers employed more forceful tactics including: sabotaging railways (see Figure 5); intimidating scabs through assault, burning their household furniture, intimidating their families; and openly defying police orders. On 2 January, the Central Strike Committee for Johannesburg sent out instructions to stop all scabbing by 'force, friction or persuasion'.³⁹ On 7 February, the SAIF Executive issued a notice re-affirming its endorsement of the commando system and urging all Strike Committees to 'utilise them for stopping all scabbing'.⁴⁰

On 28 February, police fired on a commando demonstrating outside the Boksburg gaol, killing three strikers.⁴¹ This event, a tipping point in the strike, was followed by a mass funeral and an outpouring of white public support for strikers. In the following days, clashes between police and strikers continued while anti-scabbing actions intensified. Strikers' increasing militancy saw control shift from the moderate SAIF leadership into the hands of the more militant COA and commandos.

Hoping to halt this process, SAIF sent the TCM a letter on 4 March requesting a meeting to find terms whereby 'the strike might be declared off.'⁴² The TCM responded the same day in a dismissive letter making clear to strikers that their demands would not be met through negotiation. It further stated that 'such a conference would obviously be futile' and that the TCM would not 'waste further time in attempting to convince persons of that mental calibre'.⁴³ In the days following, the forces put in motion over the previous two months reached their outer limits.

A general strike was declared on 7 March. Commandos, supported by approximately 8000 rank and file members, stormed an AE meeting in the Trades Hall and forced the moderate

³⁸ Bunting & Andrews, 1922: 18, 19.

³⁹ MLC Report, 19.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 8.

⁴¹ Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner, MLC unpubd minutes, 102.

⁴² Crawford, Archie. *Appendix G*. Letter, (4 March 1922), in Walker & Weinbren, 1961: 356.

⁴³ Gemmill, W. *Appendix H*. Letter. (4 March 1922), in Walker & Weinbren, 1961: 357.

leadership to declare the strike (see Figure 6). Simultaneously, the aforementioned race riots spread across the Witwatersrand over the following two days.

On 6 March, strikers and civilians held local meetings across the Witwatersrand to discuss the potential ‘native uprising’. On 7 March, commandos attacked the Vrededorp compound and fired on the streets of Vrededorp, Fordsburg and Brixton (see Figure 2). On 8 March, armed commandos attacked Black residents in compounds, suburban streets, and the city centre. There were attacks at the Salisbury, Jubilee, Primrose, Rose Deep, Glen Deep and Vrededorp compounds. Commandos entered ‘Native’ locations, attacking residents in Sophiatown, the Western Native Township, and the Malay Location (see Figure 2). The frequency of attacks decreased by 9 March, with few incidents spread across the Witwatersrand towns. Approximately 152 Black residents on the Rand suffered casualties during the whole strike and 44 were killed.⁴⁴

By 10 March, the energy of the race riots had turned towards the state. Commando units initiated an attack on strategic areas in the towns. Martial Law was declared on the same day, with the Smuts’ government calling in the Union Defence Forces, the Transvaal Scottish and



Figure 6: *The Trade's Hall, Rissik Street, Johannesburg. The day the general strike is called. (The Star, 1922: 61).*

⁴⁴ Those suffering casualties and murders included a small number of people identified as coloured and Indian in the official records.

the Durban Light Infantry.⁴⁵ Fighting between commandos and police unfolded in most Witwatersrand towns, with strikers initially gaining control over strategic locations such as post offices and municipal buildings.⁴⁶ However, the strikers suffered greater casualties and losses as the state violently crushed the strike. 14 March was the last official day of the ‘Revolt’, as Springs (see Figure 1) fell back into government hands. The SAIF officially called off the strike on 17 March, and the mineworkers returned to work suffering a major defeat. Having sketched the strike events, I now turn to discuss its significance in the decades that followed.

1.1.4. The significance of the Rand Revolt in understanding the racial development of capitalism

Hundreds were arrested during the strike. The state constituted a special criminal court shortly after and put 50 people on trial, with most men tried for high treason. Other charges included murder, assault, arson, and public violence. Three strike leaders were sentenced to death. While the Smuts’ government sought to repair its reputation, the mining companies went ahead with their conditions. The Status Quo Agreement was terminated, approximately 3000 semi-skilled white mineworkers were eventually retrenched, and white miners wages were cut on average between 25 and 50 per cent.⁴⁷ Mining company profits bounced back in the following years.⁴⁸ The arrests of strike leaders and rank and file members, the impact of lives lost, and the crushing of worker morale, severely curtailed white labour militancy.

However, declining white labour militancy had another cause. The violent military repression led by Smuts contributed to his dwindling popularity amongst the electorate. A ‘Pact’ alliance between the NP and Labour Party (LP) came to power after the 1924 elections and oversaw the co-optation of organised white labour.

The Industrial Conciliation Act 11 of 1924 (ICA), introduced by the Smuts’ government, came into effect after the strike and institutionalised a new industrial relations apparatus.⁴⁹ It excluded ‘Natives’ from the definition of employee, thereby denying Black workers access to

⁴⁵ The Union Defence forces were the recently established national military. The Transvaal Scottish was a reserve infantry regiment of the army which comprised of citizens who had military experience. The Durban Light Infantry was another infantry regiment.

⁴⁶ MLC Report, 15.

⁴⁷ Johnstone, 1976: 136-144; Yudelman, 1983: 190-195; Walker & Weinbren, 1961: 125-126; Robert Davies, *Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa, 1900-1960: an historical materialist analysis of class formation and class relations*. Brighton: Harvester, 1979, 156-158.

⁴⁸ Johnstone, 1976: 138-145.

⁴⁹ Industrial Conciliation Act No. 11 of 1924. See Yudelman, 1983: 198-210.

the collective bargaining system. White unions enjoyed exclusive rights to collective bargaining, enabling white workers to benefit from the new 'industrial relations' apparatus at the expense of racially subordinated labourers. The Pact government implemented various provisions under the 'civilised labour policy' which sought to provide relief measures for the unemployed and protect skilled occupations for 'civilised labourers' to consolidate the white working class's position as a labour aristocracy.⁵⁰

The results of the strike's conclusion enabled the white population to strengthen its hold on power in the settler colony known as South Africa. An alliance between the white working class and national capital was established in the wake of the 1922 Rand Revolt and shifted the direction of capitalist development. The Pact government, led by Prime Minister JBM Hertzog from 1924 till 1939, espoused Afrikaner nationalist ideals and represented local agrarian and manufacturing capital against British international capital. Their campaign's success depended on white labour policies. With the Pact government in power, various policies were institutionalised which formed the bedrock of the Apartheid government that came into power in 1948. State subsidies enabled the rise of local manufacturing industries while state intervention reduced poor white unemployment and increased racial protection of various occupations. The Rand Revolt was both a product of and element within the historical processes which set up a more starkly racially segregated, white supremacist order in the following decades.

It is this trajectory that makes the Rand Revolt an important event to study the development of racial capitalism in South Africa. While the white working population was small in numbers, their intersecting race and class positions made their co-optation critical to the success of capitalist industry and ruling class domination. My study looks at this connection between the white labour movement and the state. I aim to unpack why a movement that genuinely captured a rebellious, hopeful, and transgressive spirit was at the same time so wound up within those structures it sought to destroy.

For this reason, I seek to understand how placing racial capitalism and settler colonialism at the centre of analysis reframes the Rand Revolt. I have met this aim by reading into the discourse and practices of the state and the white working class. I argue that the suppression of the strike was achieved through the ongoing production of racialised difference by capital and

⁵⁰ The Mines and Works Act No. 25 of 1926; The Minimum Wages Act of 1925; The Miner's Pthisis Act of 1925.

the state. In response, white workers adopted settler society's dominant racial ideology within their challenge to capital and the state. In this way, white labour reproduced settler society's project of domination over the 'Native' in the course of their strike leading to the reification of settler order. Before presenting these arguments, my methodology is detailed below.

1.2 Method: Investigating the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission

In May 1922, Smuts appointed a commission of inquiry, the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission (MLC) in response to public pressure placed on the government to investigate incidents of excessive force during the Martial Law period.⁵¹ My argument addresses the main research questions set out earlier by analysing witness testimonies at this commission, and the final MLC report. Here, the convergences and divergences in practices and discourses of the settler colonial state and the white working class demonstrate the impact of racial capitalism and settler colonialism on the 1922 strike.

Informed by Ashforth (1990), my interpretations are conscious of the MLC's political form, including its ritual and symbolic aspects.⁵² The MLC's use of experts, such as judges, to investigate the state's activities provides a legal and epistemic legitimation of the colonial state.⁵³ Additionally, I follow Lester's (2020) argument that, in a capitalist society, the judicial system exists to uphold the interests of capital and judicial commissions tend to reinforce this objective.⁵⁴ The fissures within white society created by a period of open class conflict made the MLC a contested public arena. The report was referred to in parliamentary debates between the SAP, LP and NP⁵⁵, there were near daily updates on proceedings in newspapers, and some witnesses addressed the commission specifically to refute characterisations made by state actors.⁵⁶ As such, the MLC was deeply tied into managing the politically contested terrain within which it was formed.

⁵¹ "Indemnity Bill Moved: Motion Opposed." *Rand Daily Mail*, March 25, 1922, 7. (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.

⁵² Adam Ashforth. "Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/ Knowledge Forms." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1990a): 1-22.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Claire-Anne Lester. "Commissions of Inquiry and the Role of Law: Towards a Materialist Approach." *Social Dynamics* 46, no. 1 (2020): 86-103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2020.173790>.

⁵⁵ "The No Confidence Debate: Martial Law Report." *Rand Daily Mail*, January 25, 1923, 9, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.

⁵⁶ See *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 May - 28 June (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021); "The Revolution on the Rand: Martial Law Commission's Report." *Rand Daily Mail*, October 23, 1922, 8, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>. For one testimony responding to press reports see: Belsazar Van Zyl, Jeppes Chairman SAMWU, MLC unpubd, 687-694.

The MLC was established in terms of Government Notice No 618 of 1922. It ran from 4 May to 23 June 1922 under Supreme Court judges Thomas Graham and Jan Lange. The MLC set out to inquire into four issues: ‘whether the declaration of Martial Law was justified, and whether the amount of force used in the suppression of the disorders was more than was reasonably necessary’; ‘the causes, circumstances, character and aims of the revolutionary movement’; ‘incidents of excessive use of force by government officials; the behaviour of natives’ and ‘whether they, or any of them, gave any occasion for the assaults upon them’.⁵⁷

These terms of reference reveal that the MLC was used to establish the official narrative of the strike in defence of the ruling class and to legitimate the colonial state. The report’s conclusions were guided by the structure of the investigation itself. Inquiring into the force required for the ‘suppression of disorders’, the commissioners relied on forms of knowledge that established illegitimate collective action by labouring subjects. Referring to strikers ‘acts of violence’, the report concluded that the ‘declaration of Martial Law upon 10 March was justified’ and ‘imperative’.⁵⁸

Of course, this required a correlated minimising or erasure of the violence of wage-theft, retrenchment, unemployment, eviction, and generalised conditions of poverty. Moreover, police violence was barely mentioned in the report as it was considered legitimate in all cases, referring only to the Boksburg Gaol incident on 28 February as a ‘lesser’ cause of the ‘Revolutionary movement’.⁵⁹ A significant achievement of the MLC was to absolve the state officials who had acted on behalf of the government of any legal repercussions for using violence to the suppress the strike.

The MLC takes as fact that a ‘revolutionary movement’ occurred. The investigation into its ‘causes, circumstances, character, aims’ provided an ‘objective’ basis for the government’s existing claims.⁶⁰ The MLC report concludes that causes of the ‘revolutionary movement’ were: the formation of strikers’ commandos; the belief in support from the Burgher Commandos; NP speeches; Nationalist strikers’ republicanism; Bolshevik influence; the ‘ignorance of large masses...of the true functions of Trades Unionism’; and ‘weakness of unions’.⁶¹ It exaggerated the influence of the Red Scare arguing that there was ‘Bolshevik

⁵⁷ MLC Report, 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 31.

influence' on the strike. While the CPSA had endorsed the strike, and certain CPSA members had participated, the strike was not led by the CPSA.⁶² In addition, the question of 'the behaviour of natives' established the limits of violence against the 'Native Other' around the related 'feeling' and reaction such violence might have provoked in 'natives'. This line of inquiry was rooted in racial fears of a white minority settler population that had established a violent colonial order.

From this summary, it is evident that the MLC was interested in veiling the violence meted out by the state and reconciling the white public to the dominant order. While a state narrative emerged about the nature and causes of the strike, the MLC's structure of proceedings suppressed counter-perspectives. Strikers' testimonies were sparse, and their accounts were confined by the terms of discussion set out above. Similarly, testimonies given by Black witnesses were short, with the commissioners asking few questions. The perspectives which dominated, represented the interests of capital and the state.

As the topic for the MLC centred on state violence and popular violence, the control it established over testimonies was wound up in the 'legal narration' for the means of violence.⁶³ These contestations are relevant to an understanding of class conflict. One 'mining man's view', quoted in the Rand Daily Mail described the MLC report as a 'most striking vindication of the action of the employers'.⁶⁴ The suppression of labouring subjects' counterviolence in the course of class struggle creates conditions whereby a bourgeoisie can continually exert control over the labour process.

The above considerations lead me to read against the grain of the MLC report, which required a parallel reading of the unpublished minutes of oral evidence given to the MLC.⁶⁵ A range of witnesses including colonial officials, strikers, police, and Black people who were directly targeted during the race riots, presented testimonies at the MLC. These minutes were suitable for answering my research question as they contain eyewitness accounts that described events from personal perspectives and in loosely narrative formats. Tracking the recurring narrative

⁶² Allison Drew. "1922 and all that": Facts and the writing of South African political history." in Hans Erik Stolten. *History Making and Present Day Politics: the Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007.

⁶³ Nikhil Singh. "The Whiteness of Police." *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2014): 1092, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2014.0060>.

⁶⁴ "Martial Law Inquiry: Mining Man's View." *Rand Daily Mail*, October 24, 1922, 8, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.

⁶⁵ Ann Stoler. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense.* Princeton University Press, 2009, 46-47.

structures, language, discursive tools, and vocabularies, I was able to identify how testimonies reflected and constructed discourses around whiteness, class, gender, and settler belonging. The unpublished minutes are a useful tool reflecting in narrative format various contestations that played out during the Rand Revolt.

Other supporting sources included letters, a limited number of newspaper articles and secondary sources by participants in events. Letters were analysed in relation to the state discourses. The newspaper articles and secondary sources were used where they revealed strikers' social practices, but for the most part they were not included in the final presentation of this minor dissertation. The research period for this dissertation coincided with the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, recurring closures to the National Archives in Pretoria and libraries across the country constrained access to secondary and primary sources necessary to complete this minor dissertation. Subsequently, I had to complete this research without certain notable sources.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the data collected and analysed was sufficient to deal with the aims of this research and has shaped the research objectives in a unique way that may not have been possible in another context.

Taking these considerations into account and my aim to consider the Rand Revolt through the lens of settler colonialism and racial capitalism, I approached witness testimonies to read into white workers' subjective identifications and read against the stories told by police and colonial officials. This analysis is located within a focus on how race shaped the direction of events and the ultimate historical movement that class conflict would take.

⁶⁶ Most significant absences include: AH646, Trade Union Council of South Africa, Wits Historical Papers; archives of proceedings at the special criminal court for the trials of strikers; Collections of the Star Newspaper.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In this section, I provide an overview of the existing literature on the Rand Revolt and white labour in the early 20th Century, South Africa. The studies which I focus on have, for the most part, been broadly informed by historical materialist analyses within and outside academia. A dominant tendency in this literature is to give primacy to class, over race, as a category of investigation into historical change. In this chapter, I map out the gaps in the literature which my research questions arise from.

My review is divided into two sections. In section 2.2, I address the work of the CPSA (later the South African Communist Party) members, highlighting the impact that omitting race had on their theory of social change. Then I consider the wave of radical historians writing in the 1970s and 1980s from the academy. I show that these revisionist historians tended to frame race as a function of class, without *sufficiently* considering how racism is intimately wound up in the formation of class itself. In section 2.3, I unpack the literature on whiteness studies and transnational/global labour history. Here, I draw out the features of whiteness studies that help understand how racialism impacted the practices, values, beliefs, and attitudes of white workers during the 1922 strike. This analysis provides the scaffolding for my theoretical framework in Chapter 3 in which I argue that domination over the ‘Native’ is a central feature of settler colonialism that shaped the development of industrial capitalism in South Africa. This reflects both in the ways the ruling class seeks to maintain the essential conditions for capital accumulation, and in the development of the class consciousness among the white working class.

2.2. Challenging the Rand Revolt Orthodoxy

The complex relationship between white labour and social change makes the Rand Revolt a significant moment for those wishing to realise an alternative future beyond neoliberal capitalist hegemony.⁶⁷ The first communist intellectuals to write about the strike were concerned with ending capitalist domination, but their approach to white labour limited the CPSA’s strategy and tactics in its formative years.

⁶⁷ There is no capitalism that is not racial, cisheteropatriarchal capitalism.

These, and other, white left intellectuals initially developed what I refer to as ‘The Rand Revolt Orthodoxy’.⁶⁸ The Rand Revolt Orthodoxy holds the 1922 strike as a progressive movement reflective of white labour’s class militancy ultimately crushed by capital successfully dividing the working class. The Orthodoxy argues that white working-class racism stems from ‘false consciousness’, which can be overcome by class unity. Alternatively, I propose that analysing class conflict with reference to whiteness and settler colonialism in South Africa, helps us explain more fully *how* and *why* certain historical limitations have plagued white labour movements across the world.

The Orthodoxy’s stronghold is most evident in the early 20th Century work of trade unionists and communist activists who established the Rand Revolt and the white labour movement as a topic of historical investigation, often for political education.⁶⁹ Several decades later, academic historians adopted a modified version of the Orthodoxy.

This began in the 1970s when revisionist historians established an extensive body of literature challenging the dominant liberal historiography’s description of racism as a fetter on capitalist development.⁷⁰ They argued, instead, that racist state policies were functional to capitalist interests.⁷¹

First systematised by Johnstone (1976), the revisionist position on white labour argued that the racial labour hierarchy emerged out of the ‘specific class relations of South Africa’ and created ‘structural insecurity’ for working-class whites.⁷² The argument is that the Black labour force maintained limited access to the means of production in the reserves, and thus could undercut white workers’ wages on the gold mines. In contrast, white workers relied solely on wages to

⁶⁸ Bunting & Andrews, 1922; R.K. Cope. *Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W.H. Andrews, Workers’ Leader. Stewart, for the W.H. Andrews Biography Fund*, 1944; Edward Roux. *Time longer than rope: a history of the black man’s struggle for freedom in South Africa*. London: V. Gollancz, 1948; Walker & Weinbren, 1961; Simons & Simons, 1969; Edward Roux and Brian Bunting. *S.P. Bunting: a political biography* (New ed. / edited and introduced by Brian Bunting; with a foreword by Chris Hani). Bellville, South Africa: Mayibuye Books, 1993; Baruch Hirson. *A history of the Left in South Africa: writings of Baruch Hirson*. London; I.B. Tauris, 2005.

⁶⁹ Bunting & Andrews, 1922.

⁷⁰ Cornelius De Kiewiet. *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1941; Monica Wilson & Leonard Thompson. ed. *The Oxford History of South Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-71; Francis Wilson. *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969*. Cambridge: University Press, 1972; and Rodney Davenport. *South Africa: A Modern History*. London: Macmillan, 1977.

⁷¹ Giovanni Arrighi. “Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia.” *The Journal of development studies* 6, no. 3 (1970): 197-234, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220387008421322>; Harold Wolpe. “Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from Segregation to Apartheid.” In Wolpe. ed.: *The Articulation of Modes of Production*, 289-319. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980; Martin Legassick. *South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence*, 1974; Johnstone, 1976; Davies, 1979; Yudelman, 1983.

⁷² Johnstone, 1976: 58.

maintain their livelihoods in towns with a high cost of living and were thus ‘unemployable’ in unskilled labour. Mining companies’ profitability depended on driving down the cost of labour. With Black labour cheaper, this meant that white workers class position as a privileged stratum in the division of labour was ‘structurally insecure’.

Later, Davies (1979) illustrated that, throughout the 20th Century, the state intervened in the division of labour not only to provide a privileged position for the white working class, but also to create a class that was supportive of the form of state.⁷³ Similarly, Yudelman (1983) argued that simultaneously subjugating and incorporating organised white labour assisted the state and capital in maintaining ruling class domination.⁷⁴ The work of these revisionists is useful, because they show that white workers entered an alliance with national capital in the post-1922 period. However, they describe this moment as a turning point where the ruling class co-opted one section of the working class for the benefit of capital. These accounts give primacy to class in theorising white workers’ position, thereby omitting alternative and additional explanations for the historical development of capitalism following the strike.⁷⁵ In my argument, I adopt the position that society’s racial organisation provides the conditions in which capitalist development takes place.⁷⁶ It was the consolidation of white domination – which white workers were party to – that characterised the post-1922 alliance for the benefit of both capital and white society.

The 1980s saw a new generation of social historians revise the functionalist approach by emphasising culture and agency when writing about working class history.⁷⁷ South African scholars were greatly influenced by British historian’s work on social history. In particular, the

⁷³ Davies, 1979.

⁷⁴ Yudelman, 1983.

⁷⁵ Deborah Posel. “Rethinking the ‘Race-Class Debate’ in South African Historiography.” *Social Dynamics* 9, no. 1 (1983): 50-66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533958308458333>.

⁷⁶ Cedric Robinson. *Black Marxism: The making of the black radical tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983 re-issued 2000, 2.

⁷⁷ Jeff Peires. *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* Johannesburg: Ravan, 1981; Charles Van Onselen. *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914* Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982; Belinda Bozzoli. *Town and countryside in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular response*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983; Belinda Bozzoli. *Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987; William Beinart & Colin Bundy. *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics & Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987; Elsabé Brink. “Only Decent Girls Are Employed”: the Respectability, Decency and Virtue of the Garment Workers on the Witwatersrand During the 30s Johannesburg.” *University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop*, 1987; University of Cape Town, 1991; Robert Morrell. *White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940*. 1st ed. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992.

insight of EP Thompson's (1963) on class experience and class consciousness underpins many of these studies:

The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born-or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not.⁷⁸

In this work, 'class experience' becomes a key term to refer to the material relations which determine the lives of workers. Experience is defined as 'determined' by the productive relations of a given society at a given time. Class consciousness is distinguished from class experience as it is the cultural expression of a particular class responding to its experience. Importantly, class consciousness is not determined by the productive relations which one is borne into. Rather, the historical development of the traditions, value system, ideas and institutional forms that develop among the working class defines the response to the experience, as much as the experience impacts upon these cultural terms. Accordingly, Thompson (1963) emphasises the agency of the working class.

In applying this to South Africa, social historians explored the relationship between culture and resistance among the Black working class.⁷⁹ At times these analyses overemphasised culture as 'the primary and singular terrain' for struggle among the Black working class.⁸⁰ Alternatively, the white working-class was identified as a fully established proletariat whose cultural terms were assumed to mirror industrial society.⁸¹

Holding on to the importance of working class cultures as articulations of their consciousness, I follow Robinson (1983) by stretching the concept of 'class consciousness' to include 'racialism' as a cultural term.⁸² Social historians implicitly framed racialism as an aberration within a militant class outlook among white labour in the early 20th Century.⁸³ I argue the opposite – Afrikaners and British immigrants developed different and compatible forms of

⁷⁸ Edward Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1963, 10.

⁷⁹ Dunbar Moodie. "Mine Culture and Miners' Identity on the South African Gold Mines" in Bozzoli (ed.) *Town and Countryside in The Transvaal, 180-189*; Paul La Hausse. *The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936*. University of Cape Town, 1984.

⁸⁰ Tiffany Willoughby-Herard. *Waste of a white skin: the Carnegie Corporation and the racial logic of white vulnerability*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015, 103.

⁸¹ Belinda Bozzoli, "Introduction." In Belinda Bozzoli (ed.) *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal*, 41.

⁸² Robinson, 1983: 30.

⁸³ Krikler, 2005.

racial discrimination in their organisational traditions arising from how racialism was embedded in their formation and class consciousness.⁸⁴

2.3. Engaging Whiteness Studies and Transnational Histories

Recently, two trends address the gaps discussed above: the growth of ‘critical whiteness studies’ and the emphasis on ‘transnational’, ‘global’ histories in historical research.⁸⁵ I adopt relevant insights from whiteness studies to explain white workers relation to the white power structure. Further, the transnational/global approach connects discourse to the structural features of capitalism, imperialism and labour that may seem less obvious in local studies. The detailed local study I provide shows the intimate expressions of the broader trends identified.

The literature on whiteness has shown that whiteness is a ‘contingent’, ‘shifting’, ‘unstable’ category which grants certain rights, privileges, and freedoms for whites as members of the dominant racial group.⁸⁶ It establishes the basis for a racially constituted land-owning class, in which:

Whiteness is a status conferring distinct — yet conjoined — social, political, and economic freedoms across a vertiginously unequal property order.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Robinson, 1983: 28.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Hyslop. “The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself “White”: White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa Before the First World War.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. (1999): 398-421, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6443.00098>; Lucien Van Der Walt. “The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa: White Labourism, the IWW, and the ICU, 1904-1934.” *African Studies* 66, no. 2-3 (2007): 223-251, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020180701482719>; Marilyn Lake & Henry Reynolds. *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men’s Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; William Kenefick, “Confronting White Labourism: Socialism, Syndicalism, and the Role of the Scottish Radical Left in South Africa before 1914”. *International Review of Social History* 55 no. 1 (2010): 29-62, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990617>; Willoughby-Herard, 2015; Yan Béliard. “A “Labour War” in South Africa: the 1922 Rand Revolution in Sylvia Pankhurst’s Workers’ Dreadnought.” *Labour History* 57, no. 1(2016): 20-34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2016.114062>; Duncan Money & Danelle Van Zyl-Hermann. *Rethinking White societies in Southern Africa: 1930s-1990s*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020.

⁸⁶ Charles Mills. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, 3; Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 80-82; Toni Morrison. *Playing in the Dark: whiteness and the literary imagination*. Picador ed. London: Picador, 1993; David Roediger. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 1999; Noel Ignatiev. *How the Irish Became White*. London: Routledge, 2009; Matthew Horton. *Working Against Racism from White Subject Positions: White Anti-Racism, New Abolitionism & Intersectional Anti-White Irish Diasporic Nationalism*. eScholarship, University of California, 2019; Willoughby-Herard, 2015. For South African literature on whiteness studies: Melissa Steyn “Whiteness Just Isn’t What It Used to Be”: *White Identity in a Changing South Africa*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001; Melissa Steyn “The Ignorance Contract: Recollections of Apartheid Childhoods and the Construction of Epistemologies of Ignorance.” *Identities* (Yverdon, Switzerland) 19, no. 1 (2012): 8-25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2012.672840>; Mary West and Jennifer Schmidt. “Whiteness Studies in South Africa: A South African Perspective: Preface.” *English in Africa* 37, no. 1 (2010): 9-13.

⁸⁷ Singh, 2014: 1091.

Whiteness, in its various manifestations, is central to the contemporary moment's expression of race as a constitutive element in property relations. The bourgeoisie and proletariat in South Africa, and other settler colonies, were created by establishing a system of private property determined by race. Inequality becomes a 'building block of the capitalist social formation through an association of whiteness with property, citizenship, wages and credit'.⁸⁸

The racial ideology of white supremacy depended on the myths of the 'white race' and the superiority of Western Civilisation. However, landless, destitute, unemployed whites contradicted white supremacy's central logics.⁸⁹ In the 19th and the 20th Century, poor whites in colonial societies were deemed to have 'fail[ed] to live up to the civic and political responsibilities of Whiteness' and were 'in dereliction of their duties as citizens'.⁹⁰ Accordingly, whiteness studies clarify how the contradiction between white supremacy's racial ideology and working class whites' experience becomes an area of contestation in the early 20th Century white labour movement.

Scholars, such as Hyslop (1999), Willoughby-Herard (2015), Lake and Reynolds (2008), consider the impact of 'whiteness' on the South African white working class within a global context. Common across these three texts is that whiteness is described as a global phenomenon. It is understood to emerge alongside the imperial expansion of European capitalism to facilitate the global spread of racial regimes, propping up colonial societies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. As such, this literature aptly moves away from the assumption that South Africa's form of 'racial capitalism' is unique.

Hyslop (1999) identifies British labour situated in the metropole and settler colonies as being an 'imperial working class'. He argues that a 'white labour ideology' was developed by this imperial working class whereby 'the element of the critique of exploitation and the element of racialism were inextricably intermingled'.⁹¹ The dominant strategy and practices deployed by this transnational group of British labourers were racial protectionism. Kenefick (2010) has responded to Hyslop (1999) in an article focussing on syndicalism and the 'Scottish Radical Left' in South Africa prior to 1914. Kenefick (2010) highlights the political and ideological

⁸⁸ Nikhil Pal Singh, "On Race, Violence and "So-Called Primitive Accumulation." In Gaye Johnson and Alex Lubin (eds.), *Futures of Black Radicalism*. London: Verso, 2017.

⁸⁹ Colonel Pritchard, Director of Native Labour for the Union and Native Commissioner, MLC unpubd minutes, 562.

⁹⁰ Mills, 1997: 14.

⁹¹ Hyslop, 1999: 399-400.

commitments amongst members of the Scottish working class towards a non-racial movement to suggest Hyslop's (1999) 'white labour thesis' is not generalisable.⁹² Another challenge to the 'white labour thesis' is made by van Der Walt (2007), who outlines the connections between white socialists in the International Workers of the World, and the mass-based Black labour movement that formed the Industrial Commercial Union (ICU).⁹³ These critiques focus too narrowly on exceptions to the general trends Hyslop (1999) describes.⁹⁴ The ideology of white labourism goes to the core of common trajectories among British labourers in various colonial contexts because race is a social structure built into the global development of capitalism.

Krikler's (2005) work is noteworthy as the most thorough engagement with the Rand Revolt.⁹⁵ In his chapter titled 'The Racial Killings' he introduces valuable lines of inquiry. First, he unpacks whiteness scholars' work, such as David Roediger, to address how white workers' racial status influenced how they understood their class position. Second, he considers the use of urban geography to interrogate the dynamics of the race riots. With reference to the areas where racial killings took place, he suggests they were in part responses to 'racial integration' in slums and housing crises. Such explanations provide a basis to interrogate race and class as historical forces shaping the character and orientation of the 1922 strike.

However, Krikler's (2005) main argument reverts to the Rand Revolt Orthodoxy by concluding that white worker's class-based, socialist objectives were the main force characterising the 1922 strike. He confines race as a temporary distraction from class as the main motive force. Breckenridge (2007) criticises Krikler's (2005) account of the Rand Revolt and the general orthodoxy, by emphasising that the 1922 Rand Revolt was a 'deliberate, violent assault' on the growing militancy and organisation of the Black working class.⁹⁶ He argues that the strike led to the long-term ultra-exploitation of Black labour in rough, manual labour through the 'unskilling' and 'impoverishment' of the Black working class.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, Krikler (2011) has written a disappointing response to Breckenridge and other criticisms.⁹⁸ Rather than

⁹² Kenefick, 2010.

⁹³ Van Der Walt, 2010.

⁹⁴ Hyslop responded to Kenefick's article with a strong rebuttal maintaining his main positions. Jonathan Hyslop. "Scottish Labour, Race, and Southern African Empire c.1880-1922: A Reply to Kenefick" *International review of social history* 55, no. 1 (2010): 63-81, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990629>.

⁹⁵ Krikler, 2005.

⁹⁶ Breckenridge, 2007: 228-243.

⁹⁷ Breckenridge, 2007: 230.

⁹⁸ Krikler, 2011.

engaging with the ideological and theoretical points of departure, he dismisses most claims that detract from his argument by using evidence of the ‘real facts’ of history to defend his position.

The debates discussed here reveal a continuing reluctance among certain intellectuals concerned with labour history to accept categories of investigation which take seriously racialism’s impact on labour movements. While I have emphasised this point, I do not wish to imply that there was anything distinct, more dangerous, or more violent in white working-class racism. Nor do I intend to detract from white workers exploitation and subordination by the white ruling class. The state violence in 1922 is a stark reminder that whiteness did not make the white working class invincible.

Rather, as has been argued by Willoughby-Herard (2015), whiteness gave the white working-class access to both privilege and misery. The contested boundaries of whiteness, granting privilege and misery, were used to coercively subjugate and incorporate the ‘white poor’ within the dominant order and the long-term interests of oppressing the Black majority. For poor whites, privileges are partially accessible at historical periods where fracturing racial regimes have had to reform themselves. This reform has been aimed at securing the stability of the racial order through ‘rehabilitating’ and ‘reconciling’ the discarded white poor at the expense of a racialised Other. In the context of the 1922 strike, it is the ‘figure of the Native’ which takes the place of the racialised Other. I now turn to discuss my theoretical framework informed by the literature.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework: Settler Colonialism and Racial Capitalism in The Making of the White Working Class

3.1. Introduction

Whiteness studies cannot alone account for the social and economic forces at play in the 1922 strike. I contend that settler colonialism set in motion the main forces configuring class conflict during the 1922 strike. Whiteness was a category undergoing contestation and consolidation simultaneously in this context. In this section, I conceptualise racial capitalism and settler colonialism. My framework is underpinned by three propositions. First, the ‘invention of the Native’ shaped the conditions under which a settler and imperial bourgeoisie would expropriate land and labour for capital accumulation in the region which would become South Africa. Second, this invention was embedded in the pre-existing social structures from which the white working class were drawn and, thus, influenced their class consciousness under industrial capitalism. Third, the conflict between the white working class and the imperial bourgeoisie must be understood in relation to the ‘figure of the Native’ as a central feature rationalising capitalist accumulation and settler domination.

In these sections I develop the tools to answer my research questions. To address how the mechanisms of settler colonial rule informed state responses to the 1922 strike, I outline the features of settler colonialism and relevant mechanisms that arise in the strike. I answer how racialism structured class consciousness by outlining the racial proletarianization of the white working class and their pre-existing positions within the settler/imperial order. Focussing on the relationship between mechanisms of settler colonial rule and the racial direction of class struggle, enable me to centre racial capitalism and settler colonialism in my reading of the 1922 strike.

3.2. The invention of the ‘Native’ as an essential condition of capitalism in South Africa

My first proposition relies on a conceptualisation of ‘racial capitalism’ that describes race as a material and ideological force.⁹⁹ The dominant racial ideology underpinning the period of study

⁹⁹ Robinson, 1983: 2. See also: Neville Alexander. *One Azania, One Nation: the national question in South Africa*. London: Zed Press, 1979; Cedric Robinson. *An Anthropology of Marxism*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001; Kelvin Santiago-Valles. “Racially Subordinate Labour within Global Contexts: Robinson and Hopkins re-examined.” *Race and Class* 47, no. 2 (2005): 54-70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805058082>; H.L.T. Quan. “Geniuses of resistance: feminist consciousness and the Black radical tradition.” *Race and Class* 47, no. 2(2005): 39-53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805058088>; Tu Huynh. “Black Marxism: an incorporated Analytical Framework

was assembled by a binary opposition between ‘Western Civilisation’ and ‘Natives’. This ideology framed the ‘European’/ ‘settler’/ ‘white’ as civilised; member of a single nation and ruling class and disembodied sovereign subject. As a violently incomplete identity, European subjectivity depended on a construction of the ‘Native’ as ‘savage Other’, ‘ethnic/tribal Other’, and as a ‘class Other’.¹⁰⁰ This racial ideology determined the dominant means by which land and labour was expropriated in the Union of South Africa.

Informed by Robinson (1983), I define racialism as ‘the legitimation and corroboration of social organization as natural by reference to the ‘racial’ components of its elements’.¹⁰¹ Consequently, racial capitalism refers to the means by which ‘social ideology’ and ‘the development, organisation and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions’.¹⁰² Rather than unique to South Africa, this definition of racial capitalism accounts for the general and historical development of capitalism from its germinal form in European feudalism up until the current period.

In South Africa, various ‘racial regimes’, beginning from the Dutch Cape Colony and culminating in the 1910 Union of South Africa, were established by settler colonialism.¹⁰³ In each regime both an imperial bourgeoisie and settler bourgeoisie have accumulated capital through the violent expropriation of land and labour. Settler colonialism is ‘structure and

for Rethinking Chinese Labour in South African Historiography.” *African Identities* 11, no. 2 (2013): 185-199, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2013.797286>; Robin Kelley. “The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native.” *American Quarterly* 69 no. 2 (2017): 267-276, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0020>; Singh, 2017; Yousuf Al-Bulushi. “Thinking Racial Capitalism and Black Radicalism from Africa: An Intellectual Geography of Cedric Robinson’s World-System.” *Geoforum* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2020.01.018>; Hylton White. “How Is Capitalism Racial? Fanon, Critical Theory and the Fetish of Antiracism.” *Social Dynamics* 46, no. 1 (2020): 22-35; Inés Valdez. “Socialism and Empire: Labour Mobility, Racial Capitalism, and the Political Theory of Migration.” *Political Theory*, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591720981896>.

¹⁰⁰ Thiven Reddy. *Hegemony and Resistance: Contesting Identities in South Africa* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, 11.

¹⁰¹ Robinson, 1983: 2.

¹⁰² Robinson, 1983: 2. For criticism and critical engagement with the body of literature informed by Robinson’s notion of racial capitalism see: Ralph, Michael, and Maya Singhal. “Racial Capitalism.” *Theory and Society* 48, no. 6 (2019): 851-881, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09367-z>; Julian Go. “Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism.” *Sociological Theory* 39, no. 1 (March 2021): 38-47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275120979822>.

¹⁰³ For ‘racial regime’ see: Cedric Robinson. *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning: Blacks and the Regimes of Race in American Theatre and Film before World War II*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007, xii Preface. For studies on colonialism that inform my argument see: Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1st Evergreen Black Cat ed. New York: Grove Press, 1968; Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Johannesburg: WITS University Press, 2017; Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” *Journal of genocide research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>; Robin Kelley. “The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native.” *American Quarterly* 69 no. 2 (2017): 267-276, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0020>; Lorenzo Veracini. *Settler Colonialism: a theoretical overview*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 3; Thiven Reddy. *Settler Colonialism and the Failures of Liberal Democracy*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2015; Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*. London: Verso, 2016.

process' whereby the invention of 'settler' and 'Native' political identities rationalise the domination, exploitation, and destruction of indigenous peoples. As a particular process of displacement that relies on simultaneous settlement - settler colonialism facilitates the establishment and continuation of capitalist social relations in a given environment.¹⁰⁴ As a structure, it is a political form of rule. Under settler colonialism, land and labour were expropriated by an 'exogenous entity that reproduces itself in a given environment' and subsequently forms various administrative, legal, and political structures that are wielded to dominate over an existing 'political body'.¹⁰⁵ Rather than a stage or an event, settler colonial violence is an ongoing process, securing a social order characterised by the racial domination over 'natives'.¹⁰⁶

Wolfe (2016) has argued that the 'logic of elimination' was a central organising principle of settler colonial societies, which have sought to destroy indigenous societies through genocide, violence, assimilation, and displacement.¹⁰⁷ While elaborating on an important concept, Wolfe creates a partial picture by omitting contexts where the proletarianization of indigenous people was tied in to the logic of elimination from his case studies. In the African context, colonialism sought to 'eliminate the culture, identity, and consciousness while preserving the body for labour'.¹⁰⁸ As there was a small settler population in South Africa, the proletarianization of the indigenous population was necessary to meet the labour and security needs of settler society. The migrant-labour system developed out of this historical trajectory.

To displace indigenous people and establish settler claims to land and sovereignty, indigenous people were constructed as beings without cultures, histories, and political structures of their own.¹⁰⁹ The 'Native Other' is constructed as antagonistic to Western Civilisation, as fixed within a premodern state of being that contains potentially dangerous capacities if not disciplined by the socialising violence of white civilisation.¹¹⁰ Further, in the formation of Dutch Colonies and later 'South Africa', settler myths of national origin reconstructed 'Natives' as 'foreigners' and Dutch 'settlers' as autochthonous stewards of the land. Thus, centuries of settler colonial violence, rationalised by racialism, resulted in Black people being

¹⁰⁴ See some of Samir Amin's work on settler colonialism and capitalism.

¹⁰⁵ Veracini, 2010: 3.

¹⁰⁶ Wolfe, 2016: 101.

¹⁰⁷ Wolfe, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Kelly, 2017: 268; Wolfe, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Kelley, 2017: 267.

¹¹⁰ White, 2020: 24.

dispossessed from their land and forced to live in small territories, later termed the ‘native reserves’.

By portraying Africans as a people without culture and history, the ‘invention of the Native’ establishes antiblack racism as a key social structure rationalising the dominant relations under which industrial capitalism would develop in South Africa. Antiblack racism portrays Blackness as an ‘embodied subjectivity to animal biology, a feral bodily power’ as part of establishing relations of domination that fix abstract labour under capitalism to Black people.¹¹¹ The ‘class Other’ constructed a social ontology of ‘Natives’ as embodied beings fit for manual labour.¹¹²

Drawing from the Algerian colonial context, Fanon (1968) developed a framework for the colonial situation and antiblack racism that provides important insights into how ‘the figure of the Native’ underpins the structure of racialised power in South Africa. It illuminates that the Union of South Africa incorporated white workers and African workers under two forms of rule, a bifurcated state upheld by differentiating the ‘settler’ as a citizen from the ‘native’ as a subject. Not only is there a bifurcated rule, but the dividing line is enforced by violence. The colonial world is ‘divided into compartments’ between a ‘settler zone’ and a ‘Native zone’.¹¹³ Mechanisms – including i) pass laws; ii) compounds; and iii) employment contracts – were employed to meet the settler zones need for a cheap Black labour supply without subverting the Manichean structure of colonial society.

Recruitment of cheap Black labour relied on the deliberate underdevelopment in the reserves, which in turn led to a growing urban Black population. Subsequently, a central contradiction had to be managed – Native presence in the settler zone. The presence of the ‘Native Other’ generates social crises in settler society which were resolved through violence to establish the Native subject’s racial subordination to the settler subject. This is the basis for the colonial state to introduce pass laws that racially defined the pass-bearer and subsequently controlled movement. These laws required Black people in settler territories to carry a passbook that contained their personal information, place of residence, employer’s information, and employment history. *Any* white civilian could demand that this passbook be shown to them in a settler territory at *any* time.

¹¹¹ White, 2020: 23, 24.

¹¹² Reddy, 2000: 11.

¹¹³ Fanon, 1968: 36-37.

Most Black mineworkers were initially housed in overcrowded, cheaply constructed hostels provided by employers on mining property called ‘compounds’ (see Figure 7). The compound provided racially segregated, single-sex accommodation for Black waged workers recruited from the reserves. It was these compounds to which the pass-laws, and residential segregation policies confined tens of thousands of Black workers. The compounds acted as physical boundaries that ‘enclosed’ the ‘Native subject’ within the segregated urban landscape.¹¹⁴

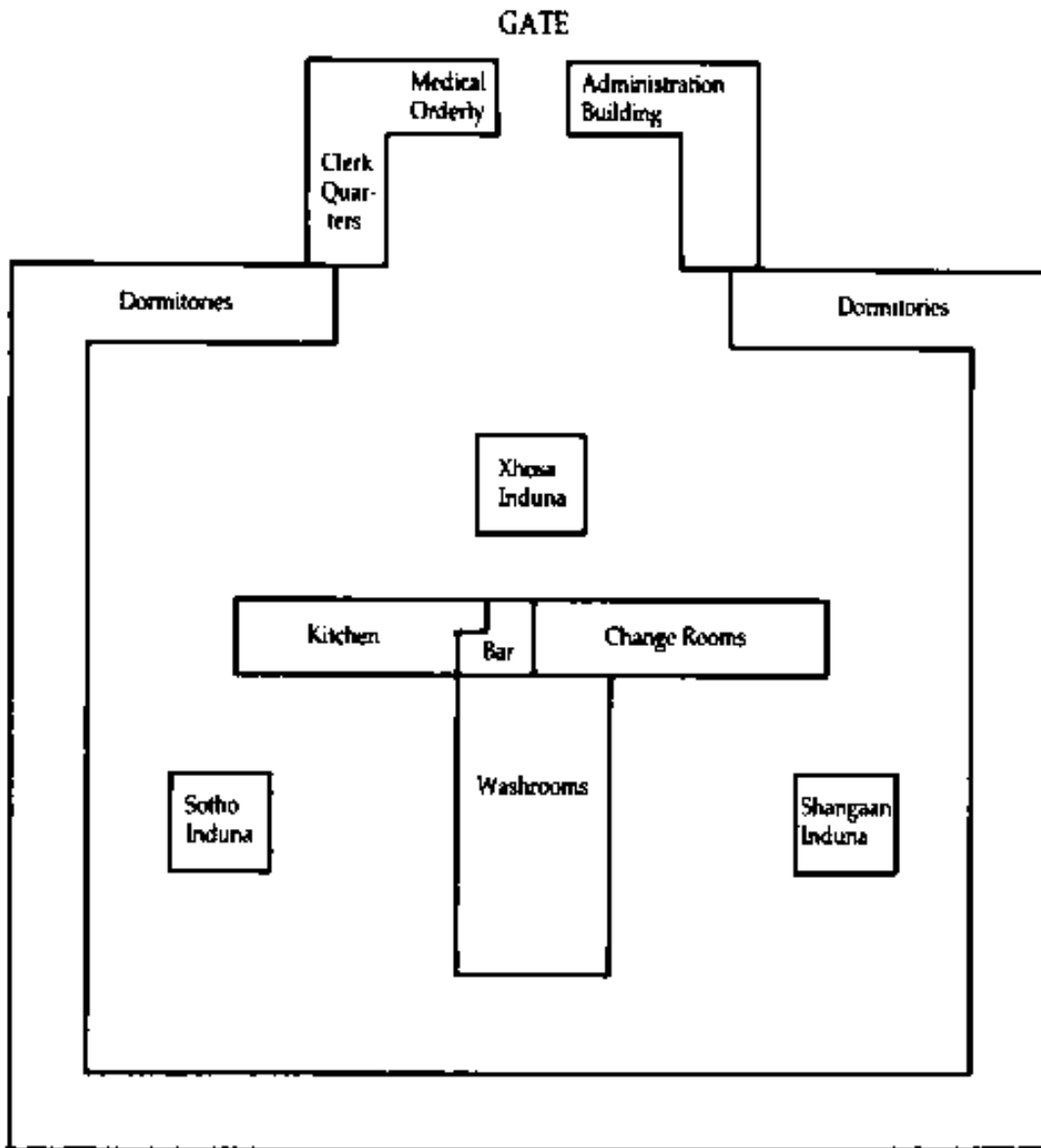


Figure 7: 'Schematic of typical compound layout'. 1950s. (Moodie, 1994: 79).

¹¹⁴ Mamdani, 2017: 69; Reddy, 2015: 100, 200.

Further, colonial violence underpinned the contract system. Penal offences were applied to ‘native’ labourers who breached contract terms. Breach of contract included ‘failure to commence work at an agreed date, unlawful absence from work, desertion and strikes’.¹¹⁵ Additionally, indiscipline and damage to property were considered penal offences and included ‘disobedience, drunkenness, brawling the use of abusive language’.¹¹⁶ Thus, the contract system served a coercive and disciplinary function dependent on absolute rule over Black workers who were constructed as embodied, labouring subjects.

By rationalising domination over the ‘Native’ through a discourse of racial supremacy, ‘Racial consciousness’ is fundamentally shaped by ‘settler consciousness’. I identify settler consciousness as primarily determined by the ongoing need to constitute settler agency and sovereign capacity by eliminating the ‘Native’ Other. The ‘Native’ is both a founding myth of national origin for the Union of South Africa and an essential condition for expropriating land and labour in a racially hierarchical capitalist order.

3.3. The ‘figure of the Native’ as a feature of class consciousness among the white working class

In the Witwatersrand gold-mining industry, British labourers, drawn from the imperial core, and the Afrikaans labourers, drawn from settler colonial society in South Africa, were ascribed a status that defined them as members of the ‘superior race’. Both the British and Afrikaans workers who came to work on the gold mines and participate in the 1922 strike had been drawn from societies whereby racialism existed as a dominant social ideology – while subordinate to the white ruling class – their social, historical, and cultural backgrounds were rooted in the development of ‘Western Civilisation’. As such, the ‘figure of the Native’ as the antithesis to Western Civilisation was embedded into the development of their class consciousness.¹¹⁷

Racialism and settler colonial violence were interwoven into the white working class’s formation. The recruitment of British labourers for the gold-mining industry was determined by the racial logics making up settler colonial society, where ‘skilled labour’ was associated with the inherent capacities of Europeans as civilised subjects. Further, during Reconstruction following the Anglo-Boer war, British workers were recruited to ‘anglicise the Transvaal’ and

¹¹⁵ Simons & Simons, 1969: 24. See also: Paul Stewart. “The Centrality of Labor Time in South African Gold Mining Since 1886.” *Labor History* 57, no. 2 (2016): 170-192, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2016.1161137>.

¹¹⁶ Simons & Simons, 1969: 24.

¹¹⁷ This phrasing borrows heavily from Robinson, 1983: 28.

develop an empire-aligned voter base.¹¹⁸ Afrikaans workers, drawn from the countryside, came from a society steeped in racial hierarchy, where even bywoners enjoyed a level of master-servant relations with Black people inside and outside the workplace.¹¹⁹

It is at this juncture that the insights of whiteness studies and settler colonialism must be combined to create a more complete picture. White mineworkers, fitting into the political category of settler, drew an ‘economic, public and psychological wage’ from whiteness.¹²⁰ It was economic, in the form of the higher wages, available credit, and access to property ownership. It was public, through their rights to vote and benefit from the administrative apparatus established by the domination, destruction, and exploitation of the ‘Native Other’. It was psychic, as capitalist society’s alienation was plastered by exerting power over the ‘Native’. Racial violence towards the ‘Native’ enabled white workers to symbolically augment their fears and anxieties onto the ‘figure of the Native’.¹²¹ Further, this violence was a form of settler colonial violence that constituted the disembodied sovereignty of white subjects in all strata of settler society.¹²²

3.4 Poor Whites, Class Struggle, and the Racial Contract

The distinction between the ‘native’ and settler zone was not as sharp in the Transvaal’s growing slums in the early 20th Century as it was in the Algerian context which Fanon describes. While white workers were granted certain rights and freedoms guaranteed by their racial status, their place within the settler order was shifting, contingent and unstable. As such, the contours of class conflict between white labour and capital would be shaped by the subjecthood of whiteness. This subjecthood was constructed differentially across class lines in ways that were defined by varying relations to the ‘figure of the Native’.

In the making of the white working class, the ideology of ‘poor whiteism’ rationalised their alienation and exploitation. The class subordination of the white working class was justified by a racial ideology ascribing their deficiencies to inherent character traits and proximity to the

¹¹⁸ Lis Lange. *White, Poor and Angry: White Working-Class Families in Johannesburg*. Ashgate, 2003: 11, 26-27, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315190990>.

¹¹⁹ Krikler, 2005: 26-27.

¹²⁰ W. E. B Du Bois. *Black Reconstruction in America: an Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. London: Cass, 1966, 700-701; Roediger, 1999: 12, 137, 150.

¹²¹ Saidiya Hartman. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 21-23; Roediger, 1999: 150; Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto, 2008, 120, 123.

¹²² Reddy, 2015: 83.

‘native and coloured races’. The 1906-8 Transvaal Indigency Commission (TIC) provided the settler state’s intellectual framework on poor whiteism and proposed ‘remedial measures’ for ‘the abatement of the evil’.¹²³ The TIC defined the ‘problem’ of European indigency according to two classes. The first was ‘those who [were] in actual want of the necessaries of life’, categorised according to the various causes of indigency.¹²⁴ ‘Poor whites’ fell under this class and were defined in the following way:

Those who, though able-bodied, are not competent to do skilled or semi-skilled work, and are unable to obtain employment in rough manual labour in competition with the native – the poor whites. The poor whites are the peculiar produce of countries in which there is a large coloured labouring population.¹²⁵

‘Poor whites’ proximity to the ‘native’, and incompetency for ‘civilised’ labour, defines the state’s relation to the ‘native’ as necessarily coercive. Other categories falling under this class were the disabled, ‘victims of industrial conditions’, and those who were ‘unwilling to work, and exist as loafers, vagrants, and members of the semi-criminal class – the lazy and vicious’. The second class were those at ‘risk’ of becoming ‘poor whites’ due to being ‘ignorant’, ‘lazy’ and living at ‘low standards’:

They are to be found in the Transvaal to-day mainly among the country population. They have fallen behind in the march of civilisation, and are, generally speaking, without any real knowledge of farming or of any skilled trade.¹²⁶

It was this ‘class’ of whites who increasingly migrated to the Reef mining towns to escape rural poverty and became ‘poor whites’ when reaching the cities. Poor whites, and those at risk of becoming poor whites, were considered the location of racial degeneracy in white civilisation. Their proximity to the ‘inferior races’ was deemed the source of this degeneracy. The language used in these definitions surrounding the nature, habits and lack of civilisation of poor whites shows how they existed as a group that became targets for racial marking, coercive management, and exploitation by the white ruling class.¹²⁷ Politics of race and respectability

¹²³ National Archives Repository, SAB, BES, volume no. 626 (535), Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1906, 1.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 3

¹²⁵ Ibid, 3-4.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 4.

¹²⁷ Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 84.

inform a white supremacist ideology that seeks to ‘uplift poor whites’, mystify the racial organisation of society and produce anti-black racism.¹²⁸

Imperial (British capital) and national/ settler (Afrikaans) capital used these shifting boundaries to their advantage, discarding some subordinate settlers and celebrating others when it suited them. At the same time, different sections of the white working class took advantage of these factions to leverage their own partial power over the Black working class. The English worker or the Afrikaans worker is only able to get piecemeal reforms from respective factions of capital when such reforms enhance the white power structure as a whole.

Stating that indigency was ‘the product of lack of education or of some weakness of character’ the report argued that the ‘object of relief should also be their economic and moral regeneration’.¹²⁹ The TIC report and later reports recommended the use of coercive measures such as labour colonies and relief works to reform ‘indigent whites’.¹³⁰ With the establishment of the Union, many of these Transvaal concerns became national. By 1920 between 100,000 and 120,000 South Africans across the Union were identified as poor whites.¹³¹ These poor whites were the main agents of change during the 1922 revolt. Their location as white ‘indigents’ shaped the predominant terms in which the struggle unfolded.

White workers ‘indigent status’ at times inflects a subversive subjectivity that challenges the dominant order. However, the ideological force of the ‘racial contract’ would shape the limits and possibilities of the white working class’s political praxis. The racial contract was the implicit agreement between the white polity and the racial state which guaranteed the privileging of white society at the expense of racialised Others.¹³² Mills (1997) developed this concept in relation to the USA, but it is relevant to the manner in which the white minority sought measures to establish white power in South Africa. The 1922 Rand Revolt emerges as a moment where the management of white supremacy as a political system was brought to the forefront of battles within the settler order. One part of the racial contract was the demand for colour bar policies to provide for the benefits of racial status. Demands to protect the racial labour hierarchy were shaped by notions of white workers falling below a civilised standard to

¹²⁸ Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 143-145.

¹²⁹ National Archives Repository, *Transvaal Indigency Commission*, 1906, 5.

¹³⁰ For relief works see: Davies, 1979: 103-106, 112, 154, 158, 161 -162, 224-225. For a critique of the Davies argument see: Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 105-107. For labour colonies see: Neil Roos. “Work Colonies and South African Historiography.” *Social history* 36, no. 1 (2011): 54-76, <https://doi-org/10.1080/03071022.2011.549749>.

¹³¹ Johnstone, 1976: 62.

¹³² Mills, 1997.

the level of the ‘Native’.¹³³ The second part of the racial contract was to sanction violence against the racialised Other. Sakai (1983) refers to this phenomenon as the ‘settler garrison’.¹³⁴ At times, the ‘White Front’, which white workers become a part of sees them as white citizen’s acting as a Deputised Police force.¹³⁵ Within settler society, white citizens of the settler state were given access to the means of violence to act as a citizen police force and maintain domination over the colonised population.

I suggest that the deputization of white civilians to crush rebellious collective agency is a central feature of maintaining a colonial state founded on white power. This becomes a part of the historico-racial schema of white bodies occupying a colonial world.¹³⁶ As a function of whiteness, deputization enables the commitment of legally encoded and socially sanctioned acts of violence against Black people. This shows that the white workers’ class practices – shaped by white supremacy – are not always directed at class-based racial discrimination. The relationship between racial subjects and the colonial state was fundamental to understanding how class struggle unfolded in 1922, as we see below.

Part Two of the minor dissertation demonstrates that the character and orientation of the 1922 strike was shaped by the settler colonial situation. In Chapter 4, I consider the dominant discourse circulating between the Union government, the police force and compound managers during the strike. This discourse revealed that the state relied on constituting racialised differences among the lower orders to manage the strike. The state monitored Black workers throughout the strike as a potential security threat. Rhetoric surrounding this threat informed measures taken to maintain discipline and control in the compounds, with slight amendments to the contract and pass systems. Regarding the white working class, the state defined and distinguished problematic ‘hooligans’ from the ‘civilised’ white community. The stated corrupting influence of ‘hooligans’ was used to justify state violence against white strikers. In Chapter 5, I show the continuities between the settler state’s practices regarding ‘natives’ and the white working class’s practices. The white working class viewed ‘natives’ as a threat in the

¹³³ *The Story of a Crime: Being the Vindication of the Transvaal Strike Legal Defence Committee in Connection with the Great Strike on the Witwatersrand in 1922*. Johannesburg: The Committee, 1924, 6-15.

¹³⁴ J. Sakai. *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat from Mayflower to Modern*. PM Press, 1983, re-issued 2014, <https://site.ebrary.com/id/10905785>

¹³⁵ Hosea Jaffe Mnguni. *Three Hundred Years*. Unity Movement History Series. New Era Fellowship, 1952.

¹³⁶ Fanon & Bhabha, 2008: 84. See also: Sara Ahmed. “A Phenomenology of Whiteness.” *Feminist theory* 8, no. 2 (2007): 149-168, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>; Pierpaolo Ascari. “Bodies, Spaces and Citizenship: The Theoretical Contribution of Frantz Fanon”, *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes* 1, no. 1(2018), 17-32, <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/8686>.

same way as the state and were concerned throughout the strike with confining Black people to the compounds. This chapter deals with the race riots and demonstrates how white civilians took on the social role of a deputised police force amidst rumours that a 'native uprising' was imminent.

My argument shows that white workers' class militancy cannot be neatly separated from their racial consciousness. During the 1922 strike, white workers' outlook and demands were orientated towards consolidating a white, settler political community. In this way, white workers' practices reflected features of the dominant order. Subsequently, the terms of reference used to resist mining companies mirrored the terms laid out by the dominant settler colonial order (chapter 4). Ultimately, these shared practices and terms of reference meant that the challenge to the TCM and the Smuts' government was subsumed by the settler state (chapter 5). To make this final argument it is necessary to first consider how the ruling class managed the 1922 strike in attempts to maintain the dominant settler colonial order.

Part Two:

White Society's Wounds and Plasters

Chapter 4: ‘Genuine Mineworkers’, ‘Hooligans’ and ‘Native Trouble’ – Managing the Lower Orders through Difference

4.1. Introduction

In section 3.4, I argued that, in the Union of South Africa, the ‘elimination of the Native’ was a foundational and ongoing feature of class conflict. In this chapter I unpack how this emerges in the oral evidence given at the MLC. I argue that the colonial state responded to a heightened moment of class conflict, the 1922 strike, in its immediate context by using racial logics to maintain domination over its subject populations for the benefit of the mining industry and the long-term interests of the white polity.

This argument is made by focusing on discourses and practices which circulated among state actors. I focus on the enforcement of state power in two main sections. I begin in section 4.2. by focussing on how state-actors maintained control over the Black population living in Witwatersrand towns through discourse and rubric for action surrounding ‘native trouble’. In section 4.3, I consider how the state suppressed the challenge thrown up by rebellious poor whites through a language and practice which questioned their membership to white civilisation itself. This language enabled the use of extra-economic coercion to crush the strike and force white strikers back to work. The state responses to both groups indicate that the ongoing constitution of racialised identities produces, disciplines and maintains labouring subjects.

4.2. Monitoring ‘Native Trouble’ to Suppress a White mineworkers strike

It is not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is to say with the help of the army and the police force, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil.¹³⁷

In this quote, Fanon suggests an interconnection between colonial discourses and the material dimensions of the Manichean world. The ‘painting of the native’ as a representational practice, acts in conjunction with state violence to exert control over colonised subjects. Similarly, during the Rand Revolt, the state’s fixation on possible ‘native trouble’ and its threat to urban centres was underpinned by an image of the ‘native as a sort of quintessence of evil’.

¹³⁷ Fanon, 1968: 40.

This section considers how the construction of the ‘native’ shaped certain state priorities and practices during the strike. From the early 1920s, local municipal government in Johannesburg took a more deliberate stance on residential segregation, which both emerged from the influence of manufacturing capital’s growing power on local politics as well as greater concern for residential segregation among the white electorate.¹³⁸ The popular discourses which fed into urban segregation across South Africa ascribed ‘social ills’ – such as criminality and disease – to ‘Native presence’ in the growing Witwatersrand slum yards, particularly surrounding Johannesburg.¹³⁹ The colonial imagination in the Witwatersrand was dominated by racial fears of ‘uncontrolled Natives’ in the towns. I explore the impact of these discourses on the Rand strike through three aspects of the migrant labour system as it applied to the gold mines: the contract, pass, and compound systems.

In doing so, I fill a gap where the secondary literature primarily takes for granted that Black workers were secondary actors during this strike. Foregrounded in most revisionist accounts of the Rand Revolt is that the *primary* political issue for the state during and after this strike was crushing the power of organised white labour.¹⁴⁰ This view has proliferated a correlated narrative that aside from the race riots, and policy that followed, the everyday events occurring between January and March did not concern Black residents in the Witwatersrand. In this section, I illustrate the intimate connections between the coercive management of Black labourers during the strike and the ‘subjugation and co-optation of white labour’.¹⁴¹

4.2.1. Enforcing the Native Zone During the Strike

In this section, I outline the construction of ‘native trouble’ and show that it formed a central concern for state actors during the strike. ‘Native trouble’ loosely refers to moments where white authority was challenged, or felt to be challenged, by some action done by ‘natives’. White society at large seeks stability in the settler zone through the perpetual purging of ‘native trouble’. During the strike, settler stability was sought through the spatial enclosure and ‘affective mastery’.

¹³⁸ Susan Parnell. “Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg’s Inner-City Slum-Yards, 1910-1923.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (2003): 631-636, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070306219>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Yudelman, 1983: 33; Krikler, 2005: 43-49.

¹⁴¹ Yudelman, 1983.

The language surrounding ‘native trouble’ defines the expected relationship between the colonial state and subjects defined as ‘Natives’.¹⁴² The relationship was based on state enforcement of two roles expected of ‘natives’: labourer and docile subject. The enforcement of these roles rested on classification, surveillance, and spatial confinement.¹⁴³ On 9 January, the day the strike ballot was voted on, Smuts published a message throughout the Union to ‘native labourers in strike areas’. This message reveals the state’s attempt to constitute ‘Natives’ as ‘docile subjects’:

Remain quietly in your compounds and obey the orders of the Government give you through the Director of Native Labour and compound managers. By so doing you will receive the necessary protection. On the other hand, any disobedience or disorder will be promptly and severely dealt with. I feel sure that this message will find you ready listeners and that your conduct will remain law-abiding and obedient until work is resumed on the mines.¹⁴⁴

Underpinning the above instructions to ‘listen, be quiet, remain obedient’ is the order to obey white authority. The order to obey white authority itself works to constitute ‘Natives’ as ‘docile subjects’ who would ‘remain quiet, obey orders, and remain in compounds’. Forms of ‘trouble’ are reflected in the opposites of these instructions. I interpret these opposites as Black sonics (‘remain quiet’), defiance (‘obey orders’), and occupation of urban space (‘remain in compounds’). Thus, if trouble, was identified, it was because ‘Natives’ were challenging their ‘docile’ status by defying orders of whites, making too much noise, or leaving compounds.

Pritchard, the Director of Native Labour, functioned as the link between mining companies and the Union government. He was an important actor for the state and capital during the 1922 strike. He described his role as ‘keeping the native as much out of the trouble as possible’.¹⁴⁵ Keeping ‘natives out of trouble’ was such a concern because Black mineworkers’ resistance had increased in recent years.

Events such as the 1920 African mineworkers strike weighed heavy on the minds of state actors. For example, Pritchard stated that ‘the leading natives’ had in the past ‘complained

¹⁴² Adam Ashforth. *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990b.

¹⁴³ Reddy, 2000: 135, 162, 163.

¹⁴⁴ Smuts, J. *Message from Prime Minister and Minister of Native Affairs to the native labourers in the strike areas.* (January 1922): National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 312.

¹⁴⁵ S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour for the Union and Native Commissioner, MLC unpubd minutes, 543.

bitterly about the existence of the colour bar'.¹⁴⁶ He stated that changes to the colour bar relied on white public opinion:

They have as you are aware created considerable trouble in the past on one or two occasions, and they have created a certain amount of fear and consternation among the European section of the community here, and I have pointed out to them that that is the way in which they make enemies and not friends, that by listening to and obeying the instructions of the Government they make friends, and if their conduct in the future was to be on the lines as it has been in the past, they would only make enemies and prejudice their case.¹⁴⁷

This 'trouble in the past' makes a connection between keeping Black workers in the compounds and preventing any form of resistance. The word 'trouble' itself acts as a sign-post for the dialectic between colonial subjugation and Black resistance as it surfaces in the archive. 'Trouble' is a subversion of colonial rule by 'the Native' – as such it creates 'fear and consternation among the European section' (settler zone). It is a word used as part of the colonial state's recording of 'the Native's' response to colonial subjugation, and as such we see that 'trouble' necessarily generates its own response from colonial society. By monitoring and recording 'trouble in the past', the colonial state necessarily highlights its own negation - Black resistance. As the colonial state records its attempt to eliminate the *repetition* of 'trouble', it signals the continued agency of the Black working class. Such continued agency itself creates a correlated state of perpetual colonial repression. This is evident in how Pritchard responded to two demonstrations that occurred by Black mineworkers early in the strike:

The natives wanted to leave the compound and go to Johannesburg to make representations to their recruiters, the Native Recruiting Corporation. They were nervous as to what arrangements would be made as regards pay, and on the Knights Central and the West Rand Consolidated they actually made an attempt to leave the compound and go to Johannesburg, but that was stopped and eventually emissaries were sent from Johannesburg to talk the matter over with them and nothing more happened.¹⁴⁸

In a normative regime of law and order, an employee's effort to clarify their employment would be insignificant. Under a 'permanent state of exception' this was trouble that had to be 'stopped' in order to maintain the spatial enclosure of 'natives' (see Figure 8). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to consider Black peoples' responses to the Rand Revolt at

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 544.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

length, it must be noted that Black agency was clearly articulated throughout the strike in these moments of ‘trouble’.

State actors’ language surrounding ‘native trouble’ was used to describe the relationship between Black residents in the city and the colonial state. At the strike’s onset, these actors set out a framework for the practices and structures used to control and subjugate the Black population in the Witwatersrand to ensure that they remained ‘obedient’ throughout the subsequent period. Below, I consider how this discourse shaped the management of pass laws, the compound system, and the contract system in the course of the Rand Revolt. Practices of control and technologies of rule were implemented, not to divide the working class, but to maintain white domination.



Figure 8: *Compounds Gold Mines*, undated. (Pearson Patrick, *Collection of Photographs, Wits Historical Papers, A2638, Film 6 no. 1*).

4.2.1.1. The Contract System and the question of Repatriation

Black mineworkers were employed on 6 to 12-month-long contracts. With families and homes in the reserves and long-term residence in cities being prohibited Black mineworkers would return home at the end of these contracts. This system posed a challenge for mining companies in 1922, as the strike’s onset coincided with the expiry of 65000 contracts held by Black

mineworkers. At the time, there were approximately 177000 of Black workers employed on the gold mines overall.¹⁴⁹ Thus, there was the possibility for a large-scale loss of Black labour.

On 9 January, the TCM issued instructions to mining companies that ‘time-expired natives’ should be given six days’ notice and ‘allowed’ to return to the reserves. Those who wished to remain despite expired contracts could do so, with mining companies responsible for food and housing, subsidised by the state.¹⁵⁰ State subsidies show that the Native Labour Department (NLD) and mining companies worked together to reduce the impact on mining profits and to provide an incentive for experienced Black labourers to remain in the city.¹⁵¹ Mining companies’ fear of labour shortages was compounded by the fact that most expired contracts were held by ‘long-service’ workers, with experience and training on the mines:

The intention was to treat even the time expired natives on the mines, among whom are the most experienced and valuable natives on the mines, as fairly as they possibly could.¹⁵²

This situation was cautiously managed to maintain stability both in the mining industry and settler society. To avoid the substantial loss of labour, state and mining company actors sought mechanisms to keep ‘Natives’ whose contracts had expired in the Witwatersrand region. However, the idea that ‘natives’ might live in the city for an extended period without the socialising routine of daily minework was a point of concern for colonial and mining company officials. To avoid ‘native trouble’, state and mining company actors sought means to reconstitute ‘idle Natives’ as ‘Industrious Natives’ during the strike. In this vein, Pritchard explains that mining officials ‘improvised all kinds of work’ to keep Natives employed.¹⁵³ In the early stages of the strike, most Black workers remained as ‘weekly labourers’ rather than workers with fixed-term contracts.¹⁵⁴

While maintaining a stable labour supply was important, Pritchard explained that he was obliged to facilitate repatriation for those who desired to return to the reserves to avoid ‘native trouble’:

¹⁴⁹ S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour, MLC unpubd minutes, 562.

¹⁵⁰ Pritchard, S.M., *Relief of Distress among natives and coloured people due to Industrial Unrest*. Letter, (4 April 1922), National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 312.

¹⁵¹ S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour, MLC unpubd minutes, 538.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 537,

This class, I am informed, includes some 65,000 natives, many of whom will not agree to remain in enforced idleness without pay and are already clamouring to return home. Their detention here would be illegal, could only be effected by force and would undoubtedly cause trouble and be a menace to the public safety.¹⁵⁵

Fearing ‘trouble’ by ‘idle Natives’ led the NLD to facilitate repatriation. Just under 65 000 Black workers took up this ‘offer’ in the course of the strike. Managing the white mineworkers’ strike was dependent on dealing with the contradictory ‘native question’.¹⁵⁶ ‘Idleness’, ‘menace’ and ‘public safety’ ushered in a subtext about the conditions surrounding the administration of racial segregation and white domination.¹⁵⁷ By postulating and preparing for a future, hypothetical ‘trouble’ these communications surrounding managing employment contracts provided a rubric for action aimed at maintaining ‘natives’ as docile and labouring subjects.

4.2.1.2. ‘Confining them to the property’: Compounds and Pass Laws

Keeping Black workers busy with work was not the main solution to ‘native trouble’. This was sought in the compound and pass systems. Extra controls were placed over Black mineworkers during the mineworkers strike to ensure that white domination was not significantly threatened. Compound managers testimonies revealed that spatial enclosure was combined with an ‘affective mastery’, a wielding of racialised power to exert control over mood, feelings, and attitudes in order to maintain domination over subject populations.¹⁵⁸ The control over ‘native feeling’ was intimately tied into establishing stability in the settler zone during the strike.

Pritchard, the police, compound managers, Magistrates and other state actors emphasised the ‘excellent’, ‘exemplary’ behaviour of the Natives’ throughout the strike.¹⁵⁹ In reality, we see that the Black working class mobilised at certain stages of the strike. State actors and compound managers monitored ‘behaviour’ so closely because they were simultaneously

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 538.

¹⁵⁶ Reddy, 2000: 163.

¹⁵⁷ Parnell, 2003: 631-636.

¹⁵⁸ Stoler, 2009: 67.

¹⁵⁹ Various testimonies, MLC unpubd minutes: Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner, 95; Alexander Smith, Robinson – Randfontein Mine Compound Manager, 623; Henry Ottoway, Geduld Proprietor Mine Compound Manager, 624; Archibald Edmunds, Geldenhuys Deep chief compound engineer, 624; Charles Shaw, Nourse Mines Compound Manager, 626; Richard Judd, Modder Deep Compound Manager, 627; Henry Grigg, New Primrose Acting Manager, 629; Edward Nniland, New Primrose Compound Manager, 635.

nervous about moments where ‘Natives’ were ‘alarmed’, ‘incensed’ or ‘excited’.¹⁶⁰ They endeavoured to prevent these moods from becoming antagonistic activity.

Increased regulation of the Black mine workers’ movement during the Rand strike was achieved by increasing pass law restrictions to keep Black mineworkers in compounds and out of the city. The ‘message to native labourers in strike areas’, published on 9 January, led to compound managers across the Wits region holding meetings with Black workers. In these meetings, they would ‘explain the situation’ before putting measures in place to ensure no native trouble occurred during the strike.¹⁶¹ The measures arose from colonial officials and compound managers concerted efforts to enforce racial control.

Compound managers along the Reef took two measures to limit passes. First, to reduce Black mineworkers’ ability to interact with Black people from other mines and the native locations, they stopped issuing special visiting passes from the beginning of the strike.¹⁶² By doubling down on the fragmentation of the Black workforce, compound managers hoped to undermine the ‘security threat’ of any ‘trouble’ that might occur by pre-emptively cutting off possibilities for collectivity among Black residents in compounds. Second, compound managers introduced ‘special passes to leave mine property’, putting in place stricter controls on how and when Black workers could leave compounds.¹⁶³ Significantly, prior to the strike, the compounds in the Witwatersrand operated according to an open compound system where Black workers could leave the mining premises and go into the town with a special pass. These two amended measures reveal how managing the white mineworkers’ strike was intimately connected to controlling the Black population.

As slight as these measures may seem, they were done amidst the need to establish stability in the settler zone, during a moment of industrial unrest, by exerting ongoing control and surveillance over Black labourers. Implemented in January, two months before rumours of a ‘native uprising’ caught steam, the aim was to produce ‘docile’ subjects subordinated to white authority generally and in the workplace. State actors felt that – either through provocation by

¹⁶⁰ Various testimonies, MLC unpubd minutes: Charles Roberts, Acting Superintendent of Municipal Locations of Johannesburg, 566; Archibald Edmunds, Geldenhuys Deep Chief Compound engineer, 624; Vernon Temple Harrison, Brakpan Mines Acting Manager, 629.

¹⁶¹ Charles Shaw, Nourse Mines Compound Manager, MLC unpubd minutes, 626.

¹⁶² Charles Shaw, Nourse Mines Compound Manager, MLC unpubd minutes, 626; Edward Nniland, New Primrose Compound Manger, MLC unpubd minutes, 635-638; Richard Judd, Modder Deep Compound Manager, MLC unpubd minutes, 627.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

strikers or by their own accord – the ‘natives’ were bound to become ‘restless’, ‘break out of compounds’ and cause ‘trouble’ without constraints on their movement.

As one compound manager described, these adjustments arose to ‘take precautions in regard to confining them to the property’.¹⁶⁴ Controlling Black subjects’ movement enabled the racial management of space and populations in the settler city.¹⁶⁵ The language used in the MLC testimonies reveals how the ‘native trouble’ discourse was configured around the spatial control of ‘natives’ within the compounds. Additionally, compound managers described constant endeavours in the MLC to monitor ‘natives’ and ensure they were ‘quiet’, ‘well behaved’, ‘in the compound’ and obedient.¹⁶⁶ The features described in Smuts’ initial message emerged as a common language among the compound managers who testified.

Using the lens of ‘native trouble’, we can see that the compound managers’ responses to the race riots aimed to control Black workers responses and ensure they remained in compounds. Such activity by state actors reveals moments where the Black working-class subverted the absolute rule of colonial subjugation. For example, on 8 March, the compound manager for the Salisbury and Jubilee Compound, David Swan expressed concern at his loss of control over Black workers in the compound:

The boys there were very excited because they had heard about what had happened in the morning, but I calmed them down. Then the boys all came out of the compound.¹⁶⁷

The morning events referred to are the race riots. Frequently, the infantilising labelling of adult men as boys, paired with possessive language (generally ‘my boys’) recreates an image of obedient ‘natives’ during the strike. Swan testified to ‘turning the natives back into the compound’ and telling ‘the boys to remain quiet’.¹⁶⁸ Later, a group of 200 Black people gathered outside his compound. He told this group of men to ‘come into the compound’, but they refused saying they ‘would be killed there’.¹⁶⁹ While Swan sees the compound as a place

¹⁶⁴ Charles Shaw, Nourse Mines Compound Manager, MLC unpubd minutes, 626.

¹⁶⁵ Denis Byrne. “The Intimate, Urbanizing Frontier: native camps and settler colonialism’s violent array of spaces around early Melbourne.” In Tracey Banivanua-Mar & Penelope Edmonds, *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity Basingstoke*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 142.

¹⁶⁶ Various testimonies, Compound Managers, unpubd minutes MLC, 492, 490, 481, 486, 624.

¹⁶⁷ David Swan, Salisbury and Jubilee Municipal Compound Manager, unpubd minutes, 490.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 491. See also: Archibald Edmunds, Geldenhuis Deep Chief Compound Engineer, 624; Alfred Paulsen, Vrededorp Compound Manager, 590.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 492. For testimonies of African witnesses on Salisbury and Jubilee compound attacks: “Charlie Mapisa”, Rickshaw Puller and resident in Salisbury and Jubilee compound, 498; “Phillip”, Compound Policeman at Salisbury and Jubilee Compound, 499.

to protect Black men, they saw it as a place where they were marked, hemmed in and vulnerable to attack.

On 7 March, a compound police officer working on the Power Station Compound in Doornfontein alerted the compound manager that a commando of about 250 men was approaching stating ‘boss, we are being killed’.¹⁷⁰ The compound manager intervened to ensure there was no response among the 1150 Black workers in his compound:

...on looking into the compound I saw the boys making for the gate, armed with sticks and bars of iron and anything. These were my boys, making for outside. So I told the boys to stand fast and I would go up and speak to these people outside.¹⁷¹

The compound manager’s appeal to strikers was that ‘the boys were doing no harm and were locked up in the compound’ and the strikers’ actions were ‘causing a lot of trouble and danger’. He reassured the commando leader that he ‘would take full responsibility for the boys and would control them’.¹⁷² A word is needed on the size of the groups of people mentioned. The commando was 250 strong, while the Black workers in this compound numbered up to 1150. It must be remembered that the white settler population in South Africa established settler colonial rule as a small minority, numerically speaking, over the Black majority. The fears of ‘natives breaking out’ were both exaggerated and a real reflection of the high levels of violence and coercion required to maintain the racial regime as it existed. The spectacle nature of the commandos’ racial violence should not overshadow that Swan was first and foremost concerned with ‘locking up’ ‘natives’ and preventing ‘*native*’ trouble and danger.

When the compound managers tasks were overwhelmed, the police and white civilians stepped in and relied on the same practices and discourses embedded in the lens of ‘native trouble’. A storekeeper living near the Salisbury and Jubilee Compound stated that he ‘helped the police drive these natives back’ after ‘noticing natives out of the compound’ later that evening.¹⁷³ When racial attacks occurred at New Primrose, near Germiston, a striker’s commando, who ‘had their women and children behind’ fired on ‘natives’ outside the compound and chased them into the compounds. At the same time, a police captain, Gerard Kruger confined New Primrose residents to the compound all the same while claiming to protect them:

¹⁷⁰ Frank Marshall, Compound Manager Power Station Compound, MLC unpubd minutes, 499.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid, 500

¹⁷³ Sidney Emanuel, Storekeeper, MLC unpubd minutes, 496.

I placed a guard in charge of the compound immediately on my arrival to prevent the natives from breaking away and alarming the neighbouring compounds.¹⁷⁴

The actions of the Kruger and the Doornfontein compound manager reveal that they were more concerned with Black mineworkers' responses than protecting them from the race riots in the compounds. The fragmentation of the total Black urban population was achieved by restricting their ability to 'break away' and connect with neighbouring compounds. The compound was used to avoid the development of any antagonistic, collective action and discontent at the generalised conditions of racial subordination, and to enable continuing legitimacy of white domination. For example, the detective head constable stationed at Fordsburg was called out on a report by a Detective Sergeant on either 8 or 9 March that 'natives' were breaking out on Crown Mines:

...My officer sent me out, and told me about 10,000 natives had broken out from the Crown Mines, and they were going towards Vrededorp... I saw the chief compound manager, and he told me that he had got the natives back who had broken out... They had not done any mischief. They got them back before they got into Mayfair. The natives were all quiet when I got there, and I saw that there would not be AN attack.¹⁷⁵

Mayfair is a suburb to the north of Crown Mines that sat between Fordsburg and the Western Native Township. The features of managing 'native trouble' arose in the policeman's testimony, where he focussed on keeping 'natives' 'quiet', stopping them from leaving the compound and avoiding 'mischief'. Additionally, we see the connections between different agents of the white power structure (from a detective to the compound managers to the police) that were different features of the regime of violence that subjugated the Black population in the settler colonial situation.

Redefining the compound as a safe haven mystifies the act of 'confining natives to mine property' in the strike as benign, common-sense, practical responses by white civilians and state actors.¹⁷⁶ As we see with the 'native trouble' discourse, the maintenance of labourers as docile subjects confined to the workplace underpinned confinement before and during the race riots. Pritchard himself described a level of acquiescence to white authority from the Black population on the Rand. Black residents living in the compounds were frequently praised for

¹⁷⁴ Gerard Kruger, Police Captain, MLC unpubd minutes, 1652.

¹⁷⁵ James Milne, Detective Head Constable of the C.I.D., MLC unpubd minutes, 526.

¹⁷⁶ Mills, 1997: 113; Reddy, 2000; Ashforth, 1990b.

their excellent behaviour. Indeed, the final MLC report stated that ‘only the plucky conduct of the officials and the docility of the natives saved the situation from becoming even more grave’.¹⁷⁷ However, the examples above show that ‘the Native’ was not at all the docile subject that colonial officials had hoped, whether it was 10,000 Black workers breaking out of Crown Mines; or 1150 Black workers making their way outside the Doornfontein compound with sticks and iron bars; or 250 Black people gathering in the streets. The real audience for this commission was the white public and the goal in these descriptions was to show that white supremacy was under no threat throughout the strike. Alternatively, Black workers’ efforts to organise outside of compounds to protect themselves reveal that Black actors held a subversive counter-perspective which was articulated where Black subjects characterised the compound as a place they would be ‘hemmed in’ and vulnerable to attack.¹⁷⁸

4.2.2 ‘Should Similar Trouble Arise in the Future’: A Permanent State of Trouble

The race management practices employed by the state must be understood as in dynamic interaction with the realities which occur during class struggle. Above, I have shown that state actors undertook conscious efforts to enclose Black mineworkers in compounds to avoid ‘native trouble’. These experiences saw these same actors prepare for future situations. The ongoing violence which produced the enclosure of ‘natives’ created the conditions for the continued expropriation of labour from the ‘native’ as ‘class Other’ during and after the 1922 strike.

Immediately after the strike, the Native Recruiting Company and mining companies lobbied for two additional clauses to be inserted into Black workers’ contracts. The first clause stated that in the case where an employer cannot provide work for ‘Natives’, ‘such Natives will receive half pay’. The second clause stated that ‘any native engaged hereby may be to any class of work underground or surface irrespective of the class of work he was engaged for’ prior.¹⁷⁹ These two clauses aimed to avoid losses in cases of work stoppages and provide greater control to mining companies in the division of labour, dealing with the issues discussed in section 4.2.1.1. On 3 February 1923, a circular minute was sent to all Magistrates communicating the additional clauses to ‘Native’ contracts to be attached to the schedule of wages.

¹⁷⁷ MLC Report, 68.

¹⁷⁸ Fanon, 1968: 51.

¹⁷⁹ Pritchard, S.M. *Schedule of Wages*. Circular Minute, (3 February 1923), National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 311.

State officials sought to continue to control Black workers as they had done in the strike. A document written by the Inspector of the Native Affairs Department, Walker, to the Director of Native Labour titled “Behaviour of Native Labourers During Strike Period” assessed the measures taken regarding ‘Native trouble’ and set out 5 issues (Control, Food Supply, Liquor, Employment, and Compound Managers) for compound managers to consider ‘should similar trouble arise in the future’.¹⁸⁰ He expressed anxiety for any failure to prepare for situations that might have caused ‘natives’ to ‘get out of hand and cause considerable damage to life and property’.¹⁸¹ ‘Life’ referring to white people on the Rand, and the protection of ‘private property’ being the essential conditions for racial capitalism. Walker suggested that there should only be one entrance to the compounds to ensure ‘the better protection and control of natives’. In the case of liquor, the inspector argued that it was of ‘inestimable value to the Community’ to close liquor stores. He mentioned that he ‘expected trouble from the old Jubilee and Salisbury Compound’ which he stated had ‘an unenviable name in respect of illicit native liquors’. Further, that ‘the capacity of the mines to find employment for all their Natives’ was ‘one of the greatest factors which has been instrumental in keeping the Native Labourers so well behaved’. He warned against the strike clauses mentioned above.

The inspector stated that ‘the Public owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Compound Managers for maintaining such excellent relations between themselves and the Natives’. Held up as exemplary deputised whites, the letter stated that ‘they were able to keep their own houses in order and relieve the State from any anxiety of this nature’.¹⁸²

The gist of this letter was to secure the state’s successful control of ‘natives’ during the strike in conditions which benefitted mining companies control over the labour process. It reveals colonial officials deliberate, manufactured and conscious effort to keep ‘natives...out of the strike’.¹⁸³ The extent to which Black workers might be provoked or encouraged to ‘break out of compounds’, or ‘rise’ arose in discussion of white striker’s activities. In this vein, to maintain subjugation over the Black population, it was considered essential to suppress the white mineworker’s strike. A letter from Sergeant Trigger to the Deputy Commission of the South

¹⁸⁰ Walker, W. *Behaviour of Native Labourers During Strike Period*. Letter, (18 March 1922), National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 312.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

African Police, on 23 August, three months after the suppression of the Rand Revolt, stated as follows:

There is some loose talk of a general strike of mine natives throughout the Reef, but I do not consider this is likely to come to pass owing to the lack of efficient leaders; moreover, they are greatly disturbed at past events, and the action being taken in the Courts at the present time regarding Europeans who were concerned in the recent industrial unrest must have a marked effect.¹⁸⁴

State violence committed against the white working class was seen as successful in its role in allaying fears of future ‘native unrest’. Ultimately, the connection between the 1922 strike, and the subjugation of the Black workforce was intimately connected to the discourses around the ‘Native’.

The discourse surrounding the ‘behaviour’ of ‘natives’, created links between different institutions of the colonial society such as the compound, the NLD, the Magistrates overseeing the MLC and the Prime Minister’s office. These state institutions were the structures of settler colonial society that produced and reproduced the dominant over the dominated.¹⁸⁵ The ‘native behaviour’ discourses within official circles shaped the narratives of legitimation and practices of domination used by the colonial state to suppress white labour resistance.

4.3. The Hooligan Element: Locating and Disciplining Rebellious Whites

In the MLC, agents of the colonial state repeatedly othered sections of the white working class through reference to a ‘hooligan’ or ‘criminal’ element amongst the strikers. Below, I outline how the ‘hooligan element’ was defined in testimonies at the MLC. I argue this characterisation justified the generalised criminalisation of poor whites and poor white neighbourhoods. In this section, the discourse around the Rand Revolt shows that the shifting boundaries of whiteness are central to securing a racial order.

The hooligan element emerges from the ‘poor whiteism’ ideology which emerged following the Anglo-Boer War as mentioned in chapter 1. The political, moral, and social discourses which had developed surrounding this class in the settler order informed how the state actors described the 1922 strike.

¹⁸⁴ Trigger, A.E. *Native Unrest*. Letter, (23 August 1922), National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 312.

¹⁸⁵ Reddy, 2000: 4.

4.3.1. Constructing Racial Distinctions Between Hooligans and Genuine Mineworkers

In this section, I unpack the main features of the hooligan element. I do this as part of a discussion about the social composition of the strike movement. The ‘hooligan element’ was a loose categorisation including those working-class whites who committed transgressions against white respectability and the propertied order. As whiteness acts to confer rights, freedoms and privileges to the dominant racial group, the state had to question the whiteness of rebellious strikers to separate them from the dominant community. I identify four main features that were used to characterise ‘hooligans’. These were criminality, violence, unemployment, and indecency. Underpinning these characterisations was a racial marking of the white urban poor as undesirables and a threat to the propertied order. Moreover, the presence of the ‘hooligan element’ in the archive indicates that there was not a monolithic white working class that acted according to a universal program.

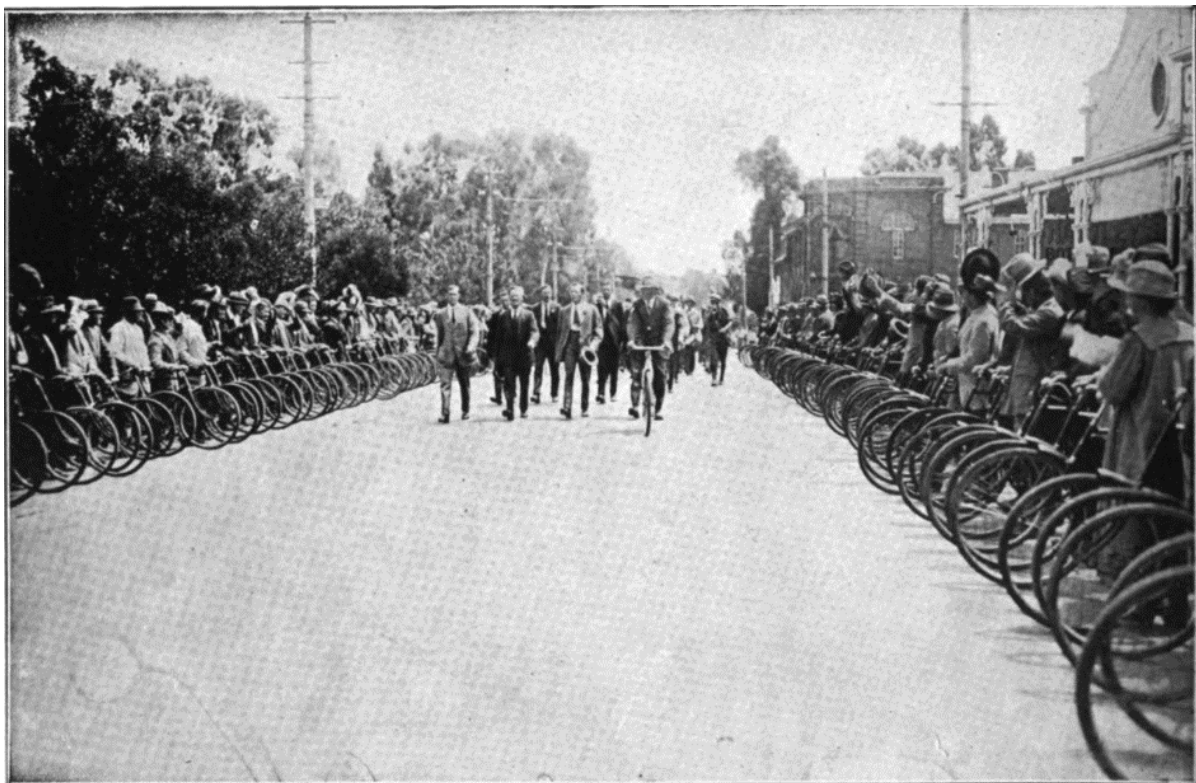


Figure 9: Boksburg, February, 1922. A cycle parade lead by the Brakpan Commando. (The Star, 1922: 66).

The identification of a hooligan element had two functions for state actors. First, it provided a rubric to define and classify the social composition of the strike movement. Second, it identified those who would be met with coercive state measures within white society. As

descriptions pertained to the white working class, a certain type of respectable white labourer was considered a ‘law abiding citizen’.¹⁸⁶ Alternatively, the unemployed and ‘criminally inclined’ were identified as the base of ‘the mob’ who threatened the regime of law and order. The commando system was identified as central to this problematic (see Figure 9).

A police sub-inspector outlining the changing composition of the commandos made this distinction:

When the commandos started in the beginning, it appeared that they were composed of genuine mine workers. The composition of the commandos to my mind changed as time went on. The so-called Irish commando appeared to be formed from the criminal classes. And I think a number of genuine workers gradually dropped out of it when they saw the trend which events were taking, and the genuine worker was replaced by the criminal classes.¹⁸⁷

Police testimonies regularly identified the ‘commandos’ with the violent mob and wave of lawlessness. In the quote above, the ‘genuine mineworkers’ are suggested to operate according to a law-abiding moral code that distinguishes them from the ‘criminal classes’. The Irish Commando itself included returned soldiers and was headed by women.¹⁸⁸ Another police sub-inspector who testified at the commission described men amongst the strikers as ‘belonging to the criminal classes’ before questioning their employment:¹⁸⁹

A good many of them appeared to be men who did very little work, but who were men of the hooligan type...¹⁹⁰

If they were not ‘genuine mineworkers’, then it was implied that they were unemployed. In this way, the figure of the ‘lumpen’ as a dangerous element in society was implied in these descriptions. Discourses surrounding the ‘ignorant’, ‘lazy’, ‘indigent’ class of unemployed whites were ushered in through these terms of reference.¹⁹¹ Part of these discourses were standards and politics of white respectability.¹⁹² To classify certain men using their appearance to be of the ‘hooligan type’ was to other these men through reference to certain standards of white respectability and class status. In this quote, and the one above, we see ‘labour’ and

¹⁸⁶ MLC Report, 13.

¹⁸⁷ Frederick MacDonnell, Police Sub – inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 109.

¹⁸⁸ Walker & Weinbren, 1961:121.

¹⁸⁹ Walter Long, Police Sub-Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 137.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Lis Lange, “The Ideological Construction of the Poor White Problem, 1890-1922.” In Lange, 2003:133.

¹⁹² Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 51.

‘criminality’ were two central methods of defining respectability and belonging to the political community.¹⁹³

The final report added a Judicial authority to these assessments of striker’s composition. When explaining the ‘revolutionary’ movement from 10 March, the report identifies ‘poor whites’ from rural areas as a destructive force to industrial society:

Few of them know anything of the history and objects of sane Trades Unionism.¹⁹⁴

Remember that the TIC Report identified this group as falling behind in the march of civilisation. Being poor Afrikaners from country districts, the commission saw their behaviours, attitudes, and mindset as out of sync with the modern mould of a civilised labourer. Further, their morals were distorted by their backgrounds of rural poverty:

With a change in occupation, however, came many other changes. The temptations for extravagance offered by a large city, the arduous natures of the work and the consequent desired for excitement and relaxation, led to a complete alteration of habits. It is stated that few of these miners saved money.¹⁹⁵

The MLC report synthesised evidence with the dominant ideas gathered in official circles about the ‘immoral habits’ developed among poor Afrikaners in the city to identify the causes of the revolutionary movement.

A significant number of these men were ex-soldiers who had returned from World War 1 to a situation where their jobs were no longer available, and the government was apathetic towards them. For example, Ritchard Godley, police deputy commissioner, distinguished between those men who had given service to the country and the hooligans:

Quite a number of the men in these commandoes had seen active service, but a lot severed their connection afterwards when they found they were drifting. A large proportion consisted of absolute hooligans. I made representations to the Strike leaders several times in regard to these commandos.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ As a broader discourse, see how a moderate trade unionist uses the same narrative in: Joseph MacDowell, AE Member, MLC unpubd minutes, 727.

¹⁹⁴ MLC Report, 17.

¹⁹⁵ MLC Report, 17.

¹⁹⁶ Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 99-100.

Godley suggested a distinction between ‘absolute hooligans’ and ‘those who had seen active service’ as military veterans, who he assumed would not behave as ‘criminals’. However, only anecdotal evidence was given that ex-soldiers left the commandos in significant numbers. Police perspectives reveal how agents of state violence whose duty it was to protect the propertied order understood ‘hooligans’ and ‘criminality’ during the strike. This framework for the hooligan element was gendered. Labour, military service and lawfulness combined into a conception of an idealised masculine subject. To be figures who ‘never work’, ‘part of the criminal classes’ and have no military experience was to fall short of contemporary masculine notions of whiteness.¹⁹⁷

Similarly, women who took part in the strike were othered for failing to embody idealised white femininities.¹⁹⁸ In one police inspectors report, women who took part in the strike were described as ‘abusive’, ‘vulgar’, and ‘a very low class of women’.¹⁹⁹ For example, Colonel Lieutenant Godley claimed his officers displayed excellent behaviour in the face of this ‘low class of women’:

They were called every name under the sun. The women used to spit on them, and they were insulted and abused in every way, and I have seen it myself, and many officers can give evidence of what actually occurred.²⁰⁰

These ‘abusive’ women during the Rand Revolt partook in a rejection of the dominant ‘ideology of domesticity’ for Christian women.²⁰¹ Women who took part in the strike, acting as anti-scabbing units and forming commandos, challenged their confinement to the domestic sphere as white women. These actions were weaponised by the state, to show the dangers of

¹⁹⁷ Lake & Reynolds: 2008: 26.

¹⁹⁸ Deborah Gaitskell. “Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39.” *Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 241-256, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700021964>; See also: Willoughby-Herard, 2015:51; Ann Stoler. “Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures.” *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 634-660, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1989.16.4.02a00030>; Brink, 1987; Marijke Du Toit. “The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 155-176, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305707032000060485>; Lisa Chilton. “A New Class of Women for the Colonies: The Imperial Colonist and the Construction of Empire.” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 36-56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530310001705596>.

¹⁹⁹ Frederick Lloyd, Johannesburg District Commandant, MLC unpubd minutes, 437.

²⁰⁰ Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 103.

²⁰¹ Gaitskell, 1983.

racial degeneration in producing a ‘low class of women’ who fail to perform white femininities.²⁰²

State actors defined a set of caricatures during the MLC, these were: the criminal lumpen, the vulgar woman, the unlawful mob and the Bolshevik Russian Jew.²⁰³ Behind these caricatures were various groupings of poor whites who, for a momentary period, turned the ideology of poor whiteism on its head as it applied to their own lives. The ‘vulgar woman’ spat at, insulted and abused police – they constituted themselves outside the straitjacket presented by the ideology of a harmonious white civil society. The unlawful mob divested from ‘law and order’ and invested instead in their capacity for working-class self-organisation. The rise of ‘the hooligan element’ saw strikers turn towards a rebellious subjecthood whereby sections of the urban white poor rejected the dictates of white bourgeois law and morality. It was not that the composition of commandos actually changed as the police claimed. It was rather that there was a shifting consciousness among the white poor.

By defining these groupings as outsiders to civil society, the colonial state was able to criminalise and intervene in this shifting consciousness as a representation of a degenerating whiteness.²⁰⁴ The ‘hooligan element’, tied to poor whites, sees white supremacy transform itself into a vulnerable category, one which was at risk of degeneration.²⁰⁵ To signal this degeneration, state actors discussed the hooligan element in a way that racially marked poor whites. This was made explicit in the testimony of police sub-inspector Frederick Macdonnell:

On the 7th when the general strike was declared, bands of hooligans who did not appear to be mine workers at all, - a lot were of mixed blood, or at any rate not white – went round intimidating shopkeepers and others forced them to close up their places.²⁰⁶

Significant here is that the criminalisation of working-class resistance (closing business places) is articulated through assigning an impure racial status onto strikers. The sub-inspector makes these claims upon sight, they ‘appeared’ a certain way. A visual schema, used to racially classify individuals through reference to blood, makes up a somatic racial marking of

²⁰² Timothy Keegan. “Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa, ca.1912.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 361, 460, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430120074545>.

²⁰³ For a testimony raising complaints of antisemitic public narratives surrounding the strike: Emil Sacks, university student and Russian immigrant, MLC unpubd minutes, 704-708.

²⁰⁴ Singh, 2014: 1095.

²⁰⁵ Willoughby-Herard, 2015: 51.

²⁰⁶ Frederick MacDonnell, Police Sub-Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 109.

‘hooligans’. Macdonell draws on and contributes to the ‘colonial habitus’ which informs a mode of perception among white bourgeois society in the Transvaal.²⁰⁷ In this way, reference to hooligans identifies the white poor as subjects of violence through a ‘discourse of radical violence in which the physical body serves as a key signifier’.²⁰⁸ Noting the hooligans ‘coloured blood’ he questions their nationality, stating they were ‘not the real type of Afrikaner’ as they were a ‘Hybrid class’.²⁰⁹

And so, this sub-inspector, relying on essentialist notions of race and criminality, denied the ‘hooligan elements’ claims to settler polity.²¹⁰ The Othered construction of strikers are explicit in this testimony but are the subtext to the repeated discussion of the ‘hooligan element’ in the commission.

The physical space occupied by subjects in the city were used to identify them with undesirable behaviours. Ex bywoners who migrated to the city settled in particular areas. Patterns of poverty and unemployment in these areas saw them defined in various commissions as carrying a corrupting influence on those who lived there. The location of racialised subjects was used to inform ideas about strikers’ racial status:

When I spoke of some of the commandoes consisting of Hybrids, I meant men with coloured blood in their veins. There is a coloured population in Fordsburg apart from those men. There is a recognised coloured population who live in what is known as the dip between the rise of Fordsburg and Ferreirastown.²¹¹

The scientific ideology of race ushered in by talking of men having ‘coloured blood in their veins’ is reinforced by a logic of the shared neighbourhoods between poor whites and coloured people in Fordsburg and Ferreirastown (see Figure 2). Major Trigger made a similar remark about the relationship between the nature of strikers and their spatial environment:

In the little villages the commandos consisted mainly of strikers, but in places like Fordsburg, Benoni, and Boksburg of course the undesirable element was attracted.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Pere Ayling. “Frantz Fanon: Whiteness, Colonialism and the Colonial Habitus.” In: *Distinction, Exclusivity and Whiteness*. Springer, Singapore, 2019, https://doi-org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/10.1007/978-981-13-5781-7_3.

²⁰⁸ Reddy, 2000: 69.

²⁰⁹ Frederick MacDonnell, Police Sub-Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 109-111.

²¹⁰ Saul Dubow. *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36* Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with St. Antony’s College, Oxford, 1989, 7.

²¹¹ Frederick MacDonnell, Police Sub-Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 119.

²¹² A.E. Trigger, Divisional CI Officer Transvaal and Police Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 184.

Fordsburg, Benoni and Boksburg were areas that had bigger slum populations, higher levels of poverty and unemployment and, in the case of Fordsburg, more racial integration. Trigger relies on a common-sense understanding among the commissioners when he asserts that ‘of course the undesirable element’ was a significant force in these areas.

These gendered and racial ideologies surrounding respectability, class and status do more than demonise ‘poor whites’ during the MLC. They underly the relationship between the colonial state and racialised subjects, ultimately characterising the narration of class struggle according to ruling class hegemony.²¹³ Whether implicit or explicit, the ‘figure of the Native’ was ever-present in the terrains of conflict between white workers and the white ruling class.

4.3.2. Racial Marking and the Rationalisation of State Violence

Respectability, morality, and criminality converged to define strikers as outsiders to civil society and the white working class as enemies to the propertied order. This typology was used in the MLC testimonies and final report to justify episodes of state-sponsored violence against the white working class in general. In this way, the ‘hooligan element’ and white respectability reveal the *temporary* necropolitical urge of the state towards poor whites as a racialised group located on the shifting margins of white society.²¹⁴

The police offensive in February, described in the introduction, achieved little to force the strikers back to work. A few days after the general strike was declared and race riots unfolded on 7 March, Martial Law was implemented on 10 March as the state sought use violent means to end the strike. Prior to Martial Law, the legal framework for suppressing white workers’ strike activity was drawn from the Riotous Assemblies Act 27 of 1914, including how it had been applied in *Rex vs Herschel*. This framework outlawed picketing on employer’s properties and efforts to prevent scabbing.²¹⁵

However, the existing laws were not completely effective repressive measures as certain protections for white citizens to gather in public remained. The Johannesburg District Commandant explained:

²¹³ Singh, 2014: 1092

²¹⁴ Willoughby-Herard, 2015:85.

²¹⁵ *Rex v Herschel* 1920 AD 575.

Under the common law I could not confine people to their houses or keep the streets clear, and you could not prohibit meetings. It was important that the streets should have been kept clear.²¹⁶

Confinement, denial of access to public space, and outlawing meetings relied on *coercive* state measures not broadly available to treat white subjects at scale. In contrast, my argument in section 4.2 shows that confinement, keeping the streets clear, prohibiting meetings were a permanent and daily feature in the lives of ‘Native subjects’, striking or not striking. It was a quotidian violence that established what author’s such as Reddy (2015) refer to as a ‘permanent state of exception’, a form of domination without hegemony.²¹⁷ In contrast, from 10 March *temporary* exceptions to the prevailing legal regime in the settler zone would be sporadically applied to rebellious poor whites, as had been done in the 1913 and 1914 strikes.²¹⁸ Lt. Godley, who tried to stop the commando movement, explains the legal limitations placed on the state’s spatial management of white strikers:

We could not deal with it because it was not a particular meeting held at a particular place. They had various headquarters in various areas, generally the Strike Committees headquarters.²¹⁹

Striker protections, afforded to them by their inclusion into the settler zone of law and order, had to be removed to suppress their movement. In this light, the Martial Law regulations aimed to enable coercive control. During Martial Law, the white working-class suburb emerged as a *temporary* ‘space of exception’ existing alongside normative conceptions of law and order, where discretionary violence was enacted to manage social crises.²²⁰

Importantly, meetings and gatherings (of more than six people) were prohibited from taking place in ‘any street, square, or in any open space’.²²¹ Picketing and the possession of arms, ammunition, and explosives, were prohibited. Other offences included the ‘publication of matter likely to create ill-feeling’.²²² Those found in specific public places who ‘may be

²¹⁶ Frederick Lloyd, Johannesburg District Commandant, MLC unpubd minutes, 437.

²¹⁷ Reddy, 2015: 68, 87-101.

²¹⁸ Walker & Weinbren, 1961: 91-92.

²¹⁹ Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 100.

²²⁰ Singh, 2014: 1095.

²²¹ Smuts, J. *Government Notice No. 44 of 1914: Martial Law Regulations*, (1922), in Walker & Weinbren, 1961, Appendix B: 341-346.

²²² *Ibid.*

deemed suspicious' could be arrested, and failure to comply, could result in being shot by government forces 'without further warning'.²²³

In practice, extra-economic coercion took place by identifying poor white spaces and placing 'police barracks' over these spaces. State violence aimed to force strikers to return to work and to crush their resistance. A member of the Langlaagte provincial council explained that when Benoni was bombed there was no warning and 'if they intended to bomb the trades hall, they were very bad bombers. They bombed all round it'.²²⁴ In this instance, three women and three children out shopping were killed on the street.²²⁵

To maintain public support following these events, Smuts embarked upon a campaign to paint the armed movement from the 10th as a revolution and a Bolshevik conspiracy by Russian Jews.²²⁶ The MLC went to lengths to gather evidence that force was necessary to suppress disorders because the hooligan element was upending law and order on the Rand. The Commissioners concluded that Martial Law and state violence were justified in all cases because of the dire threat to the established order posed by the outbreak of unlawful violence among strikers.

The commission dismissed the state violence meted out by criminalising the strikers. The final report only mentions three dubious instances of police brutality that were in 'excess' of what was required under the circumstances.²²⁷ As a judicial commission, the report absolved the state of accountability for the following: the shootings at the Boksburg Gaol by Captain Fulford; the execution of 5 men in a field; the bombing of neighbourhoods; hundreds of injuries and lives lost to police and military violence. Time and again, the caricature of the hooligan element and the dismissal of testimonies made by the working class were used to justify state violence.

The hooligan element stood in for the generalised criminalisation of the white working class, occurring where whole areas were defined by their relation to hooligans:

Large numbers of civilians were apprehended having been found in areas recently occupied by the Revolutionaries... It was often impossible to discriminate between the peaceful citizen and

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ George Hills, Member of Provincial Council, MLC unpubd 1672.

²²⁵ Walker & Weinbren, 1961: 122.

²²⁶ Yudelman, 1983: 182-186; Bunting & Andrews, 1922: 31-34.

²²⁷ MLC Report, 35.

the Revolutionary in hiding, until an examination into the actions and behaviour of the prisoner had been made.²²⁸

In Johannesburg in particular, the ‘revolutionary in hiding’ was deemed so by the fact of living in the ‘racially integrated’ suburbs to the West of the city centre. On 10 March, one of the first operations undertaken by military forces stationed in the central Johannesburg areas was door to door military raids in Brixton, Sophiatown and Vrededorp (see Figure 2).²²⁹ The stability of the settler zone required disciplining the space of the ‘criminal’ poor white political subjects as a means to ‘criminalise the counterviolence of dominated people’.²³⁰ The discourse and practice surrounding space, law and criminality showed how state repression was deeply connected to the management of racialised subjects within the overall political order.

During the 1922 strike and after, the state defined the ‘hooligan element’ to apply racialised instruments of rule to poor whites and secure ‘law and order’. The instruments of rule used against poor whites in the Rand Revolt drew their ideological force from racialism. The poor white sectors of the Witwatersrand urban regions were whites who by their ‘vulnerable’ and ‘contingent’ status were deemed acceptable victims of state violence, capitalist alienation and conditions of poverty in as much as such conditions do not undermine the white supremacist system. Ultimately, the discursive racial marking of the white poor was tied into the legal and political repression of any rebellious activity which threatened the dominant order’s stability. In the next chapter, I consider how racialism impacted white workers’ decisions and practices during the strike.

²²⁸ MLC Report, 35.

²²⁹ Edward Thackeray, District Staff Officer No. 8 Military District, MLC unpubd minutes, 760.

²³⁰ Singh, 2014: 1093.

Chapter 5: Standing Guard – Deputised Whiteness and the Reification of the Settler State

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that during the 1922 strike, white workers' attitudes, practices, and discourses mirrored those of the colonial state outlined in Chapter 4. I employ the concepts of deputised whiteness, racial solidarity, and the racial contract to show how their struggle was reshaped by the articulation of their identities within the dominant terms of the settler colonial order. This chapter is split up into three sections. In section 5.2, I demonstrate that white workers articulated their struggle through whiteness. White workers approached the state's boundary-making by attempting to include themselves in the settler side of the dividing boundary line. In section 5.3, I argue that the racial fears surrounding 'native trouble' shaped white workers' attitudes and practices in the months *prior* to the race riots. In section 5.4, I argue that the race riots were an attempt by white civilians, majority working-class, to try to enclose 'Natives' in the same way as the colonial state.

The consequences of this mirroring were that the white working class were unable to demystify the settler colonial state. The rebellious subjectivity adopted in section 4.3.2, needed to be pushed to its final conclusion if white workers were to overcome the white ruling class: race suicide.²³¹ As it relates to the white working class, the abolition of whiteness is a necessary feature in the struggle against capitalism, as argued by Noel Ignatiev:

White people must commit suicide as whites in order to come alive as workers, or youth, or women, or whatever other identity can induce them to change from the miserable, petulant, subordinated creatures they now are into freely associated, fully developed human subjects.²³²

Race suicide depends on a rejection of the dominant terms of order and the racial ideology which sees collective subjects align themselves with the *idea* of being/ becoming white.²³³ Certain critics have suggested that the abolitionist position erases the existence of poor whites in capitalist society and excludes them from a narrow vision of social change. In reality, poor whites stand to gain specifically from a programme aimed at the abolition of whiteness. As I have shown in section 4.3.1, the racial ideology informing 'whiteness' reinforced the

²³¹ Noel Ignatiev, *The Point is Not to Interpret Whiteness but to Abolish It*. Blogpost: PM Press. <https://blog.pmpress.org/2019/09/16/the-point-is-not-to-interpret-whiteness-but-to-abolish-it/>.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ David Roediger. *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History*. London: Verso, 1994.

subjugation of ‘the hooligan element’ who participated in the 1922. At the same time, ‘the hooligan element’ demonstrated their potential to reject the racial terms of the dominant order as it applied to themselves (section 4.3.2).

However, as it related to the ‘native’, we see that white workers navigated their contradictory location by becoming the willing members of an oppressive society. With no challenge to white power, the challenge to the colonial state was subsumed within its existing structures and operations.

5.2. ‘To fundamentally establish this country as a white man’s country’

In this section, I describe white strikers own self-constitution as members of the dominant racial group. The dominant discourse which rested on whiteness as a guarantor of rights, freedoms and privileges, were used to mobilise white workers around a vision of the white community. As such, white settlers’ racial consolidation and domination were a political objective of the 1922 strike.

The argument presented in this chapter reconsiders established assumptions about the relationship of this strike to the stability of the modern South African state. The Rand Revolt has been characterised as organised white labours rejection of the state.²³⁴ However, a combination of repression and reform saw white workers accept their role as ‘junior beneficiaries’ of the capitalist settler state following this strike. Certain conditions were necessary for white workers to accept the new industrial relations apparatus ushered in by the ICA and the civilised labour policy of the Pact government. In this chapter, I aim to identify those conditions that existed within the white labour movement.

The commando’s centrality in the strike and representation of the rank-and-file makes them a valid unit of analysis for the white labour movement’s collective self-constitution (see Figure 10). SAIF formally endorsed the commandos on 2 February and passed a resolution supporting their formation throughout the Rand. This resolution articulated the working-class organisation along the lines of belonging to the settler polity:

²³⁴ Yudelman, 1983: 64, 158.

Whereas it is desirable and imperative that Commandoes of the following three sections of the white community, inhabitants of the Union of South Africa be immediately formed and raised with the object of protecting the interests of all white workers, namely:

(a) Strikers' Commandoes;

(b) Unemployed;

(c) Employed;

And whereas it is essential, and the time has arrived to fundamentally establish this country as a white man's country; it be resolved: –

That Commandoes of all sections of

(a) Strikers

(b) Unemployed

(c) Employed

Of the white community of the Rand be immediately formed with branches in each township under officers to be elected by each platoon.²³⁵

This resolution, advancing the organisation of the white working class, was oriented towards the constitution of a racial community.²³⁶ The framework for struggle was formed around mobilising sections of the white community to establish a 'white man's country'. Evidently, the ideological hegemony of white supremacy in white labour formations is present in this resolution.

Significantly, the commandos went where unions and strike committees had failed to go and actively recruited unemployed whites into their ranks. Additionally, the commandos provided daily rations for those who joined. Women's commandos were prominent throughout the strike.²³⁷ These were actors who were nominally excluded from the roles they took on in 1922. The commandos, more than any other part of the movement, began to tackle the question of 'who' makes up a white South Africa. They incorporated all sections of the settler order into this vision. Despite the extensive self-organisation achieved in the commando system, their base and their future remained confined by racial citizenship defined by the settler society and

²³⁵ MLC Report, 4.

²³⁶ Krikler, 2005: 146.

²³⁷ Jeremy Krikler, "Women and the Rand Revolt" In Krikler, 2005: 78.

‘the white community’ they emerged from. Furthermore, the notion of ‘protecting the white community’ provides the potential for aggression towards the racialised Other. To ‘protect’ the white community poses its vulnerability in the face of the generalised Other, thus framing violence towards the Other in a self-defensive style.²³⁸



Figure 10: Witwatersrand, February, 1922. Newlands Commando. (*The Star* 1922: 66).

Organising the white labour movement around protecting the white community, necessitated the social production of white spaces which included the white poor. The public culture of the white labour movement was successful in this respect.²³⁹ Daily public meetings took place in the open in town halls, squares, the Trade’s Hall, the Mineworkers Hall, and on main streets and residential streets. Additionally, parades, marches and drilling were daily activities (see Figure 9). These mass public political aesthetics performed by white workers’ collective activity embodied a consolidation of racial solidarity as part of a class identity. Amidst the police offensive, dismissive TCM and Smuts’ government, strikers practised a public culture that enabled the performance of antagonistic political aesthetics:

²³⁸ Reddy, 2000; Veracini, 2010: 63.

²³⁹ Johan Van Wyk. “Volcano Needing Constant Watching’: South African White Labour and Socialist Culture 1900-1924.” *Journal of Literary Studies* (Pretoria, South Africa) 14, no. 1-2 (1998): 116-135, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02564719808530192>.

...The strikers had to content themselves with demonstrating in the streets and halls. But the demonstrations now became BITTER INDIGNATION MEETINGS against a soulless Chamber, a tyrannical Government, and a now thoroughly hated police force.²⁴⁰

This shifting atmosphere, and space of demonstration, saw the white working class establish a level of control over the city space and the organisation of their daily lives:

...Meetings attended daily and nightly, both in centres and in suburbs, by unprecedented audiences consisting, as it seemed, of the whole white population except the bourgeoisie proper, eagerly listening to propaganda which a year or even a month before they would have rejected with contumely.²⁴¹

The consolidation of a racial community was intertwined with a critique of the government and TCM. Simultaneously, socialist symbolism and language emerged in the presence of Red Flags, red rosettes worn by strikers, the singing of the Red Flag and the slogan 'workers of the world fight and unite for a white South Africa' (see Figure 10).²⁴² This symbolism was articulated as a collective, performative expression of strikers' ideas, value systems, and orientations. It provided a language through which to critique the Smuts' government and the TCM.

The Red Flag was one of two prominent songs sung at mass meetings, demonstrations, parades, and marches. The Other was the Volkslied, the settler anthem for the Transvaal Republic. The synthesis of these performed traditions reveals how critiques of mining companies, and Smuts, were wound up with the embrace of the white community. Strikers such as Cyril Lewis, an unemployed miner, stated that 'the present Government should be done away with' so white strikers could 'get our rights, and there would not be tampering then with the contract system of the status quo'.²⁴³ Resolutions, such as the one taken at the mass meeting where the Waterston Resolution was passed, centred their demands around a vision 'to protect the white race in South Africa'.²⁴⁴ This orientation, towards reforming white supremacy as a political system and ensuring its proper benefits were shared, was rooted in class struggles over the racial contract.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ Bunting & Andrews, 1922:18.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner, MLC unpubd minutes, 25.

²⁴³ Cyril Lewis, Miner and striker on trial for contravention of Martial Law Regulations, 668.

²⁴⁴ MLC Report, 30.

²⁴⁵ Mills, 1997: 3, 13, 14; Reddy, 2015: 101.

The assertion of an aesthetic and political collective subjectivity around ‘whiteness’ confined the white labour movement’s vision to the terms set out by the modern colonial state. This shared vision included: the perpetual regeneration of the settler agency; the stability of settler sovereignty; and exploitation, displacement, and elimination of the racialised Other. For the racial state and capital, the white labour movement had to be eliminated as a political threat and integrated into the capitalist state to stabilise the dominant social order. This task meant that white workers’ aspirations had to become aligned with the aspirations of one or another fraction of capital. The seeds for such an alliance existed in the coercive measures taken by the state, but also within the choices made by the settler working class as a collective subject.²⁴⁶ In the post-1922 period, white workers allied with settler / national capital through their support for the political representatives of this fraction in the NP and LP.²⁴⁷

I argue that whiteness provided the conditions for white workers’ aspirations to become aligned with national capital’s aspirations. Moreover, I show how the conditions for shared aspirations existed in the ways whiteness shaped white workers’ attitudes and practices towards themselves and the racialised Other. White workers’ discourses and practices surrounding their self-organisation was centred around ‘the interests of the white community’. In the next section, we see how ‘protecting the white community’ translated into a discourse of ‘native trouble’ whereby the settler polity’s dependence on the settler state took precedence in white workers political practices.

5.3. The Terrains of Racial Anxieties

In January and February, white strikers relied on the state to step in where they perceived ‘native trouble’ to need management. A pattern of ‘structures of feeling’ were embodied in a context where white workers’ turned to the state to resolve racial anxieties over the ‘threatening’ presence of ‘natives’.²⁴⁸ I identify these anxieties as relating to the organisation of space, acoustics, and the ‘gaze’ associated with observing subjects. Underpinning each is a desire to permanently reinforce the intimate and general aspects of white authority and control in the settler colony.

²⁴⁶ Fred Burrill. "The Settler Order Framework: Rethinking Canadian Working-Class History." *Labour / Le Travail* 83 (2019): 176-177, <https://doi:10.1353/lt.2019.0007>.

²⁴⁷ Robert Davies, “The Pact Period, 1924-1932” in Davies, 1979: 179.

²⁴⁸ Gloria Wekker. *White Innocence: paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016, 19-20.

5.3.1. Mapping the Acoustics of White Power

Section 4.2.1 portrays how the order to ‘remain quiet’ emerged in the framework for ‘native trouble’ that the state acted upon during the strike. Quietness is associated with a state of compliance among Black subjects. The pursuit against ‘unsettling Black sonics’ is an attempt to ‘control the spectacle of Black bodies’ as Cynthia Dobbs puts it.²⁴⁹ Beyond compliance, the order to ‘remain quiet’ was an order for Black subjects to conceal their presence within the urban landscape. In this way, ‘noise’ was one dimension in the contestation over space in the urban areas. White workers saw Black presence articulated onto the sonic landscape as a threat. For example, on 31 January, Pritchard, the director of Native Labour reported that the audience watching a bioscope performance at the Crown Mines compound’s ‘bioscope for natives’ ‘became a little noisy’. This agitated the white workers living in the married quarters:

The occupants of the married quarters hearing this noise became alarmed, and stood on guard against the possible attack until they were assured that there was no need for anxiety. My inspectors enquired into it, and were satisfied that there was no threat whatever against the Europeans. It was merely something in connection with performance, and it may be that the natives were laughing for all we knew.²⁵⁰

Evident in this excerpt is a sense that ‘noise from the bioscope’ threatened whites living in the married quarters claim over the space which they shared in proximity to Black workers. The immediate ‘alarm’ represents the general white working-class affective disposition during the strike.²⁵¹ The nearby presence of the ‘native bioscope’ to the married quarters signifies shared social space between white occupants of the married quarters and the Black workers on the mines.²⁵² When they formed a picket, they engaged in a process of racialisation in response to the crises thrown up by the possibility of sharing such social space.²⁵³ Their movement through space and in response to their environment was built around a historically constituted social framework of being that acted in antagonism with Black contestation of public space.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Cynthia Dobbs. “Mapping Black Movement, Containing Black Laughter: Ralph Ellison’s New York Essays.” *American Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (2016): 910, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0072>.

²⁵⁰ S.M Pritchard, Director of Native Labour for the Union and Native Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 546.

²⁵¹ Wekker, 2016: 19.

²⁵² Wolfe, 2016: 15.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Fanon & Bhabha, 2008: 84; Ahmed, 2007: 161; Ascari, 2018: 19; Megan Jones. “Urbanism and Black Mobility in Peter Abrahams’s *Mine Boy*.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38 no. 1 (2012): 203-215, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2011.639206>; Kathleen Kirby. (1993) “Thinking through the Boundary: The Politics of Location, Subjects, and Space.” *Boundary 2* 20, no. 2 (1993): 173-189, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303362>;

Attention to the meaning of Black laughter and public space is necessary in this case, as analysed by Chasar:

... The noise of a combative rather than humorous, comedic, or funny black laugh could go where the physical black body in many cases could not and thus could uniquely challenge white control of public space while also mapping or territorializing that space as a field for further political action.²⁵⁵

Chasar shows how the ‘acoustics of white power’ existed in an antagonism with subversive acoustics articulated through Black political and social struggles. The discussion of ‘noise’ from the ‘natives’ and the reactions to laughter point to how ‘white control of public space’ was challenged. Moreover, when this public space was challenged, white workers living in the married quarters took it as their responsibility to reassert white control and halt any processes ‘mapping or territorialising that space as a field for further political action’.²⁵⁶ Pritchard again singled out laughter when he noted Black workers response on Wit Deep Mine to being ‘interfered with’ by a commando in February:

The natives returned to their work singing and laughing and the compound manager had considerable trouble in getting them back to their work. They resented the action of the Europeans at the time.²⁵⁷

The identification of singing and laughing with ‘trouble’ and ‘resentment’ reveals the shared contours between Pritchard’s concerns and strikers’ concerns. Evidently, the colonial state and white workers shared ‘White anxieties’ in relation to Black sonics. These socio-ontological responses form the ‘colonial habitus’ that underpinned the consolidation of official segregation policies in the Union.²⁵⁸ Agents of the colonial state and white workers described events in such a way whereby ‘trouble’ was framed in racial and spatial terms. Public space was racialised and the fear of ‘native presence’ was related to a ‘geography of trouble’.

Camilla Hawthorne. “Black Matters Are Spatial Matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-first Century.” *Geography Compass* 13, no. 11 (2019): 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12468>; Katherine McKittrick. *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

²⁵⁵ Mike Chasar. “The Sounds of Black Laughter and the Harlem Renaissance: Claude McKay, Sterling Brown, Langston Hughes.” *American Literature* 80.1 (2008): 58, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2007-062>.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour for the Union and Native Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 546.

²⁵⁸ Ayling, 2019.

5.3.2. Controlling the Gaze

Spatial struggles operated through the manifestations of gaze and the act of looking. Black workers watching white striker activities became a topic of concern during the strike whereby the act of watching strikers reproduced white anxieties. In response to this, on 1 February, Pritchard released a circular to all inspectors stating the following:

Representations have been made to me by the Commissioner of Police that there is a tendency being manifested on the part of natives, who are spectators of demonstrations by the strikers, to jeer at or pass remarks on the latter. Such behaviour is likely to lead to reprisals and result in serious trouble.²⁵⁹

This circular identifies ‘jeering’, ‘passing remarks’ and spectating as acts to be stopped. The Native Affairs department and the police tried to control Black subjects’ behaviour in public spaces on multiple fronts. Strikers themselves held such concerns, raised complaints to authorities, and in some cases, actively intervened:

They were mine natives walking about the place, and seeing the commandos drilling on market square, as natives will do, they stood still and watched the crowd. On two occasions they were assaulted, quite brutally by the strikers using weapons you have here.²⁶⁰

The gaze, coupled with ‘jeering’ evokes elements of the discussion of Black laughter above, while taking us to consider the social ontology central to white supremacy as a system that controls bodies.²⁶¹ Jeering and provocative spectatorship perform the same function as ‘combative black laughter’ within public space. While white workers organised around white supremacist demands in public spaces, Black workers gaze and jeering mapped the space for possible future political action. Consequently, efforts to control Black people’s orientation, where they could look, was an intimate expression of the sociospatial struggles of the time.²⁶² Petrus Steyn, a miner living in Vrededorp describes this gaze as a discomfoting presence in his neighbourhood:

²⁵⁹ S.M. Pritchard, Director of Native Labour for the Union and Native Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 546.

²⁶⁰ Robert Ray, District Surgeon, MLC unpubd minutes, 465.

²⁶¹ Fanon & Bhabha, 2008: 83-84.

²⁶² McKittrick, 2006: 135; Sally Gaule. “Poor white, white poor: Meanings in the differences of whiteness.” *History of Photography* 25, no. 4 (2001): 334-347, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2001.10443236>.

I have noticed that since the latter part of February and the beginning of March that the natives living at the Malay location were adopting a very unusual attitude towards the white people living in Vrededorp. They used to come out in the main street where the tramline runs, De La Rey Street, and gaze at people and sneer at them and use insulting language to them.²⁶³

By foregrounding ‘natives’ ‘unusual attitude’, alongside gazing and sneering, Steyn implies an unacceptable subversion of white authority. It is this ‘unusual attitude’, especially adopted on the ‘main street’, De La Rey Street (see Figure 11²⁶⁴) that shows how white residents developed anxieties around ‘native’ presence in public spaces. In this passage, Steyn described the build up to the racial attacks by white strikers on 8 March. The nature of the physical attacks, juxtaposed against the ‘unusual ‘attitude’ of ‘natives’ shows the means by which the security of the settler zone is maintained by discretionary racial violence.

Therefore, ‘gaze’ was one plane in which we can see how white anxieties were shared between different sectors of white society and were rooted in the structural and affective dimensions of a society structured by racial dominance.

In responding to the acoustic and visual plane of being in the social world, strikers sought to reproduce the spatial enclosure of Black subjects. White workers’ reclamation of public spaces was achieved alongside the reification of the dominant social production of space and the correlated relations between racialised subjects. In this way, strikers called on settler colonial instruments of rule to enforce appropriate ‘native’ behaviour, including hyper-vigilant acts of surveillance and confinement. None of these examples can be understood solely as white strikers expressing their frustration over ‘natives’ as competition for labour, especially where the colonial state exhibited similar behaviours using the instruments at its disposal. More appropriate explanations are rooted in the operative dimensions of white supremacy as a historical force in the 1922 strike.

²⁶³ Petrus Steyn, Miner and resident in Vrededorp, MLC unpubd minutes, 1313.

²⁶⁴ See note 2. This map is not intended to be exact but is rather a basic supplementary guide for the reader. Vrededorp is bordered by a Native Location to the West, not included in the map.

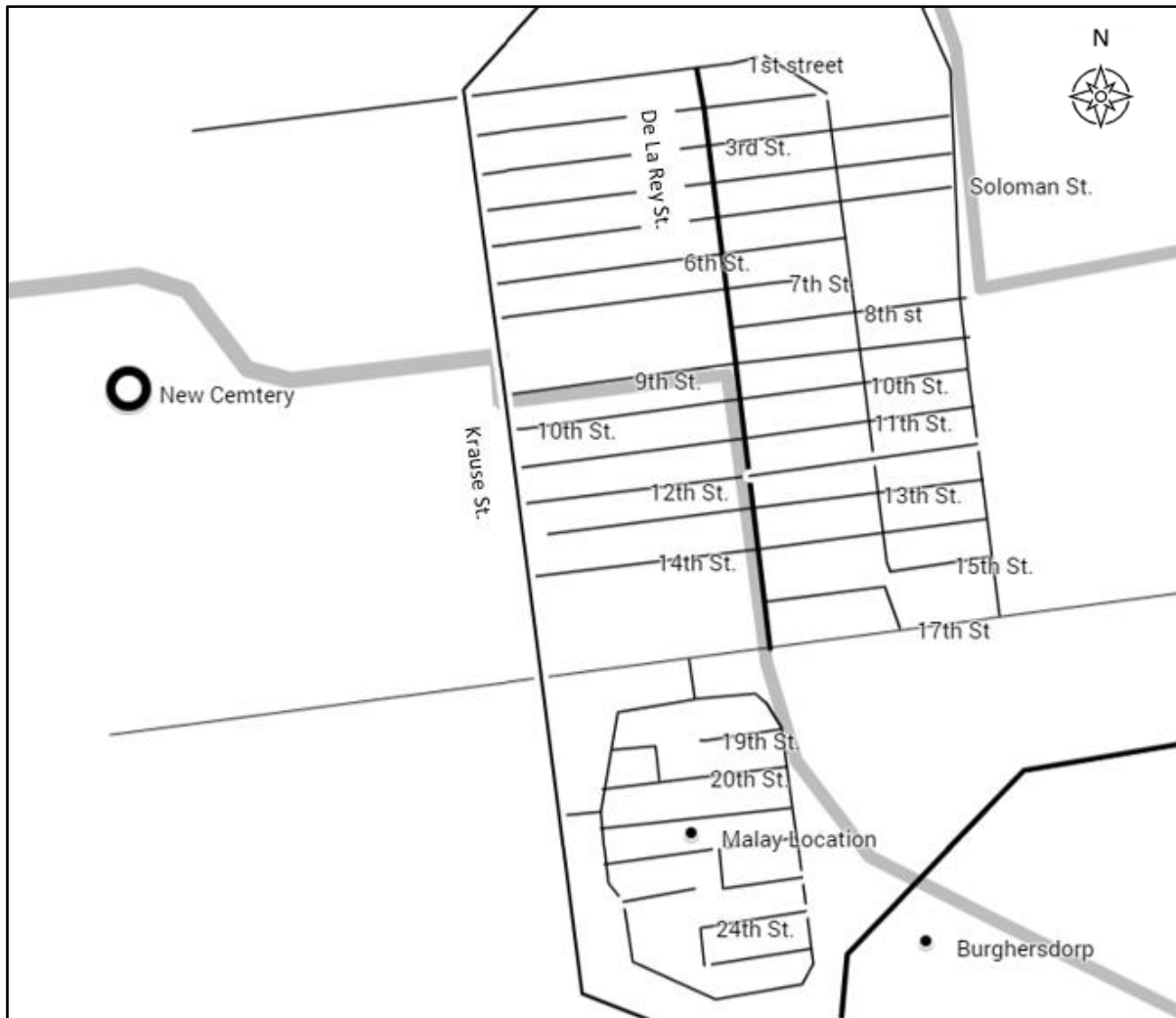





Figure 11: Map of Vrededorp

Map Key

-  Road
-  Tramway Line
-  Railway

5.4. Deputised whites and Sociospatial Struggles

These practices took a specific trend that was tied into the nature of white workers’ struggle. As strikers came to see the Smuts’ government as unwilling to protect them from mining companies, so too did they see the state as unable to protect the white community from native trouble. When the race riots unfolded, white collectives, usually in the form of commandos or strikers’ pickets, stood in for the colonial state’s coercive function to administer the boundaries between the native and settler zones. Initially, strikers tried to unite with the police to put down the rumoured ‘native uprising’. When this failed, they stood as deputised agents of racialised

state violence. The ‘deputisation of white civilians’ was a function of whiteness aimed at preserving the settler state. This function of whiteness was tied into white workers’ struggle against the TCM and Smuts’ government. Significantly, the white working class’s focus in these activities went beyond the scope of the status quo and notions of job competition. They were occurring in a context of racially ‘integrated’ neighbourhoods in and around the Johannesburg area (see Figure 12). I argue that the race riots were a coordinated attack on Black presence in urban areas occurring on the plane of a sociospatial struggle.²⁶⁵



Figure 12: Ferrierastown, Johannesburg, March 9, 1922. “Natives under escort of S.A.M.R. move their dead from the scene of the fight at Ferreirastown to Marshall Square.” (*The Star*, 1922: 6).

5.4.1 ‘A feeling of friendship with the Police’

Section 5.5.3 shows that the conditions existed for racial attacks led by white workers well before 7 March. White workers’ race riots arose from the drive of the whole white power structure to confine Black workers to compounds throughout the strike. Their first port of call was to try to work with members of the colonial state to reinforce the dividing line of colonial society. Strikers’, who were engaged in a 3-month long battle with the TCM, actively put their

²⁶⁵ Byrne, 2010: 142. See, for example, attacks occurring off mining property: “Klaas”, Rowe, Jewell & Co. employee, MLC unpubd minutes, 584; “Jack”, Rowe, Jewell & Co. employee, MLC unpubd minutes, 584-585; “Charlie”, Bakery employee, MLC unpubd minutes, 589.

weight behind *preventing* a ‘native uprising’. Instead of encouraging such a movement, white strikers tried to rally the police around the threat posed by ‘natives breaking out of compounds’.

In the early 20th century, and during the Rand Revolt, white workers and the colonial police developed an antagonistic relationship, due to persistent violent police suppression of strikers.²⁶⁶ Despite this, strikers attempted to make alliances with police during the race riots between 7 and 10 March.²⁶⁷ These attempted alliances reveal that strikers attempted to ally themselves to agents of the colonial state, therefore reifying settler rule.

Throughout the strike period, the moderate sections of the leadership emphasised maintaining law and order. At the onset of the strike, they communicated to strikers in districts affected that they should undertake the following:

...To take measures to suppress any tendency towards disorder, and to cultivate good relationship with the Government representatives also to be prepared if called upon to act in conjunction with the police should any tendency to disorder arise amongst the natives.²⁶⁸

Law and order were concepts imbricated with racial ideology surrounding settler stability and white dominance over ‘natives’. On 10 January, a meeting was held with Truter, Godley, and Trigger (the police testimonies discussed in section 4.3 above) and marshals were appointed to ‘control all processions and to act with the police should any section attempt any disturbance or public violence’.²⁶⁹ Initially, the union leadership had qualified success in these activities:

It was also agreed that all strikers should cultivate the best relations with the police and co-operate in suppressing any disorder arising throughout the strike area. This understanding had a very good effect in every district and established a feeling of friendship with the police, which was continued until February...²⁷⁰

The union leadership, aiming at ‘friendship with police’ and ‘suppressing disorders’ tried to contain the more radical and rebellious tendencies of rank-and-file workers. In January and early February – the period where commandos were described as consisting of ‘genuine

²⁶⁶ Various testimonies, MLC unpubd minutes: Edward Coober, Trammer on mines on trial for charges of high treason, 1288-1290; Marthinus Potgieter, Miner on trial for charges of high treason, 1290-129; Petrus Beach, Miner on trial for charges of high treason, 1308.

²⁶⁷ Krikler, 2005: 146-149

²⁶⁸ Joe Thompson and J George, Affidavit placed before MLC, published in, “Miner’s Leaders’ Views.” *Rand Daily Mail*, June 28, 1922, 11. (Accessed Online: 1 September, 2021) <https://www.readex.com/>

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

mineworkers' – strikers and police had relatively calm relations. In late February and early March, especially after the Boksburg Gaol shootings and continued state protection for scabs, these friendly relations gave way to generalised antagonism between the rank and file and police. With the 'hooligan element' taking over, an attempt was made to bring the police in line with the new developments in the movement.

The racial logic underpinning the initial friendly relations between SAIF leaders and police visibly materialised again among commandos during the race riots. On 8 March, following attacks in Ferreirastown and near the Jubilee Compound, strikers in these areas attitudes toward the police shifted. This was described by a police officer:

In regard to the attitude of the commandoes towards the police generally that day, in the morning it was very hostile. After lunch however, it was rumoured that there was to be a native rising, and the commandoes then got behind the police for protection. They formed up their commandoes behind the police, and said that they had come to assist the police to put down the natives rising.²⁷¹

The effect of the 'native rising' and participation in race riots allowed strikers to see the police as a part of the community which they wanted to protect. Lt Col Godley, the Deputy Commissioner of Police for the Witwatersrand area, testified to similar occurrences in Germiston:

At Germiston, I forget the date, the Chairman of the Germiston strike committee went to the officer in charge of the police and told them I had said there was a native rising and the commando could be used to assist the police in suppressing it.²⁷²

Godley noted another request in Denver, a town on the eastern side of the Witwatersrand. A common pattern emerged across the Reef, rumours of a 'native trouble' would lead commandos to initiate racial attacks, followed by reports to police that commandoes would offer their services to the police to put down a 'native rising'.²⁷³ This offer to supplement the police with commandos was an explicit attempt to actively protect the settler state using the white working class's independent organisations.

²⁷¹ Walter Brown, Police Sub-Inspector, MLC unpubd minutes, 284.

²⁷² Ritchard Godley, Police Deputy Commissioner. MLC unpubd minutes, 104.

²⁷³ John McCrae, Police Inspector, MLC unpubd, 445.

The language of socialism and critique of exploitation (section 5.2) which had gained currency among strikers was ineffective in sustaining a struggle against the prevailing class system. The structures of feeling rooted in whiteness foreclosed any consideration that perhaps ‘natives breaking out of the compounds’ would be a good thing in a broader struggle to overcome the capitalist TCM and Smuts’ Government. Instead, overtures made to the police redirected the strikers’ orientations around maintaining the stability of the settler state.

5.4.2 White Civilians, Boundary Making and Enclosure

In cases where the police were seen to refuse to help put down the ‘native rising’, white civilians, in the form of commando units, took to enacting the racialised violence of enclosure and confinement. Below I briefly outline examples of the race riots showing that discourses of ‘native trouble’ which framed the practices of racial segregation informed these activities. Rather than a vague attitude of ‘irrational hatred’, racial consciousness was driven by the material dynamics and social relations constituted by whiteness. I discussed above how the compound represents technologies of confinement and control. At the same time, keeping Black people out of public spaces and fearing they might break out of compounds informed all cases of race riots.

The 1922 strike occurred as broader dynamics in the spatial organisation of the urban environment were already underway. A year after this strike the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 was passed which established a national policy for residential segregation in the Union of South Africa. The more intimate dynamics making up this policy are reflected in the political struggles embodied by the race riots.

The Vrededorp attacks saw organised collectives of whites, either in the form of commandos, or pickets, take to the streets to kill and enclose Black residents in the Native Location / Malay Camp. On 7 March, the Vrededorp Municipal Compound, where 370 Black people were living, was attacked by a commando of about 40 to 50 men who took possession of the gate. The commando was there to ‘protect’ the white community in Vrededorp:

They said they had information that the boys were going to break out to kill the white people in Vrededorp, and the women and children.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Alfred Paulsen, Vrededorp Compound Manager, MLC unpubd minutes, 590.

The commando comprised white strikers and acted as a voluntary unit to prevent ‘natives breaking out’ from the compound and protect white women and children where the police chose not to act. Thus, attacks on ‘natives’ in Vrededorp saw white working-class self-organisation oriented around the enclosure of ‘natives’ and the expansion of white spaces.

Additionally, deputised whites partook in displacement strategies to destroy perceived ‘native’ institutions.²⁷⁵ A Black resident living in Vrededorp, named as ‘Native July’ in the MLC minutes, witnessed other occurrences on this day, testified to the threats ‘natives’ living in the location that formed part of the Vrededorp suburb received. A white man told him that the ‘Dutch people’ planned to ‘burn down the Vrededorp school, and the old stable in 27th Street, and when they had finished doing that they would come and shoot [them]’.²⁷⁶

The threat to burn down a school in the ‘native’ location, attended by Black children, aimed to displace Black presence from this area. In response, Black Vrededorp residents formed defensive collective responses. After being threatened, July and another man he was with, went to warn others living in the Vrededorp location.²⁷⁷ Later, Black people gathered in the street. July stated, ‘there were a lot of natives there’ and they ‘remained there until 1 o’clock in the morning’.²⁷⁸

July’s testimony shows how Black residents defensive organisation saw them occupy the street in a way that spatially demarcated the neighbourhoods where they were situated at the Southern end of Vrededorp in anticipation of an attack from the northern end. Strikers in turn saw these collective responses as a contestation over public space and set out to regain control over these spaces. For Black subjects, public space had become dangerous to occupy in any way, as July notes when he witnessed ‘natives’ prevented from using the subway to leave Vrededorp:

I was afraid to stand in an open place as I thought I might be shot.²⁷⁹

Such violence encloses Black residents and forces them to retreat to the ‘location’ or the compound’ for the purposes of safety, away from ‘open places’. Nevertheless, one striker described ‘natives’ ‘interfering with strikers who passed through the subway’ and being

²⁷⁵ Krikler, 2005: 148.

²⁷⁶ “July”, Shoemaker and resident in Vrededorp, MLC unpubd minutes, 648. For another testimony by an African witness in Vrededorp see: “Alpheus Temba”, Evangelist and resident in Vrededorp, 530.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 649.

‘nervous’ when he later saw that Black people had gathered in numbers in the Vrededorp Native Location.²⁸⁰

Importantly, the white residents of Vrededorp were not the only participants in the race riots in the area. White subjects moved between the cluster of suburbs including Vrededorp, Brixton, Newlands, Fordsburg, Westdene, Mayfair and Ferreirastown (see Figure 2). The frenzied attacks of the day shifted to a controlled situation in the evening, where commandos were cited as ‘patrolling’ the boundaries between different suburbs, physically standing guard to separate the ‘coloured section and the white section’.²⁸¹

Underlying all the race riots in this region is how deputised whites enacted settler-colonial violence to establish and extend spaces of whiteness in the urban environment. In Sophiatown, a ‘racially integrated’ suburb, commandos fired at ‘native school children’. This incident led to several Black people in Sophiatown seeking shelter in the neighbouring Western Native Location (see Figure 2), described by the acting superintendent for the Municipal Locations in Johannesburg as a camp. In Krugersdorp, racial attacks were aimed at people and institutions in the ‘native’ location:

Rumour that the local strikers proposing to come over to the location to attack natives, plunder grocers shops, and blow up some of the church buildings such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church and Wesleyan Methodist Church.²⁸²

These churches were located in the location, the ‘native zone’ and were predominantly attended by Black residents from the Krugersdorp location. The threat mentioned in the quote follows the patterns regarding the Vrededorp school. In Roodepoort, the Chairman of the Roodepoort Strike committee, Thomas Milner testified to an ‘outbreak of a number of natives’ from the Durban-Roodepoort mine, but states that ‘our pickets drove these boys back’. At the same, Milner describes ‘friendly’ relations between the strikers and police at Roodepoort.²⁸³ At the New Primrose mine, strikers attacked and chased Black mineworkers back into the New

²⁸⁰ John Pretorius, Handyman and resident in Vrededorp, MLC unpubd minutes, 1311-1312. For other testimonies by white residents in Vrededorp about the race riots see: Petrus Steyn, miner and resident in Vrededorp 1313-1316; *Name Illegible*, Vrededorp resident, 1340.

²⁸¹ James Milne, C.I.D. Detective Head Constable, MLC unpubd, 525, 529.

²⁸² H. Lenhlekana. *Affidavit*, National Archives Repository, SAB, GNLB 311, 8 March 1922.

²⁸³ Thomas Milner, Chairman of the Roodepoort Strike Committee, MLC unpubd minutes, 1454-1455.

Primrose compound. Once confined into this physical enclosure, strikers fired on Black mineworkers.²⁸⁴

Deputised whites enacted racial violence in service of practices of confinement and enclosure designed for colonial control. However, white workers did not mechanistically act in the exact material interests of the state and capital. The state actors outwardly condemned these acts. Major Trigger met with SAIF strike leaders on 8 March and published a notice in the Press (signed by Joe Thompson on behalf of the AE), instructing all strikers to cease ‘attacking natives’ as they had ‘caused considerable feeling among the Natives’ and ‘the position in compounds is viewed with upmost concern’.²⁸⁵ On 9 March, Colonel Pritchard published a notice in the Rand Daily Mail ‘appealing to Europeans’ to cease the race riots stating that he was ‘satisfied that such attacks were not made by strikers but by Europeans who have no interest or stake in the present trouble’.²⁸⁶ Clearly, the police, mining officials and colonial officials feared strikers’ activities’ were likely to provoke a ‘native uprising’. As a result, strike leaders and state officials disciplined participants for doing exactly what the state had done from the beginning of the strike: confining ‘Native’ subjects through racial violence.

The question of deputization is not one of direct orders between state and white civilians. Rather, it emerges where white civilians followed the scripts and rubrics made possible by a discourse of ‘native trouble’. It is that they referenced ‘natives’ ‘breaking out of compounds’, causing ‘trouble’, moving about the city, occupying streets, making noise, which drove white strikers’ activities. There were few legal or penal repercussions for participants in the race riots. Of those tried in the special criminal courts, the majority were there for high treason and similar offences. Only one individual was charged in the race riots, despite hundreds participating. This reflects the fact that such violence was sanctioned under the terms of the racial contract.

The examples of white violence forcing Black workers into compounds are representative of how the colonial state and agents of the state saw their duty in relation to ‘native’ trouble,

²⁸⁴ For MLC testimonies of African witnesses on New Primrose attacks see: “Pastell”, New Primrose mineworker, 649-650; “Mister”, New Primrose mineworker, 650. For testimonies of strikers on New Primrose attacks see: Gert van Helsdingen, Unemployed Miner and member of New Primrose Commando, 642-643; Cornelius de Beer, unemployed member of New Primrose Commando, MLC unpubd minutes, 651-656; Jan Van Niekerk, member of New Primrose Commando, 1642-1644; Phillipus Venter, Member of New Primrose Commando, 1644-1645; Phillip Van Coller, Member of New Primrose Commando, 1645-1646; Johannes Pheiffer, Germiston Municipality Employee, 1647-1649.

²⁸⁵ MLC Report, 67.

²⁸⁶ S.M. Pritchard, “An Appeal to Europeans.” *Rand Daily Mail*, March 9, 1922, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/apps/readex/?p=HN-SARDM> (Accessed: September 15, 2021)

where deputised whiteness was a fundamental feature of white supremacy in a settler colonial society aimed at confining, controlling and enclosing Black subjects. This was intimately tied to the self-organisation of the white working class along racial lines aimed at protecting the white community.

Black residents living in the locations and compounds had to respond to the sociospatial enactment of violence by white pickets during the strike. Forcing Black workers into the compound was rooted in the essential conditions for the settler colonial situation merged with the essential conditions for capitalist accumulation. Certain social practices produce a social structure that divides the world in two, and the violent denial of public space to Black people is one of them. In response, Black residents' collective responses included gathering for safety in compounds or on the streets, sometimes arming themselves with sticks and assegais, or in the case of New Primrose, being armed by mine management. In most cases, the colonial state was quick to divert, suppress, control and manage these responses, and when they failed then the strikers' commando would 'drive them back'.²⁸⁷ While the Rand strike posed a challenge to the Smuts' government, and to the mining industry, the structure of white power was left intact where rebellious whites became deputised whites, directing their energies into preserving the regenerative capacities of the settler collective through violence committed against a racialised Other.

²⁸⁷ Fanon, 1968.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In the days following the race riots, the strike was concluded by an internal battle within settler society. The Reef erupted into an explosion of noise. The white poor, throwing the full weight of their force against the white state's defences, shook the ground on which settler society was built. The noise of bugle calls, boots on dusty roads, gunfire, aeroplanes, and bombs drowned out all else. And then the noise of grief. As the dust settled, all white inhabitants across the Reef had to clasp at whatever ties they could find to hold the political community together. If white South Africa was to continue, wounds had to be repaired and the defeated had to be rehabilitated.

When I started this project, I posed the following question: How can we reframe our understanding of the 1922 Rand Revolt by placing settler colonialism and racial capitalism at the centre of our analysis? I began to answer this question, by outlining *what* settler colonialism and *what* racial capitalism is. I then considered the events of 1922, unpacking how racial subjects were managed by the settler colonial state to perpetuate its own existence.

In Chapter 4, I have shown that state actors and compound managers were deeply invested in suppressing the 1922 strike through the settler colonial management of space and race. This management was largely driven by a conceptualisation of the 'native' as a menace and a dangerous force with violent capacities. The quotidian racial violence of the compound, pass laws, and the contract system rested on the reduction of Black mineworkers to embodied beings. Oral testimonies and the MLC final report showed that the danger of the 1922 strike was understood to hang on how much 'Native trouble' it might cause. At the same time, the 'figure of the Native' structured the basis for which the white 'hooligan' element was understood: they were considered the antithesis to western civilisation, to law and order, because they were in proximity to 'the Native'. The oral testimonies and the MLC report framed the 'hooligan element' as a degenerating force within the political community.

A more difficult task was to show what settler colonialism and racial capitalism meant for the 1922 strikers. I have drawn the connections between settler colonialism and the practices undertaken by state actors and strikers alike. While there were times where white workers partially rejected these terms, Chapter 5 shows that white workers' outlook and demands were orientated towards their full inclusion into the settler order. In this way, white workers' practices reflected features of the dominant order. Subsequently, the terms of reference used to

resist mining companies mirrored the terms laid out by the dominant settler colonial order, taking on the racial ideology built into this order. Ultimately, these shared practices and terms of reference meant that the challenge to the TCM and Smuts' government was tied into a foundational antagonism between western civilisation and the 'native'. Both the race riots and the events following the strike cannot be removed from an understanding of this antagonism.

Further, the racial development of capitalism in the years following the strike was deeply wound up in the racial nature of class conflict in this moment. At the penultimate moment, the white working class identified a significant group within white South Africa whom they could align their interests with: the agrarian capitalist 'free burghers'. Additionally, they allied with the NP and LP, thereby providing electoral support for the political representatives of national capital in the manufacturing industry. The new alliance between white labour and national/settler capital, was built out of the ways race shaped the events in 1922, would determine the conditions in which capitalist development unfolded through the coming years.

Smuts tried to apportion blame on Bolshevik Russian Jews, and unruly hooligans to regain the support of the white electorate. He made some efforts to repair what was lost by ushering in the 1924 ICA. Efforts to rehabilitate, reform, and unite the white front began soon after the strike. However, this was not enough. As was stated throughout the strike, a new government was needed to protect the interests of the white community. In 1924, the Pact government was voted in.

The Pact government oversaw a slightly different trajectory for capitalist development in the coming decades by providing subsidies for secondary industries to encourage the growth of national capital. A new racial regime was born out of the ashes of the 1922 strike. The white ruling class sought to tame organised white labour and the 'bands of unruly hooligans' who were so prominent in the commando movement. For the white unemployed, the government intervened in the labour market to provide jobs for whites in various relief works and labour colonies, especially in the railways. The civilised labour policy protected the upper echelon of the labour aristocracy by providing free education and training for whites empowering them to monopolise skilled trades. This new trajectory, which incorporated white labour into a new industrial relations apparatus, also institutionalised the unequal relationship between white workers (specifically) and the Black working class. The white poor were rehabilitated by consolidating the measures which ruled over the Black working class. In the spatial organisation of the urban environment, the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923 was passed. In the

workplace, Black workers were excluded from the definition of employee in the 1924 ICA and denied any bargaining power. This institutionalised collective bargaining system enabled white workers to secure higher wages and better working conditions than Black workers.

The racial nature of class conflict settled how the struggle over the division of labour was resolved in the mining industry. It also saw, in the following years, the relationship between the white poor and the colonial state settled as paternal, patronage-based and predicated on the needs of various fractions of capital and the relative strength of the white poor. It was reciprocal, in that the white poor acted as a buffer, a spontaneous garrison troop, which could unleash momentary reigns of terror on racialised Others and protect white communities at any sign of trouble. In this way, the destruction of the white community and capitalist hegemony are mutually dependent procedures. Considering the intertwined relationship between race and class reveals that both the affective and material dimensions of white supremacy shaped the character and orientation of class struggle between white labour and capital in the early 20th Century, South Africa.

Bibliography

Books, chapters in books, and journal articles

- Adhikari, Mohamed. "A Total Extinction Confidently Hoped for: The Destruction of Cape San Society Under Dutch Colonial Rule, 1700-1795." *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 1-2 (2010): 19-44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2010.508274>.
- Ahmed, Sara. "A Phenomenology of Whiteness." *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (2007): 149-168, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>.
- Al-Bulushi, Yousuf. "Thinking Racial Capitalism and Black Radicalism from Africa: An Intellectual Geography of Cedric Robinson's World-System." *Geoforum* (2020).
- Alexander, Neville. *One Azania, One Nation: the national question in South Africa*. London: Zed Press, 1979.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. "Labour Supplies in Historical Perspective: A Study of the Proletarianization of the African Peasantry in Rhodesia." *The Journal of development studies* 6, no. 3 (1970): 197-234, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220387008421322>.
- Ascari, Pierpaolo. "Bodies, Spaces and Citizenship: The Theoretical Contribution of Frantz Fanon", *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes* 1, no. 1 (2018), 17-32, <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2612-0496/8686>.
- Ashforth, Adam. "Reckoning Schemes of Legitimation: On Commissions of Inquiry as Power/Knowledge Forms." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 3, no. 1 (1990a): 1-22.
- Ashforth, Adam. *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990b.
- Ayling, Pere. "Frantz Fanon: Whiteness, Colonialism and the Colonial Habitus." In: *Distinction, Exclusivity and Whiteness*. Springer, Singapore, 2019, https://doi.org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/10.1007/978-981-13-5781-7_3.
- Beinart, William & Bundy, Colin. *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics & Popular Movements in the Transkei & Eastern Cape, 1890-1930*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987

- Béliard, Yan. "A "Labour War" in South Africa: the 1922 Rand Revolution in Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers' Dreadnought." *Labour History* 57, no. 1 (2016): 20-34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2016.1140621>.
- Bonner, Philip. *The 1920 Black Mineworkers Strike*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, 1978.
- Bozzoli, Belinda. ed. *Town and countryside in the Transvaal: capitalist penetration and popular response*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983.
- Bozzoli, Belinda. ed. *Class, community and conflict: South African perspectives*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987.
- Breckenridge, Keith. "Fighting for a White South Africa: White Working-Class Racism and the 1922 Rand Revolt." *South African Historical Journal* 57, no. 1 (2007): 228-243, <https://doi.org/10.1080/025824707094647199>.
- Brink, Elsabé. "Only Decent Girls Are Employed": the Respectability, Decency and Virtue of the Garment Workers on the Witwatersrand During the 30s Johannesburg." *University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop*, 1987.
- Bunting, Sydney, & Andrews, William. *Red revolt, the Rand strike, January-March 1922: the workers' story*. Johannesburg: Communist Party S.A, 1922.
- Burrill, Fred. "The Settler Order Framework: Rethinking Canadian Working-Class History." *Labour / Le Travail* 83 (2019): 176-177, <https://doi:10.1353/lt.2019.0007>.
- Byrne, Denis. "The intimate, urbanizing frontier: native camps and settler colonialism's violent array of spaces around early Melbourne." In Tracey Banivanua-Mar & Penelope Edmonds, *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Chasar, Mike. "The Sounds of Black Laughter and the Harlem Renaissance: Claude McKay, Sterling Brown, Langston Hughes." *American Literature* 80, no. 1 (2008): 57-81, <https://doi.org/10.1215/00029831-2007-062>.

- Chilton, Lisa. "A New Class of Women for the Colonies: The Imperial Colonist and the Construction of Empire." *Journal of imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 36-56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086530310001705596>.
- Cobley, Alan. "Why Not All Go Up Higher?": The Transvaal Native Mine Clerks' Association, 1920-1925'." *South African Historical Journal* 62 no. 1(2010) 143-161, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582471003778409>.
- Cope, R.K. *Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W.H. Andrews, Workers' Leader*. Stewart, for the W.H. Andrews Biography Fund, 1944.
- Davies, Robert. *Capital, state and white labour in South Africa, 1900-1960: an historical materialist analysis of class formation and class relations*. Brighton: Harvester, 1979.
- De Kiewiet, Cornelius. *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1941.
- Dobbs, Cynthia. "Mapping Black Movement, Containing Black Laughter: Ralph Ellison's New York Essays." *American quarterly* 68, no. 4 (2016): 907-929, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0072>.
- Drew, Allison. "1922 and all that': Facts and the writing of South African political history." in Hans Erik Stolten. *History Making and Present Day Politics: the Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007.
- Du Bois, William. *Black Reconstruction in America: an Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. London: Cass, 1966..
- Dubow, Saul. *Racial Segregation and the Origins of Apartheid in South Africa, 1919-36*. Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1989.
- Du Toit, Marijke. "The Domesticity of Afrikaner Nationalism: Volksmoeders and the ACVV, 1904-1929." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 1 (2003): 155-176, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305707032000060485>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1st Evergreen Black Cat ed. New York: Grove Press, 1968.

- Fanon, Frantz, and Homi K. Bhabha. *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto, 2008.
- Gaitskell, Deborah. "Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39." *Journal of African History* 24, no. 2 (1983): 241-256, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700021964>.
- Gaule, Sally. "Poor white, white poor: Meanings in the differences of whiteness" *History of Photography* 25, no. 4 (2001) 334-347, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03087298.2001.10443236>.
- Go, Julian. "Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism." *Sociological Theory* 39, no. 1 (March 2021): 38-47, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275120979822>.
- Gool, Selim. *Mining capitalism and Black labour in the early industrial period in South Africa: a critique of the new historiography*. Lund: Ekonomisk-historiska föreningen, 1983.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 21-23.
- Hawthorne, Camilla. "Black Matters Are Spatial Matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-first Century." *Geography Compass* 13, no. 11 (2019): 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12468>.
- Herd, Norman. *1922: The Revolt on the Rand*. Johannesburg: Blue Crane Books, 1966.
- Higginson, John. "Privileging the Machines: American Engineers, Indentured Chinese and White Workers in South Africa's Deep-Level Gold Mines, 1902-1907." *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 1 (2007), 1-34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859006002768>.
- Hirson, Baruch. *A history of the Left in South Africa: writings of Baruch Hirson*. London; I.B. Tauris, 2005.
- Horton, Matthew. *Working Against Racism from White Subject Positions: White Anti-Racism, New Abolitionism & Intersectional Anti-White Irish Diasporic Nationalism*. eScholarship, University of California, 2019; Willoughby-Herard, 2015.

- Huynh, Tu. "Black Marxism: an incorporated Analytical Framework for Rethinking Chinese Labour in South African Historiography." *African Identities* 11, no. 2 (2013): 185-199, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2013.797286>.
- Hyslop, Jonathan. "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself "White": White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa Before the First World War." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no.4 (1999): 398-421, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6443.00098>.
- Hyslop, Jonathan. "Scottish Labour, Race, and Southern African Empire c.1880-1922: A Reply to Kenefick" *International review of social history* 55, no. 1 (2010): 63-81, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990629>.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *The Point is Not to Interpret Whiteness but to Abolish It*. Blogpost: PM Press. <https://blog.pmpress.org/2019/09/16/the-point-is-not-to-interpret-whiteness-but-to-abolish-it/>.
- Jeeves, Alan. *Migrant Labour in South Africa's Mining Economy: The Struggle for the Gold Mines' Labour Supply 1890 - 1920*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1985.
- Johnstone, Frederick. *Class, Race, and Gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa.* London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1976.
- Jones, Megan. "Urbanism and Black Mobility in Peter Abrahams's Mine Boy." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38 no. 1 (2012): 203-215, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2011.639206>.
- Katz, Elaine. *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand Gold Mines, 1886-1910* Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994.
- Katz, Elaine. "The Underground Route to Mining: Afrikaners and the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry from 1902 to the 1907 Miners' Strike." *Journal of African History* 36, no. 3 (1995), 467-489, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700034502>.

- Katz, Elaine. "Revisiting the Origins of the Industrial Colour Bar in the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry, 1891-1899." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, no. 1 (1999), 73-97.
- Keegan, Timothy. "Gender, Degeneration and Sexual Danger: Imagining Race and Class in South Africa, ca.1912." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 27, no. 3 (2001): 459-477, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430120074545>.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. "The Rest of Us: Rethinking Settler and Native." *American Quarterly* 69 no. 2 (2017): 267-276, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2017.0020>.
- Kenefick, William. "Confronting White Labourism: Socialism, Syndicalism, and the Role of the Scottish Radical Left in South Africa before 1914." *International Review of Social History* 55, no. 1 (2010): 29-62, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859009990617>.
- Kirby, Kathleen M. (1993) "Thinking through the Boundary: The Politics of Location, Subjects, and Space." *Boundary 2* 20, no. 2 (1993): 173-189, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303362>.
- Krikler, Jeremy. *The Rand Revolt: the 1922 insurrection and racial killing in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2005.
- Krikler, Jeremy. (2011) "Lost Causes of the Rand Revolt." *South African Historical Journal* 63 no. 2 (2011): 318-338, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02582473.2011.569345>.
- La Hausse, Paul. *The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936*. University of Cape Town, 1984.
- Lake, Marilyn, and Henry Reynolds. *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Lange, Lis. *White, Poor and Angry: White Working-Class Families in Johannesburg*. Ashgate, 2003, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315190990>.
- Legassick, Martin. "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence." *Economy and society* 3, no. 3 (1974): 253-291..

- Lenin, Vladimir. *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963, V, Preface, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/imperialism.pdf>.
- Lester, Claire-Anne. "Commissions of Inquiry and the Role of Law: Towards a Materialist Approach." *Social Dynamics* 46, no. 1 (2020): 86-103, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2020.173790>.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and subject: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Johannesburg: WITS University Press, 2017.
- Marx, Karl. "Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels *Selected correspondence*." Progress Publishers, 1975. 9 April 1870, 220-224, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/letters/70_04_09.htm.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Michael, Ralph & Singhal, Maya. "Racial Capitalism." *Theory and society* 48, no. 6 (2019): 851-881, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09367-z>.
- Mills, Charles W. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Mnguni, Hosea Jaffe. *Three Hundred Years*. Unity Movement History Series. New Era Fellowship, 1952.
- Money, Duncan. & van Zyl-Hermann, Danelle. *Rethinking White societies in Southern Africa: 1930s-1990s*. Taylor & Francis, 2020.
- Moodie, Dunbar. "Mine Culture and Miners' Identity on the South African Gold Mines" in Bozzoli (ed.) *Town and Countryside in The Transvaal*, 180-189.
- Moodie, T. Dunbar, and Vivienne Ndatshe. *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1994.
- Morrell, Robert. ed. *White but poor: essays on the history of poor whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940*. 1st ed. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1992.

- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: whiteness and the literary imagination*. Picador ed. London: Picador, 1993.
- Parnell, Susan. "Race, Power and Urban Control: Johannesburg's Inner-City Slum-Yards, 1910-1923." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (2003): 615-637, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070306219>.
- Posel, Deborah. "Rethinking the 'Race-Class Debate' in South African Historiography." *Social Dynamics* 9, no. 1 (1983): 50-66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02533958308458333>.
- Peires, Jeff. *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence*. Johannesburg: Ravan.
- Quan, H.L.T. "Geniuses of resistance: feminist consciousness and the Black radical tradition." *Race and Class* 47, no. 2(2005): 39-53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030639680505808>
- Reddy, Thiven. *Hegemony and Resistance: Contesting Identities in South Africa*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.
- Reddy, Thiven. *Settler Colonialism and the Failures of Liberal Democracy*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2015.
- Robinson, Cedric. J. *Black Marxism: The making of the black radical tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983 re-issued 2000.
- Robinson, Cedric. *An Anthropology of Marxism*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.
- Robinson, Cedric. *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning: Blacks and the Regimes of Race in American Theatre and Film before World War II*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Roediger, David. *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History*. London: Verso, 1994.
- Roediger, David. R. *The wages of whiteness: race and the making of the American working class*. Rev. ed. London; Verso, 1999.
- Roos, Neil. "Work Colonies and South African Historiography." *Social history* 36, no. 1 (2011): 54-76, <https://doi-org/10.1080/03071022.2011.549749>.

- Roux, Edward. *Time longer than rope: a history of the black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa*. London: V. Gollancz, 1948.
- Roux, Edward & Bunting, Brian. *S.P. Bunting: a political biography* (New ed. / edited and introduced by Brian Bunting; with a foreword by Chris Hani). Bellville, South Africa: Mayibuye Books, 1993.
- Sakai, J. *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat from Mayflower to Modern*. PM Press, 1983, re-issued 2014, <https://site.ebrary.com/id/10905785>.
- Santiago-Valles, Kelvin. "Racially subordinate labour within global contexts: Robinson and Hopkins re-examined." *Race and Class* 47, no. 2 (2005): 54-70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396805058082>.
- Singh, Nikhil "The Whiteness of Police." *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2014): 1091-1099, <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2014.0060>.
- Pal Singh, Nikhil. "On Race, Violence and "So-Called Primitive Accumulation." In Gaye Johnson and Alex Lubin (eds.), *Futures of Black Radicalism*. London: Verso, 2017.
- Sizwe, No. *One Azania, one nation: the national question in South Africa*. London: Zed Press, 1979.
- Simons, Harold. J. & Simons, Ray E. *Class and colour in South Africa, 1850-1950*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.
- Stewart, Paul. "The Centrality of Labor Time in South African Gold Mining Since 1886." *Labor History* 57, no. 2 (2016): 170-192, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2016.1161137>.
- Steyn, Melissa. "The ignorance contract: recollections of apartheid childhoods and the construction of epistemologies of ignorance." *Identities* 19, no. 1 (2012): 8-25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2012.672840>.
- Steyn, Melissa "*Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be*": *White Identity in a Changing South Africa*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001

- Stoler, Ann. "Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures." *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (1989): 634-660, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1989.16.4.02a00030>.
- Stoler, Ann. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Sullivan, Shannon. & Tuana, Nancy. *Race and epistemologies of ignorance*. Ithaca: State University of New York Press, 2007.
- The Story of a Crime: Being the Vindication of the Transvaal Strike Legal Defence Committee in Connection with the Great Strike on the Witwatersrand in 1922*. The Transvaal Legal Defence Committee. Johannesburg: Trades Hall, 1924.
- Thompson, Edward. P. *The making of the English working class*. London: Victor Gillancz, 1963.
- The Star. *Through the Red Revolt on the Rand: A Pictorial Review of Events*. Johannesburg: Central News Agency, 1922.
- Van Der Walt, Lucien. "The First Globalisation and Transnational Labour Activism in Southern Africa: White Labourism, the IWW, and the ICU, 1904-1934." *African studies (Johannesburg)* 66, no. 2-3 (2007): 223-251, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00020180701482719>.
- van Wyk, Johan. "Volcano Needing Constant Watching': South African White Labour and Socialist Culture 1900-1924." *Journal of Literary Studies* (Pretoria, South Africa) 14, no. 1-2 (1998): 116-135, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02564719808530192>.
- Van Zyl-Hermann, Danelle. *Privileged Precariat: White Workers and South Africa's Long Transition to Majority Rule* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Van Onselen, Charles. *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914* Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982.
- Valdez, Inés. "Socialism and Empire: Labour Mobility, Racial Capitalism, and the Political Theory of Migration." *Political Theory*, (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591720981896>.

- Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler colonialism: a theoretical overview*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Walker, Ivan L, & Weinbren, Ben. *2000 Casualties: A History of the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa*. Johannesburg: South African Trade Union Council, 1961.
- Wekker, Gloria. *White innocence: paradoxes of colonialism and race*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- West, Mary and Schmidt, Jennifer. "Whiteness Studies in South Africa: A South African Perspective: Preface." *English in Africa* 37, no. 1 (2010): 9-13.
- White, Hylton. "How Is Capitalism Racial? Fanon, Critical Theory and the Fetish of Antiraciality." *Social Dynamics* 46, no. 1 (2020): 22-35.
- Willoughby-Herard, Tiffany. *Waste of a white skin: the Carnegie Corporation and the racial logic of white vulnerability*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015.
- Wilson, Francis. *Labour in the South African Gold Mines 1911-1969*. Cambridge: University Press, 1972; and Rodney Davenport. *South Africa: A Modern History*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Wilson, Monica & Thompson, Leonard. ed. *The Oxford History of South Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-71.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of genocide research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387-409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.
- Wolfe, Patrick. *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*. London: Verso, 2016.
- Wolpe, Harold. "Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid." In *Wolpe. ed.: The Articulation of Modes of Production*, 289-319. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- Yudelman, David. *The emergence of modern South Africa: state, capital, and the incorporation of organized labour on the South African gold fields, 1902-1939*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Primary Sources:

Central Archives Depot, K4 (01), unpublished Minutes of the Martial Law Commission.

Graham, Thomas Lynedoch. *Report of the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Commission*. Pretoria: Wallachs' P. & P. Co., 1922.

National Archives Repository, "Report of the Low-Grade Mines Commission." SAS, 1285 (1920)

National Archives Repository, SAB, BES, volume no. 626 (535), Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1906, 1.

Patrick, Pearson. Collection of Photographs, Wits Historical Papers, A2638, Film 6 no. 9.

Cases, legislation, regulations, and notices

Resolution 159 of 1855 passed by the Transvaal Government

Squatters Act No. 11 of 1887 passed by the South African Republic

Volksraad Resolution No. 359 of 1891

Native Reserve Location Act No. 40 of 1902

South Africa Act of 1909

Mines and Works Act No. 12 of 1911

Land Settlement Act No. 12 of 1912

Natives Land Act No. 27 of 1913

Rex v Herschel 1920 AD 575.

Industrial Conciliation Act No. 11 of 1924

Minimum Wages Act of 1925

Miner's Pthisis Act of 1925

Mines and Works Act No. 25 of 1926

Newspapers:

S.M. Pritchard, "An Appeal to Europeans." *Rand Daily Mail*, March 9, 1922, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/apps/readex/?p=HN-SARDM> (Accessed: September 15, 2021)

"Indemnity Bill Moved: Motion Opposed." *Rand Daily Mail*, March 25, 1922, 7. (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.

"Miner's Leaders' Views." *Rand Daily Mail*, June 28, 1922, 11. (Accessed Online: 1 September, 2021) <https://www.readex.com/>

"The Revolution on the Rand: Martial Law Commission's Report." *Rand Daily Mail*, October 23, 1922, 8, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>

"Martial Law Inquiry: Mining Man's View." *Rand Daily Mail*, October 24, 1922, 8, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.

"The No Confidence Debate: Martial Law Report." *Rand Daily Mail*, January 25, 1923, 9, (Accessed Online: 1 September 2021), <https://www.readex.com/>.