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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

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Title: The Administration and Control of Migratory Labour on the S.A. Gold Mines: Capitalism and the State in the Era of Kruger and Milner.

by: A H Jeeves

No. 026

Almost from its infancy the Witwatersrand mining industry grew up under the shelter of substantial government encouragement and support. Although spokesmen for the mines have always attempted to portray their impressive achievements as a triumph of free enterprise capitalism, [1] the leaders of the industry themselves assiduously courted state assistance from the time of Kruger's republic onward. [2] There is a close parallel with the great transportation companies which threw steel across western North America in the latter part of the 19th century, engulfing vast tracts of the public domain and huge government subsidies in the process. American and Canadian governments were drawn to the support of the railways for some of the same reasons which brought South African governments into partnership with the mining houses. Railways in the one case and gold in the other were perceived as the basic instruments of nation building. This was too important a matter to leave purely to private enterprise. Furthermore, it quickly became apparent that private companies were either unwilling, in the case of such enterprises as the Canadian Pacific Railway, or unable, as with the South African gold mines to do the job unaided by government. The railway companies took their assistance in the form of direct cash subsidies and in land. While the mining industry did not require cash subsidies until the 1960's (when certain low grade mines were subsidized), what it did require throughout its history was an enormous legislative and administrative effort to organize the black labour supply -- a crucial element in mining costs. [3]

Several considerations can be advanced to explain why the mines required state support in this area. One set of factors had to do with the persistent unwillingness of Africans to accept mine labour, especially underground, where any alternatives were open to them. Africans were perfectly well aware of conditions on the Rand, of which mines were to be prefered to others, of wage levels and of the availability or not of alternative employment. [4] Even before the South African war officials were actively involved in efforts to overcome this resistance. During the Crown Colony period, the administration made still greater efforts in the same direction. Considerations of mining economics also led the companies into a close dependence upon government. The peculiar nature of the Witwatersrand ore formations (and the uncertainties which this produced in a highly cost sensitive industry) was one factor. Another was conflict and rivalry between the various mining houses. Unable through their own institutions to control

to place along the reef, however, and there were usually sharp fluctuations within individual mines.[10] Uncertainty was increased by the need at the very outset to determine which of the ore bodies in a particular mine could be profitably extracted and which were of so low a grade as not to warrant development. This was the crucial decision. Once the mine was developed, its shafts sunk and its drives located, the design might be prohibitively expensive to change. It was much cheaper to sink a large shaft to begin with than to enlarge a small one later on.

Since the price of gold was fixed throughout this period, the payability or not of a particular ore body depended upon, first, the yield in gold per ton of ore and, secondly, upon the critical factor of working costs. These factors determined the "pay limit".[11] Geological exploration could give the mine owner some indication of the quality and extent of the ore in his mine. Working costs, however, were determined by social and economic forces which often lay only marginally under his control. A conservative company which developed only its richer and clearly payable ore, might find itself, assuming a subsequent fall in working costs, with vast tonnages of now payable but inaccessible ore. Conversely, a gambling mine management, developing its low grade ore bodies on the basis of an optimistic view of the future, might find itself faced with substantial capital losses if costs failed to fall. Richer mines were affected by these considerations to a lesser degree than poorer ones, but most of the mining houses had one or more mines where cost problems were critical.

The requirements of mining development -- the need to invest and develop at the outset for the whole life of the mine -- tended to make gamblers of the Randlords. So also did the very nature of the mineral in question. There is lots of evidence of the peculiar fascination exercised by gold upon generations of miners, speculators and hoarders, and it seems that the flint-eyed captains of Rand finance were far from immune. The same individuals who might cheerfully have left tons of, say, uneconomic copper in a mine dedicated themselves on the Rand to the single-minded pursuit of the last possible pennyweight of gold. Thus was the propensity to gamble intensified. Like all shrewd gamblers the mine owners sought to hedge their bets and so to protect themselves from the various uncertainties to which they were vulnerable. The group system of control was one device for accomplishing this. It not only rationalized mining administration

and permitted savings in management costs (through provision of centralized managerial, secretarial and engineering services), but more importantly it enabled the owners in effect to subsidize the poorer mines from the profits of the richer ones during periods of adversity.

A more important device for stabilizing working costs was to seek favourable policies from the government. Through the Chamber of Mines and through the press which they controlled, the mine owners stressed from the beginning that the welfare of the state was dependent upon the health of the gold industry. More subtle was their effort to make the demands of the industry as a whole coincide with the needs of its weakest producers. The Randlords enjoyed considerable success in their efforts to promote the notion that the welfare of the entire industry was to be measured by the profitability or not of the low grade mines.[12] Whenever the profitability of of the low grade producers seemed to be threatened, mining spokesmen would trumpet that the whole industry was in crisis. At such moments -- and they tended to be frequent -- the claim was usually also made that the prosperity and stability of Transvaal society was at stake: galloping unemployment and social instability in the white community and falling government revenues -- this was the spectre which was held up as the inevitable consequence of the failure to rescue the low grade mines. The effect of such propaganda was to identify the welfare of the industry and of the society as a whole with the maximization of output. Steady expansion usually involved mining ores of lower grade, and this in turn required lower costs.

The degree of success which the Chamber of Mines enjoyed in its efforts to identify the survival of the low grade producers with the welfare of the entire society is revealed in the reports of the plethora of mining commissions and inquiries which from 1897 have been established by successive governments. Invariably the special problems of the low grade mines figured prominently in these investigations.[13] Not until 1907 when the Botha government established the Mining Industry Commission was there an effort made to look critically at the arguments advanced by the mines to justify favourable treatment. Earlier, both the Industrial Commission of Inquiry (1897) and the Transvaal Labour Commission (1903) were dominated by the Chamber. The industry was enormously aided in that it had a near monopoly of the information needed to assess the highly technical problems of Rand mining. Commissions of inquiry, therefore, had little choice but to rely upon

Chamber data and even Chamber expertise in conducting their investigations. Even the Mining Industry Commission of 1908, though it was inclined to be very critical of group mining and financial practices, was handicapped in making an effective case by its reliance upon industry data. In short the state was slow in South Africa to develop the capacity required to look critically at the mining industry. Of course in this period, the occasions when the governments were inclined to do so tended to be rare. [14]

These general considerations help to explain why the Randlords should have committed themselves so early and so thoroughly to high cost, (relatively) low profit exploitation of the low grade ores. Still there was nothing inevitable about it. In the medium term good profits could have been made by concentrating upon the richer ores on the basis of a not much reduced scale of operations. [15] Moreover, the low grade mines were risky ventures, highly vulnerable to small increases in costs. The failures and difficulties of numbers of such mines are one reason (though not the most important) to explain the wastage of large capital sums and the rather low return to the industry upon gross capital investment, as calculated by Frankel. [16] In fact other considerations than those noted above were involved in the early commitment to low grade mining. They have to do with the optimism about the future of Rand mining which prevailed in the mid-1890's and with the state of the capital markets for South African mining shares.

The last six or seven years before the South African War saw an enormous expansion in the mining industry. The first of the deep level mines were developed at this time, and very large capital investment was required. Expansion was the product of two main considerations. The boom conditions in the share market in 1894-5 and to a lesser degree in early 1899 offered an advantageous time to seek new capital. Companies were floated which never would have been launched in ordinary circumstances. [17] Moreover, the financial houses on the Rand were enabled, through their market operations, to take profits which probably exceeded -- at least for some of the groups -- the profits from actual mining. [18] After 1895 the possibility of securing windfall profits in this way largely disappeared. Henceforward profit depended to a greater extent upon the performance of the mines themselves, including the marginal propositions floated during the boom. The other consideration which encouraged expansion was the confident

belief that working costs would come down through reform in government policies and through technological innovation.[19] Here were further inducements to investment in the development of ore bodies which could not be profitably worked under the then prevailing conditions. That this type of gambling investment was being made may be illustrated from the experience of Rand Mines Limited, a well-managed and highly profitable company controlled by the industry leader, Wernher, Beit/Eckstein. In 1907, the Rand Mines Chairman, J. Reyersbach, noted that the mines of his group had several million tons of low grade ore developed (much of it in the pre-war period) and ready for extraction whenever cost reductions made this possible. The speedy exploitation of these deposits he regarded as a matter of priority. Reyersbach estimated the average yield of this low grade ore at 16s per ton, compared with an average yield for operating mines of 40s per ton in 1897 and 34s 6d. in 1906.[20] Here is evidence of an optimism verging upon recklessness.

The collapse of the boom in "kaffirs" in late 1895 and subsequent vicissitudes induced by political crisis and war brought cost problems to the fore and exposed the precarious position of the low grade producers. Both the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company (Barnato) and the Robinson company were in serious difficulty even before the war. Testifying before the Industrial Commission of Inquiry in 1897, JCI consulting engineer, W.L. Hamilton, estimated that his group had two million pounds tied up in idle plant and equipment.[21] E. Brochon of Robinsons noted in his evidence before the same inquiry that, while the reform demands of the industry would produce only an eight per cent reduction in working costs, this was a matter of "life and death" for many companies.[22] Of all of the groups these two firms were most heavily committed to low grade mining. However, even the dominant company, Wernher, Beit/Eckstein, briefly considered closing numbers of its poorer mines in 1897.[23] Despite the failure to secure major reforms from Kruger's government in 1897,[24] profits of the operating companies were maintained up to the war largely through black wage reductions in late 1896 and early 1897 and the first (partially) effective efforts to organize monopsonistic recruiting.[25]

Though hard evidence is lacking, it appears that the operating mines were also working the richer ores and leaving as much of the low grade ore in the mines as possible. It was not then a requirement, as it is today, that a company work to the average grade of the ore

in the mine.[26]

The disruption caused by the war, the deterioration of plant and equipment and the loss of interest upon invested capital owing to the suspension of operations exacerbated cost problems for the mines. In the immediate postwar years, the need to secure substantial cost reductions appeared as a more urgent necessity even than it had been in 1897.[27] Both van der Horst and Denoon have suggested that the labour shortage of 1902-1903 was to some extent artifically manufactured by the mine owners. In their greed, according to this analysis, the Randlords severely depressed black wages and wildly exaggerated the possibilities of expansion and hence of the future demand for labour.[28] It may be, on the other hand, that these decisions on wage levels and expansion possibilities owed less to simple greed and more to low grade ore than the van der Horst/Denoon interpretation would admit. In the aftermath of war, the mining houses confronted the consequences of their own earlier optimism. On the basis of pre-war investment decisions, they were already committed to low grade mining and thus to the cost constraints which this involved. However, it must be admitted that the black wage rate of thirty shillings (average per month of thirty shifts) established just after the war was absurdly low and counter-productive as the industry itself recognized when, at the end of 1902, it returned to the (still low) fifty shilling average established in 1897.[29]

An examination of the early history of the industry reveals a growing preoccupation with the problems of low grade mining. In this is to be found a partial explanation for the persistent efforts of the owners to involve governments in attempts to keep costs as low as possible. Through government action they hoped to secure greater leverage upon costs and control over the economic uncertainties to which they were vulnerable. For this support a substantial price was exacted in terms of higher taxes and closer government control, but it was one which the owners were quite willing to pay. Dr. van der Horst recognized the early commitment of the state to the support of the low grade mines, "for successive governments have feared the consequences of any contraction of the mining industry".[30] She dated the emergence of this policy from the appointment of the Low Grade Mines Commission in 1916. In fact, however, even Kruger's government was being pressed to assist the poorer mines, and the Crown Colony administration was clearly committed in the same direction. Government support was nowhere more important than in the organisation of

the supply of migrant labour, and the balance of the paper is concerned with a discussion of the evolution of policy in this area.

As early as 1890, the Chamber of Mines was writing candidly to the government: "Private enterprise has repeatedly failed in attempting to organize and maintain an adequate supply of Kaffirs. The task must be undertaken by the public authorities, and the Chamber trusts that the Government will lend it their indispensable assistance". [31] Specifically, the industry requested a more vigorous enforcement of the pass law, measures to stop the "molestation" of Africans en route to the mines and the creation of depots along the main routes to shelter migrant workers. As well the Chamber wanted direct "encouragement" of mine labour by government officials in the rural areas. [32] Failure of the government to act effectively in these matters led the industry to establish a Native Labour Department of the Chamber of Mines in an effort to coordinate policy and to reduce competition for labour among the groups. [33] [34] A Native Labour Commissioner, William Grant, was also appointed to head up the department. Inadequately staffed, starved of resources and without the means of enforcing a common policy on the industry, this department was little more successful in handling the problem than the Chamber itself had been before 1893.

In 1895 after several years of agitation, the Chamber of Mines induced the Volksraad to enact a special pass law applicable in "labour districts" (defined under the act to coincide with mining districts). The act had been drawn up for the industry by the Native Labour Committee of the Chamber, and it was based partly on Natal models. The new pass law provided for a rudimentary form of influx control; and it enjoined Africans to wear a metal arm badge (amended later to a requirement that an official pass be carried) numbered as a means of identification. Penalties were prescribed for breaches of the act, particularly for desertion. [35] Supplementing the new pass law was the general pass law of the republic. [36] Moreover, the Master and Servants Act (a legacy of the first British administration of the Transvaal) provided criminal penalties for breach of labour contracts.

One feature of this legislation which has escaped attention is that it was designed partly to protect the mines from each other. During the 1890's the cheapest and easiest recruiting took place on the Rand itself. It was the regular practice of many mine managers to "recruit" labour from each other. Labour "touts" and African "runners" in the pay of one mine management would procure desertions from the compounds of neighbouring mines through promises (usually

false) of better pay or conditions.[37] Some of these "touts" were free-lancers, paid by the head; others seem to have been salaried employees of the various mines. So long as there was no ready means of identifying deserters, it proved impossible to control this activity. The new pass law was designed specifically to eliminate "thefts" of labour from one mine by another. It is thus no accident that the implementation of the new pass law in 1896 coincided with the wage reduction agreements of late 1896 and early 1897.(cutting black wages by thirty per cent and providing for a system of inspection of company wage sheets to enforce compliance).[38] The formation of the Rand Native Labour Association in late 1896 in an effort to monopsonize recruiting was an essentially complementary step, dependent for its effectiveness on both the pass law and the wage reduction agreements.[39] Faulty administration of the pass law seriously diminished its effectiveness, and the "theft" of labour remained a problem (though now on a reduced scale) up to the outbreak of war.[40]

After the war the Milner administration provided a much more elaborate system of control. The pass department was reorganised and expanded; inspectors were appointed; and a "finger impression" branch was established to facilitate positive identification of deserters.[41] The new Labour Agents Regulations (Proclamation 38 of 1901) prohibited recruiting in labour districts.[42] In spite of the expanded system, the mines were still complaining of a high rate of desertions and labour "theft" as late as 1905-6.[43] This is not to suggest that desertions were solely a problem caused by cut-throat competition between rival mine managers. Horrific conditions in the compounds and underground gave Africans ample reason to desert without being incited to it by avaricious labour touts and hard-pressed mine managers. However, there is overwhelming evidence that before the war and even to a degree after, desertion in substantial part was a problem created by the mines themselves.

At the request of the Chamber the republic also acted against the illicit liquor dealers who swarmed on the Rand, and in 1897 it finally legislated total prohibition of sale to Africans. The mining law of the republic, furthermore, was notoriously favourable to the big interests. Though much of this legislation was badly administered, it does reveal very well the extent to which Kruger's government, despite its post-Raid suspicions of the industry, was drawn into a close alliance with it. After the war, the Master and Servants Act,

and the Liquor law were taken over by the reconstruction government with only changes in detail.

In pursuit of favourable legislation, the industry was quickly drawn into close relationship with government officials. Both as members of official Chamber deputations and on an individual basis, mining leaders had easy access to the republican executive, including the State President himself.[44] J.B. Robinson used his good knowledge of Afrikaans and his initially friendly relations with Kruger to the distinct advantage of his various Randfontein enterprises.[45] Some companies maintained an office in Pretoria. The Warnher, Beit/Eckstein group deputed one of the partners to handle the "Pretoria work", much of which involved acting as a kind of lobbyist. A good deal of money was apparently spent on these activities. There is clear evidence that Christiaan Joubert, the "Chief" of Mines, was bribed on several occasions. Money was spent on "improving" the Volksraad and on attempting to influence both the republican elections of 1893 and 1898.[46] On the latter occasion J.B. Robinson in cooperation with Warnher, Beit/Eckstein channelled funds to the support of Schalk Burger and P.J. Joubert against Kruger with Robinson himself playing the improbable role of clandestine campaign manager and bag man.[47]

In the rural areas, particularly of the northern Transvaal, a number of the native commissioners were accused of taking bribes from labour "touts" and mining companies.[48] In return these men either bribed or coerced African chiefs and headmen to turn out levies for the mines.[49] Some considerable success attended these activities, and by 1899, the northern Transvaal was emerging as a significant source of African labour for the mines. Moreover, it appears that the burghers were being priced out of the labour market. In 1896, the Volksraad enacted a measure providing for the payment of chiefs in return for agricultural labour. Those who provided over fifty labourers in a year were to receive five shillings per head. Lesser bounties were prescribed for smaller numbers.[50]

Under the reconstruction administration a much closer working alliance developed between mining leaders and the government. At last the mine owners had, as they thought, a régime committed to the maximum exploitation of the Rand and equipped to be both honest and efficient. Immediate and far-reaching reforms were expected even by those magnates who had been closest to Kruger's government.[51] The

Chamber of Mines lost no time in making its wants known.[52] As early as 1900, a request came forward from the Chamber suggesting that the government take over responsibility for mine labour recruiting. This request was refused, one indication that Milner had no intention of serving the industry at the expense of his broader socio-political objectives. In fact the Crown Colony government always had to balance the demands of the mines with the other claims upon it. The priority given to rural development, for example, led frequently to conflict with industrial policy. Since the charge of capitalist domination was already current, both in England and in South Africa, Milner had strong political reasons to avoid identifying the government too closely with the mining industry.[53]

Shortly after civilian rule was re-established in the Transvaal in 1902, direct taxes on mining revenues were raised over what they had been before the war. The republican profits tax (legislated in 1898) which had never been collected was implemented and raised from five to ten per cent. The extension of the municipal boundaries of Johannesburg rendered residential property of many mines liable to local rates.[54] There was some compensation in a considerable reduction in the price of dynamite. What Milner told Fitzpatrick, The President of the Chamber in 1902, was that the mines would have to look for their savings not to the area of direct taxation but rather in improved administration.[55]

In the first year or so of the new government, several of the magnates were themselves involved in various official administrative jobs. Dr. Mawby has noted the heavy commitments in this respect carried by members of the Wernher, Beit/Eckstein group.[56] At the lower end of the bureaucratic echelon there was also a tendency to employ men with mining company experience. This was particularly the case of the inspectorate established in the Native Affairs Department to police conditions on the mines, to check violations of the pass law and to act as the "protectors" of Africans. At least in the early years this amounted to setting the wolf to guard the flock. That a flow of personnel also took place from the government to the industry tended to cement the alliance between them. When the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association was established in 1900 to replace the moribund RNLA, its first General Manager was Major G.A. Goodwin who had been an official in the Transvaal military government. Goodwin was succeeded by T.J.M. McFarlane and T.M.C. Nourse as joint general managers. The

latter was Officer-in-charge of Native Affairs before the inauguration of civilian rule. Early in 1902 Frederick Perry, who had earlier served in the Colonial Office, left his post as Imperial Secretary to succeed Harold Strange as Chairman of WNLA. These men had moved easily in high government circles and now their contacts were brought to the service of the mining industry. Indeed, the line dividing industry from government tended at times to blur. Certainly Perry tended to act at the head of WNLA as if he was running a government department rather than a private corporation. On occasion the Commissioner of Native Affairs, Godfrey Lagden, who was himself notably sympathetic to the needs of the mines, felt obliged to criticize Perry for this.

Using the correspondence files of the Native Affairs Department it would be easy to make a case that Lagden and his officials answered rather to the Chamber and WNLA than to their superiors in government. An extensive and partially private correspondence was exchanged on a regular basis. The monthly reports of the executive of the Chamber were sent to Lagden as a matter of course. So also were the bi-monthly reports of the WNLA general managers to the board of management.[57] The latter sometimes contained highly confidential information which at least implied that WNLA was using recruiting methods at variance with government policy. Lagden and his Secretary of Native Affairs, W. Windham met frequently with leading officials of both the Chamber and the recruiting association. These men were treated with extreme deference. Whenever Lagden had occasion to criticize some industry deficiency, his prefered method was to write a private note to the senior official of the company concerned or to speak informally to the President of the Chamber. As a result, many complaints did not even come officially to the attention of the government. Mining leaders for their part frequantly briefed Lagden and sought his approval in advance of major and even minor policy changes. The effect of these informal exchanges was to reduce the independence[8] of the Native Affairs Department, and doubtless this was the intent of the industry in promoting them. Having been consulted privately by the Chamber during the planning of policy, Lagden was handicapped in bringing forward official criticism at a later stage.

This close relationship between the mines and Native Affairs department officials developed at every level of the administrative hierarchy. The department inspectors were rarely critical of their opposite numbers, the compound managers. A departmental report on the

competence of the latter was notably generous in its assessments.[58] The statistics of the department gave unwitting evidence of just how these men conceived their role. During 1902 and early 1903, the inspectors, who were supposed to act in some sense as the "protectors" of Africans on the mines, investigated thirteen cases of alleged assault upon black mine workers by their white overseers and twenty-eight complaints concerning alleged wage irregularities. In the same period well over 3000 Africans were disciplined for breach of contract and for other "offences" against their employers. These figures were sufficiently startling to provoke a question in the House of Commons and a subsequent inquiry by the Secretary of State.[59] Scattered through the files of the department are several references to work stoppages caused by short-lived strikes of black mine workers. On such occasions, the mine management would invariably contact the nearest inspector. In each case the inspector ordered the Africans back to work, threatening those who refused with immediate arrest for breach of contract. Every effort was made to identify the leaders of the strikes and to bring them to trial.[60] Far from being in any meaningful sense the "protectors" of Africans, the inspectors acted primarily in the interest of the owners to enforce a harsh industrial discipline.

However, there is another dimension to the relations between the Native Affairs Department and the mining industry. In one area the department did act with considerable vigour and effectiveness to improve the conditions of the black labour force. This was on the matter of mining compounds. Without exception, all of those who were connected with these matters testified to the grotesque situation which prevailed before the war. Throughout southern Africa there was a regular traffic in black labour for the mines. Once en route to the Rand, an African would typically pass through the hands of two or three labour "touts" (in effect having been sold from one to the next) before he reached his destination. Those who arrived safely at the mines after running a gauntlet of avaricious labour agents, government officials, predatory farmers and actual thieves, met a new set of horrors. Among those who testified before the Transvaal Labour Commission in 1903 were several men with direct experience of compound conditions as they were before and just after the war. A former compound manager at the Crown Reef mine spoke of the "drink sodden condition, want of discipline and general moral decay" of the Africans on the mine.[61] The Reverend E. Croux described "the fearful corruption and contemination" and the constant illness in the compounds which he had been allowed to visit.[62]

Perhaps the most graphic description was given somewhat later in a private letter to Lagden:

> No man, with any claim to manhood, could have gone thru those /prewar/ experiences and not have realized the indescribable horror of it. To say that at weekend I carried my life in my hands is putting it mildly; it was a constant case of having to quell riots among natives frenzied with drink, and I fear that in the process I had over and over again to adopt methods which ... would ordinarily have qualified me for gaol. I have never used a revolver tho I always carried one, but I have been thru riots with a heavy sjambok and with that quelled the disturbances but almost at the cost of some natives lives. The horror of it I shall never forget.... [63]

Mortality statistics are not available for this period, but the death rate was probably between eighty and one hundred per thousand per annum. On some mines and during the winter months it was almost certainly very much higher than that.

Very quickly after the return to civilian rule in the Transvaal, the Native Affairs Department began to press for reform.[64] Compound managers were brought under a degree of control and like the labour agents required to hold government licences. Native Affairs Department inspectors began to report on compound conditions and to gather mortality statistics. The reports and the statistics revealed a shocking situation, little, if at all improved since the war.[65] Armed with incontrovertible evidence of endemic disease and high mortality on the mines -- included in the WNLA reports under the heading of "wastage" -- Lagden approached the Chamber to insist upon reform. Lagden's paternalism was outraged by the situation revealed in the inspectors' reports. To effect a transformation became something of an obsession with him. The intention of publishing mortality statistics gave him a lever with which to act on senior mining company officials.[66] Before long substantial improvements began to take place in the compounds.[67] Moreover, the Chamber of Mines itself began to underwrite inquiries and research into the causes of disease amongst the black labour force.[68] Even here, however, in an area where Lagden himself seems to have been personally engaged, the department treated the mines with great leniency. They were given considerable time to carry out the improvements. They were assured that there would be no premature publicity. Low grade mines or mines nearing the end of their productive life were not required to effect improvements involving the expenditure of large capital sums.

That Lagden was able to convince the industry to initiate reform had partly to do with a fear of censure from the home government.[69] Another consideration was the mounting evidence that compound conditions were seriously interfering with recruiting. WNLA agents, Transvaal native commissioners and officials of the Cape and Basutoland pointed this out repeatedly.[70] Lagden also used their evidence in his efforts to secure reform. Yet the leaders of the industry were slow, extraordinarily slow to take the point that their own self interest would be served by a reduction in mining mortality.[71] Lagden had to resort to threats in order to force improvements. For years he fought with Max Langerman to get the Robinson group to provide decent conditions in its compounds. On one occasion Langerman was virtually ordered to accompany Lagden on a tour of the Robinson compounds. Even this did not work, and it was only when Lagden threatened to withdraw the passes from the group's labour force that it began to act.[72] This type of experience finally led the Transvaal authorities to enact a Coloured Labourers' Health Ordinance in 1905 which prescribed minimum compound conditions and gave the Native Affairs Department power to enforce compliance.[73]

Even this minimal degree of friction tended to be an exception in the generally cordial relations between the Transvaal authorities and the mine owners. The government gave indispensable assistance to WNLA in its efforts to widen the catchment area of its recruiting operations. The negotiation of the Modus Vivendi with Portuguese Mozambique upon terms markedly favourable to that government reflected the priority which was given to increasing the labour supply. The Modus Vivendi was accompanied by a secret agreement (negotiated with the knowledge and consent of the Transvaal government) between WNLA and the Mozambique authorities. The effect of this arrangement was to give WNLA a near monopoly of recruiting in the territory. Non-WNLA agents were simply refused licences. The Crown Colony administration was also instrumental in securing the approval of London for the experimental recruiting scheme in the British Central African Protectorate (Nyasaland).[74]

Lagden also made certain, of course, that his own native commissioners were well aware that one of their important functions was to "encourage" mine labour in their districts. Just how far these native commissioners were to go in promoting the objects of WNLA was a delicate matter. Early in the reconstruction period, Chamberlain had warned and Milner had agreed that there must be no suspicion of forced labour as under the republic.[75] Though the Native Affairs Department

was bound by this instruction, there is quite a bit of evidence that the line between force and persuasion tended to be a fine one. On one occasion, the native commissioner of the northern division wrote in alarm to Lagden that a recent court case had turned up "matter suggestive of forced labour" for the mines. A riot had broken out during recruiting operations in the area. The native commissioner explained for the record that "the matter resolves itself into the carrying out only of the intricate internal management of a somewhat powerful native tribe". A facility with euphimism was evidently a recommendation for those working in the Native Affairs Department at that time.[76] Lagden was tolerant of such incidents so long as they did not draw unfavourable publicity. Indeed the emphasis he gave to the promotion of mine labour almost certainly encouraged his officials to employ methods which could not be officially condoned.[77] Certainly he was aware of the methods being employed by WNLA. Toward the end of the Crown Colony period, he wrote to Selborne that WNLA regularly provided "presents and bribes" to Portuguese officials and to native chiefs and headmen: "No doubt, it has been necessary for private /labour/ associations to have large amounts of secret service money at their disposal to be expended without question or doubt" -- "not corruptly", he added in the margin, "but as a pure matter of business".[78] He asked that this memorandum not be passed on to the Botha government as it might be "misunderstood".

The central role of the state in sustaining the labour policies of the mining industry was clearly revealed in the labour crisis of 1906, which was the product, partly, of the threatened withdrawal of official support of the WNLA monopsony. A most vexing question for the mines and the government during these years was the maintenance of a regular and dependable flow of labour to the Rand. The Randlords themselves demonstrated a singular incapacity both to anticipate their own labour requirements for any distance into the future and to predict the supply situation. The problem was, however, complex. In any given month, several thousand migrants would arrive at the WNLA central depot in Bloemfontein. These were the Africans recruited by WNLA agents from a catchment area which embraced a large part of the subcontinent. A significant number again would offer themselves at particular mines, having made their own way to the Rand as volunteers. In that same month there would be an outflow of several thousand Africans whose contracts had expired, who were repatriated (or simply kicked out of the compounds) because of illness, who had deserted or died.[79] One difficulty

was to balance the inflow with the outflow. An increase in recruitment levels in one month would inevitably produce an accelerated outflow six to twelve months later as the contracts of these workers expired. Any sudden change in recruiting levels -- either up or down -- was likely to catch the industry unawares. A sudden increase in the supply during the first months of 1905, for example, resulted in the mines actually turning away labour. Since the Randlords had been shouting only two years before about the labour shortage, this was a cause of some embarassement to them, as well as to the government. An equally sharp downturn in the supply later that same year (like the earlier increase, unaxplained and apparently unexplainable) produced a reaction akin to panic in the Chamber and in WNLA.

WNLA, of course, represented an effort to control demand, to prevent wage competition and to allocate the available labour on the basis of the crushing capacity of member companies (as established by a standing committee of mining engineers). In periods of sufficient supply the system worked fairly well. In periods of falling recruitment levels, trouble invariably followed. Under pressure to maintain production targets, mine managers would start to cheat. They would engage in clandestine recruiting, they would offer "under the table" bonuses or they would attempt to secure a higher rating from WNLA by exaggerating their crushing capacity and thus claim a higher proportion of the available supply. The evidence suggests that breaches of the monopsony were endemic both in the last years of Kruger's republic and at intervals during the reconstruction period. J. B. Robinson, for example, though a member of WNLA until late 1906, was believed to maintain his own agents in the Cape who supplied him with "volunteers" outside the WNLA system.[80] Labour agents' regulations in the Transvaal and the other colonies imposed constraints upon the recruiting methods of licenced agents. Moreover, at Lagden's insistence, WNLA had bound itself to the medical examination of its recruits. Though only loosely enforced, these regulations seem to have materially increased recruiting difficulties. Clandestine recruiting was, of course, affected by none of these constraints. During periods of adversity, the temptation to cheat was thus enormous, but the advantage would persist obviously only so long as most of the WNLA members bound themselves to its rules.

Shortfalls in the supply inevitably produced acrimony within the association as to just what these rules should be. One contentious

issue at such times was invariably the factor of wage levels. In public discussion, most industry spokesman held -- as indeed many of them continue to hold -- to the target worker argument. Within the industry, however, agreement on this point was far from complete. During 1902 when the Chamber and WNLA were especially concerned about the supply an acrimonious dispute erupted on the wage issue. When production was resumed in the later stages of the war, the industry had implemented a minimum rate of wages which at thirty shillings (thirty shifts) was substantially lower than the rate agreed in 1897.[81] As the labour shortage continued during 1902, one group within the industry argued for a return to the 1897 rate, while others, cleaving to the target worker argument, fought for the maintenance of the thirty shilling minimum. Despite efforts to present at least the appearance of a united front on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary of State (early in 1903), The Chamber could do no more than register the two basic viewpoints on the wage issue.[82] In the end the proponents of the increase had their way. They were able to secure acceptance of a complicated wage scale based on the 1897 agreement, prescribing a "maximum average" wage of fifty shillings per thirty shifts and allowing for limited incentives through piece work rates.[83]

Much more serious was the crisis of 1906 which badly damaged and nearly destroyed the monopsony. It was the coincidence of recruiting difficulties and a threatened withdrawal of official support from WNLA as a result of political changes in Britain which produced trouble. The first few months of 1905 saw a sharp increase in African employment on the Rand, reaching a peak in April when 107, 756 black workers were employed on the mines. There followed an equally sharp downturn, beginning in September and increasing in intensity for over six months. The low point was reached in July, 1906 when only 90,420 Africans were employed. Thereafter a gradual recovery took place, but the April, 1905 figure was not exceeded until February, 1907.[84] In the event, increasing numbers of Chinese (imported under licences issued before the Unionists left office in December 1905) compensated for the fall off of African employment, and the total non-white labour force remained relatively constant. What alarmed the owners, however, was the almost simultaneous fall of the Unionists and the formation of a Liberal government in Britain committed to ending Chinese labour. Thus the foreign supply was threatened at the very time when the African labour force was declining in numbers.

The record of the Liberals in opposition, together with their

early decisions to suspend the implementation of the Lyttelton Constitution, to move directly to responsible government and to suspend the issue of labour importation licences left little doubt concerning their attitude toward the Randlords.[85] While the leaders of the Chamber and WNLA viewed these changes with undisguised alarm and apprehension, a few of their colleagues saw in them opportunities which they were not slow to exploit.[86] The shark who troubled the bar was J.B. Robinson. For years, J.B.R. and his associates had chafed at the restrictions imposed on them by membership in WNLA and the Chamber. In these organisations they constituted only one group among several and not by any means the most important. Moreover, Robinson saw himself as a victim of the Crown Colony administration. Close to Kruger in the pre-war period, he now confronted a régime which was unsympathetic to his group and which regarded Robinson himself with positive distaste.[87] Robinson had already made contact with Het Volk, the activities of which he was later to subsidize, and Langerman was returned as a Het Volk candidate in the first election under the new constitution.

Within a few months of the formation of the Liberal government, Robinson wrote a series of letters to the new Secretary of State, Lord Elgin, in an effort to build a bridge in that direction.[88] He first attacked WNLA, alleging that its recruiting methods were inefficient and pointing out (correctly) that it enjoyed a *de facto* monopoly on recruiting in Mozambique. WNLA inefficiency, he suggested, was no accident and resulted from a plot to make a case for continued Chinese labour importation. Robinson went on to claim that the Transvaal authorities were under the control of the Chamber which drafted all official despatches on labour and mining questions. Lord Selborne like Milner before him was the mere cipher of the big interests. Robinson's fabled cunning is nicely displayed in these dealings with Elgin. The charges which he made were well calculated to appeal to the new administration. Both Robinson's rivals in the industry and the Selborne government were thrown onto the defensive where they remained throughout 1906.

From his mansion in Park Lane, Robinson moved to destroy WNLA. In April, 1906, the leaders of several of the mining houses were startled to receive a blackmailing letter from A.E. Wilson, the manager of a new and mysterious organisation called the Transvaal Mines Labour Company. He blandly informed the industry that his company had been established to recruit in Mozambique and that it had the approval of both the Portuguese and the Transvaal authorities. The company was negotiating

for confirmation with Lisbon but was encountering delays which it attributed to WNLA opposition. A report on the situation had been prepared for the British cabinet and would reach London within the week: "...we have no hesitation in stating that our presentation of the matter, coupled with the sworn testimony we have obtained and sent home will result in free recruiting taking place in Portuguese East Africa". Wilson sadly conjured up the evils which would follow the re-introduction of free recruiting, and he reviewed the horrors of the pre-war situation. The mines could prevent this by agreeing to limited competition between the TMLC and WNLA. The result, he confidently predicted, would be a doubling of the labour supply to the advantage of all concerned. Wilson concluded his letter by stating that if WNLA ceased its opposition forthwith, the TMLC would arrange to have its report to the Liberal government "returned to us unopened".[89] The mining houses responded warily at first and attempted to discover who was behind the TMLC and what degree of official support it actually had.[90] In the end, they decided to call Wilson's bluff and to refuse to yield to blackmail. The TMLC did not have permission to recruit in Mozambique, but it did have an entry with London through Robinson whose agents were behind the formation of the company. What it also had was a "certificate of no objection" from the Transvaal authorities.[91] Under the Modus Vivandi, the Transvaal had the right to veto applications of labour agents seeking permission to recruit in East Africa. Selborne's officials apparently did not realize the implications of what they had done. They were soon brought to their senses, however, and in June Selborne cabled London that his government could have nothing to do with any such "scoundrel" as "Kaffir" Wilson.[92] The recently respectable manager of the TMLC had suddenly become the infamous "Kaffir" Wilson.

In a carefully coordinated campaign, Selborne, his officials and the Chamber of Mines moved to head off Robinson. They warned the Imperial authorities of the evils which would follow the introduction of competitive recruiting. All of the controls which the government had laboriously built up to protect African mine workers would be jeopardised. Moreover, the wage agreement in the industry would inevitably break down, and the poorer companies would be priced out of the labour market.[93] This last argument was certainly spurious. The wage agreement was presented as a device which protected the low grade mines and collieries from wage competition they could not afford to meet. The richer companies which could afford higher wages (thereby securing their full complement of labour -- the target worker argument was conveniently forgotten) had

agreed to sacrifice themselves in the interest of the low grade mines. The picture of the industry as a disparate collection of rich and poor independent producers was, of course, erroneous. The controllers of the rich mines were also the owners of most of the poor ones. In both capacities they benefitted from the wage agreement. Moreover, this argument conveniently ignored the fact that many of Robinson's holdings were low grade propositions. According to what Selborne and the Chamber wrote to Elgin, the Robinson group ought to have been the last to leave the monopsony.

In any case Robinson was at least one step ahead of them. Elgin wrote to Selborne in May, 1906 that the government had received a definite application from the Robinson group. In the view of the Secretary of State, it was "impossible to deny to so substantial an interest the right to separate from [WNLA] and to be placed on an equal footing with its competitors in obtaining labour".[94] Elgin asked Selborne to exert pressure on Lourenco Marques to secure recruiting licences for Robinson. The High Commissioner was frankly informed that Elgin had formed the view that the Governor General of Mozambique "believes he is acting in accordance with your wishes in giving the Association [WNLA] a practical monopoly".[95] Just to make sure that Selborne understood that he was supposed to demonstrate the impartiality of his government, Elgin passed on Robinson's charges of Chamber domination of the Transvaal administration.

Selborne did indeed reply with a vigorous defence of the independence of his government. At the same time, however, he adopted a new strategy in dealing with Robinson which turned out to be also that of the Chamber of Mines. This was to argue for delay. The labour issues were complex, Selborne argued, and policy changes should be preceded by a thorough inquiry — perhaps a joint inquiry of the British and Portuguese governments.[96] This ploy also failed. Elgin replied that the Imperial government favoured a joint inquiry but only after Robinson had been granted his recruiting licences by the Portuguese.[97] Robinson meanwhile had ended his association with "Kaffir" Wilson and the TMLC. In Wilson's place, G.G. Holmes, a Robinson group manager, was appointed, and Holmes quickly established himself at Lourenco Marques.[98] In the face of Elgin's peremptory instructions, the Transvaal government had little choice but to grant Holmes his certificate of no objection.[99] After some delay, the Mozambique authorities also capitulated and issued a licence to Holmes.[100]

The response of the members of WNLA was immediate and dramatic -- sauve qui peut. The rhetoric which just weeks before had been used to defend the monopsony -- WNLA as the guardian of the Africans, WNLA as protector of the poor mines -- was forgotten as the other mining houses rushed to secure for themselves what the Liberals had apparently acquired for Robinson. The other major groups all wrote to the High Commissioner demanding that London secure the same privileges for their companies. Otherwise, as the Rand Mines Limited letter expressed it, the mines of their group would be "deprived of their just proportion" of Mozambique labour.[101] The President of the Chamber reiterated the arguments which were always used when adverse government action was threatened:

> The position of many producers is today already sufficiently serious. We are convinced that their position will become precarious, and in many cases impossible, if the cost of production is further increased by reason of the increased cost of native labour.[102]

Selborne continued to do what he could to deflect Elgin and the Liberal government from its course. Further efforts were made to discredit Robinson: "...the experience of the Native Affairs Department is that the mines of the Robinson group will take no measures involving any expense for the welfare of their coloured labourers which cannot be enforced by law." This was true. On the other hand, the contrasting depiction of WNLA as a virtually humanitarian organisation was somewhat overdrawn.[103]

J.G. Baldwin, the British Consul General at Lourenco Marques, raised another matter with Selborne which the latter eagerly passed on to the Secretary of State. Reporting a conversation with the Governor General of Mozambique, Baldwin explained that the Portuguese authorities were opposed to competitive recruiting which might disturb the colony. The Governor General himself favoured government recruiting for the mines, and Baldwin pointed out that this meant forced labour.[104] Government recruiting would also give Mozambique an even greater stranglehold on the Transvaal.[105] If the Transvaal was placed at the mercy of the Portuguese in this way, Selborne suggested, his government might be forced to amend the Modus Vivendi and to grant further concessions to Mozambique on railway and customs policy. This in turn would exacerbate bad feeling between the Transvaal and the Cape and Natal.

Both the Chamber and the Transvaal government made every effort

to impress upon the Secretary of State the disastrous consequences for the mines, for the Transvaal and for British South Africa which his continued support of Robinson would involve. None of this should be taken at face value. There was more than an element of contrivance in the indecent haste with which the other mining groups rushed to abandon WNLA when the Liberal decision to back Robinson became known. Moreover, the letters which they wrote, demanding similar privileges for themselves, were virtually identical. Here is evidence of an orchestrated disunity -- an organised campaign to create the appearance of chaos in the hope that the Liberals would recoil from the consequences of their support for Robinson and drop him.

Lord Elgin was disturbed neither by the threat to destroy WNLA nor by Selborne's various alarmist warnings. The British government continued to press the Portuguese on behalf of Robinson.[106] The other mining houses were informed that similar treatment for their interests could not be considered until after the proposed joint inquiry with the Portuguese had taken place: "The Secretary of State accordingly requests his Excellency /the High Commissioner/ to warn the members of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association against taking precipitately any irrevocable step for the breaking up of the association".[107] Thus was the Chamber neatly checkmated and its threats to produce anarchy in the labour market rendered harmless.

The transparently hostile attitude of the Secretary of State together with the inability of Selborne to exercise much leverage upon him, forced the Chamber and WNLA back upon their own resources. Late in 1906 Robinson was forced to leave the recruiting association, and he also resigned from the Chamber of Mines. There remained the Portuguese pawn. With the grant of the licence to Holmes by the Portuguese authorities, it was generally believed that the way had been cleared for the Robinson group to commence recruiting in Mozambique. Hence the immediate efforts of the other mining groups to desert WNLA. In fact, however, Holmes' licence was useless without permission to employ sub-agents and African "runners". This the Mozambique government resolutely refused to grant, despite pressure from the Imperial government. Robinson's reliance upon Elgin turned out to be as misplaced as that of his rivals upon Selborne. His protests were loud but unavailing.[108] The final decision lay with the Portuguese authorities, and, for whatever reason, they decided to stand by their old allies in WNLA. The decision may have been dictated by a desire to demonstrate that Mozambique held the whip hand on the

labour issue. Portuguese pride and a desire to assert independence in the face of British pressure may have played a part. It is also possible that some of that WNLA secret service money, refered to by Lagden, found its way into the appropriate hands.

There was no speedy resolution to the crisis. Though Robinson was excluded from Mozambique, his agents were competing vigorously for labour elsewhere in southern Africa. He was apparently still hopeful that through Imperial pressure he would ultimately succeed in breaking WNLA's hold on Portuguese East Africa. Early in 1907 the new Transvaal government took a hand in the matter. Botha made contact with Robinson and his enemies in an effort to bring the two sides together. The Prime Minister also informed Selborne for transmission to the Secretary of State that his government was convinced that recruiting in Mozambique must be carried on "through a single organised body [and] the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association must be kept in existence for this purpose". [109] He was also opposed to the joint British-Portuguese inquiry on the labour issue and wished to negotiate directly with Mozambique. Elgin agreed to go along with this. [110] The Het Volk government perceived where the Liberals did not that a serious disruption of the industry was threatened and that not only the mines but also government revenue could suffer in consequence. They may also have been concerned about the plight of their ally Robinson. In August Selborne was able to report that Botha had succeeded in composing the differences within the mining industry. Robinson would rejoin both the Chamber (September, 1907) and WNLA (January, 1908). Apparently Botha himself had drafted the terms of the settlement. Selborne concluded his despatch by stating that his government "has arranged to keep a general control over the work of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association" in order to act as arbitrator in disputes between member companies. [111]

Through Portuguese support and with the mediation of the Botha government, WNLA was able to maintain a precarious hold upon Mozambique, but it was far less successful within British South Africa. Dissatisfaction with WNLA efforts in these areas led to widespread evasions of the monopsony as recruiting levels declined in late 1905 and 1906. WNLA began to lose control not only over the labour supply but also over its own recruiters. Charles Goodyear, a WNLA manager at Mafeking, defected to the enemy and signed on with Robinson. By 1906 most of the groups and not merely Robinson were recruiting on their own account. Between January 1 and October 30, 1906, WNLA managed to recruit scarcely

more than ten per cent of the available supply in the northern Transvaal (2337 out of a total of 22601).[112] In the circumstances the association had little choice but to release its members from the recruiting agreement, first in the Cape and Basutoland and then later in the northern Transvaal. In November, Frederick Perry, still the Chairman of WNLA, approached Lagden to express his concern. He was fearful of a return to the anarchy and destructive competition which had prevailed before the war. Both WNLA and the Chamber were anxious that the Native Affairs Department should act to prevent this.[113]

The incapacity of these organisations to control their own members was further revealed in an interview Lagden granted to several industry representatives also in November. They told a sorry tale of competitive recruiting, of the theft of labour from one mine by another, of bribery and corruption within the industry, and, worst of all, of breaches of the wage agreement. And they frankly confessed that they were quite unable to control the situation. It was up to the government to save the mines from themselves by increased supervision of the compounds, by the use of police traps and by a further extension of the Finger Impression Branch to facilitate the apprehension of deserters. Lagden replied with one of his lectures:

> I pointed out that the government could never counteract the dishonest and disloyal action of certain mines who betrayed the confidence they ought to have in each other and stole each others' labourers as they did before the war. They were in fact urging us to check evils which they themselves were the authors of.[114]

Not until 1912 with the formation of the Native Recruiting Corporation was the industry able to begin to renew the monopsony within South Africa itself. The Robinson group did not adhere to the NRC until 1919, after JBR had retired from active participation in the management.[115]

The crisis of 1906 reveals with particular clarity the central role of the state in sustaining the migrant labour policies of the Chamber of Mines. The mining industry was brought into close association with government not because it was strong, united and able to impose its will but because it was divided in its councils and (at frequent intervals) crippled by destructive competition. For the Randlords, the relationship was rather one of dependence than of domination. It is important to distinguish, however, between the administration/

and the formulation of policy. In policy formation at least the Rand financiers did demonstrate substantial unity of purpose. The particular circumstances of the 1890's led to an early emphasis upon low grade mining. Through their press and through the reports of successive official inquiries, the Randlords were able to promote the notion that the welfare of the industry as a whole was to be measured by the health of its weakest producers. There was unanimity in the industry on this point. Thus labour and other policies were formulated in relation to the presumed needs of a minority of the mines, the poorest among them. Because labour was, therefore, cheap on rich as well as low grade mines, it was wastefully and inefficiently used. The mine owners demonstrated both ignorance and callous disregard of their black labour force (frequently at the expense of their own self- interest). Through coercive labour legislation, governments protected them from the more obvious of the consequences and at the same time gave only minimal protection to the African mine workers. After visiting Johannesburg in 1903, Joseph Chamberlain commented that "much skill and brains had been put into the mining and engineering side of the industry and that now a portion of the same should be directed to the human side...." [116] Partly as a result of the support of the state, this was a lesson which the Rand mining industry never had to learn.

A.H. Jeeves
Johannesburg
March, 1975.

NOTES

1. For example, J.P. Fitzpatrick, The Transvaal from Within (London, 1899); Lionel Phillips, Transvaal Problems (London, 1905); and more recently, A.P. Cartwright, The Corner House (Johannesburg, 1965) and Gold Paved the Way (Johannesburg, 1967). The annual reports of the Chamber of Mines, of course, are an excellent source of self-congratulatory statements.

2. Cf. Heribert Adam, Modernizing Racial Domination (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1971), p. 29.

3. G.A. Denny, The Deep Level Mines of the Rand (London, 1902), p. 149. Denny suggests that black labour costs averaged 24 per cent of total costs. See also Evidence and Report of the Industrial Commission of Inquiry (Johannesburg, 1897) /hereafter, ICI/, evidence of C.S. Goldmann, p. 116.

4. Transvaal Archives Depot /hereafter, TAD/, Secretary of the Transvaal Labour Commission Archive, Vol. II: statement of W.E.M. Stanford, 25 August 1903; memorandum of W.T. Brownlee, 15 August 1903; memorandum of R.J. Dick, 2 September 1903. Report of the Transvaal Labour Commission, 1903 /hereafter, TLC/, evidence of F. Suter, p. 23; D. H. Fraser, pp. 219-220; F. Hellmann, pp. 614-617; Nathaniel Umhalla, p. 855. South African Intercolonial Native Affairs Commission, 1903-1905 /hereafter, SANAC/, Minutes of Evidence, vol. II: evidence of H.T. Lowry, p. 1063f; W. Waddell, p. 1087; P.K. Kawa, p. 616; W.N. Seti, p. 563; J.T. Jabavu, pp. 727-728; vol. IV: evidence of J. Ellenberger, p. 239; Solomon Plaatje, p. 268. Cape of Good Hope, Department of Native Affairs, Report of Native Delegates together with Correspondence relating to visit of Native Representatives to Johannesburg ..., G.4 -- 1904 (Cape Town, 1904), a very useful source on this issue.

5. Donald Denoon, "The Transvaal Labour Crisis", Journal of African History, VII (1967), pp. 481-494; and The Grand Illusion (London, 1973). H. Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: from Segregation to Apartheid", Economy and Society, I(1972), pp. 429-430. M. Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence", Economy and Society, III(1974), pp. 260-261.

6. A.A. Mawby, "Capital, Government and Politics in the Transvaal, 1900-1907: a Revision and a Reversion", Historical Journal, XVII(1974), pp. 387-415; and "The Transvaal Mine Owners in Politics" (unpublished seminar paper, University of London). Also A.H. Duminy, "The Political Career of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, 1895-1906", (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1973). Duminy cleaves pretty closely to the Mawby interpretation of capitalist influence or rather lack of influence during the Crown Colony period.

7. J.S. Marais described the relationship of the capitalists with the Imperial government in essentially similar terms. The Fall of Kruger's Republic (Oxford, 1961).

8. A.A. Mawby, "The Transvaal Mine Owners ...", op. cit., p. 22.

9. "The great reputation these fields justly have for security and regularity is in Gold mining merely relative and based on the law

23. Rand Mines Archive, Johannesburg /hereafter, RMA/ G. Rouliot to J. Warnher, 27 March 1897, 19 April 1897

24. TAD, British Agent's Collection, XVI, C. Greene to High Commissioner, 22 April 1897 (H.C. 127).

25. CMAR for 1897, pp. 113-114; for 1898, p. 55.

26. The sharp fall in the average grade of ore extracted in 1906 as compared with 1897 suggests that this policy may have been followed. See Mining Industry Commission, evidence of J. Reyersbach, op. cit.

27. J.A. Hobson, The War in South Africa, its Causes and Effects (London, 1900), pp. 229-230.

28. S.T. van der Horst, op. cit., pp. 201-202. Donald Denoon, A Grand Illusion, op. cit., p. 134.

29. S.T. van der Horst, op. cit., p. 202.

30. Ibid., p. 205.

31. CMAR for 1890, p. 61, Chamber of Mines to State Secretary, 23 January 1890. See also, Rhodes House, Oxford, Charter Consolidated MSS, Draft Statement of Industry Grievances, February, 1897.

32. CMAR for 1890.

33. CMAR for 1891, pp. 49-50; for 1892, p. 52; for 1893, Report of Committee of Mine Managers' Association.

34. CMAR for 1893, pp. 41-42.

35. CMAR for 1894, pp. 48f; for 1895, p. 25; S.H. Barber, et al (transl.), Laws, Volksraad Resolutions, Proclamations and Government Notices Relating to Natives and Coolies in the Transvaal.

36. CMAR for 1896, pp. 104f. Law 23 of 1895 was amended in 1896 and again in 1899. See S. H. Barber, et al (transl.), op. cit.

37. ICI, evidence of F.W. Kock, Chief Pass Officer, Johannesburg, pp. 294f. TLC, evidence of David Erskine, p. 228 and M.S. Erskine, p. 265. The brothers Erskine were giving evidence on the prewar situation. In 1903, both were WNLA district managers. See also, Transvaal Administration Reports for 1902, Pt. I, p. A31.

38. CMAR for 1896, pp. 156-157, 168f.

39. CMAR for 1897, pp. 4-5.

40. CMAR for 1899, p. 412, Government Labour Agent, Cape Colony (L.H.S. Tainton) to Chamber of Mines, 31 January 1899.

41. Transvaal Administration Reports for 1902, op. cit., pp. A32-A33.

42. Ibid., p. A4. South African Native Races Committee, The South African Native Races: Their Progress and Present Condition (supplament, London, 1908), pp. 21f.

43. TAD, Secretary of Native Affairs Archive /hereafter, SNA/, 57/2451/1905, Chamber of Mines to C. Lagden, 16 July 1906; 58/2944/1905, Secretary of Native Affairs to Secretary of the Law Department, 11 October 1905; also file 63/664/1906, passim.

44. CMAR's contain many examples.

45. RMA, J.B. Taylor to Wernher, Beit and Co., 23 September 1893; C. Rouliot to J. Wernher, 20 July 1897.

46. TAD, Leyds Argief, no. 670, Briewebook Lionel Phillips, Phillips to A. Beit, 12 August 1894. RMA, Phillips to Beit, 26 November 1892; J.B. Taylor to Wernher, Beit and Co., 28 October 1893.

47. J.P. Fitzpatrick Papers (in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. Niven at Amanzi near Uitenhague), Fitzpatrick to J. Wernher, 23 October 1897, 8 November 1897; H. Eckstein and Co., to Wernher, Beit and Co., 4 December 1897. Colonial Office, Confidential Print, Series African South /hereafter, C.O. 879/ (microfilm in TAD), C.O. 879/55/532 (secret), nos. 130-132, pp. 135-141.

48. ICI, evidence of George Albu, p. 14; W.L. Hamilton, p. 85; J.H. Johns, p. 261. SNA, 261, C. Lagden to A. Wheelwright, 20 October 1902.

49. TLC, evidence of William Grant (Native Labour Commissioner of the Chamber, 1893-1897), p. 490.

50. Report of the Superintendent of Natives of the Z.A.R. for the Year 1897, Appendix D: First Volksraad Resolution no. 2260, 8 December 1896; translation in SNA, 47/2012/1904. See also CMAR for 1899, p. 83.

51. J.A. Hobson, op. cit. CMAR for 1900 and 1901, pp. 106-107, Chamber of Mines to Milner, 21 August 1900. C. Rouliot's Presidential Address to the Chamber of Mines, 3 April 1902, printed in the Johannesburg Star, 4 April 1902. Leo Weinthal, The Life of Sir Joseph Robinson (London, n.d.).

52. CMAR for 1900 and 1901 op. cit.

53. Stephen Koss (ed.), The Pro-Boers (Chicago, 1973).

54. A.A. Mawby, "The Transvaal Mine Owners", op. cit., p. 11. Also, A.H. Duminy, op. cit.

55. Ibid.

56. A.A. Mawby, op. cit.

57. SNA, 5, H. Strange to Lagden, 8 January 1902.

58. TAD, Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Archive /hereafter, GOV/, 753/P.S. 50/1903, Report of the Chief Inspector Native Affairs Department for the Year ending 30 June 1903. There were exceptions, of course. Archibald Grant, the compound manager at the Lancaster G.M.C. was dismissed at the request of the Director, Foreign Labour Department when it was found that "he and the Chinese interpreter on the mines were in the habit of selling opium to the coolies, gambling with them and at the same time receiving a percentage of all stakes". See TAD, High Commissioner Archive /hereafter, HC/, HC 17/956, Selborne to Elgin 24 September 1906.

59. SNA, 45/1458/1904. It must be added that by 1904, partly as a result of adverse criticism in Britain, the inspectors were maintaining a closer watch on the mines.

60. Ibid., C.W. Spencer, General Manager, Consolidated Main Reef G.M.C, to G.A. Goodwin (WNLA), 2 April 1902; 11/1308/1902, Report on strike of natives at Langlaagte Estate G.M.C., 7 July 1902; 11/1342/1902, Report on strike of natives at Geldenhuis Estate G.M.C., 22 August 1902; 12/1480/1902, Report on strike of natives at Durban Roodepoort G.M.C., 7 August 1902.

61. TLC, evidence of R. von Hernach, p. 681f. South African Native Races Committee, The Native Races of South Africa: Their Economic and Social Condition (London, 1901), p. 189f.

62. TLC, evidence of E. Croux, pp. 12-14. See also, SNA, 6, M.E. Klein to Lagden (n.d.).

63. SNA, 261, H.W. Lloyd [?] to Lagden, 30 June 1905.

64. Cf. Donald Denoon, A Grand Illusion op. cit., p. 171, who suggests quite unfairly that Lagden did nothing in this area.

65. SNA, 9/1200/1902, Report by V.M. Pieterson, Native Affairs Department inspector; 12/1761/1902, passim; and 15/2135/1902. Cf. Transvaal Administration Reports for 1902, Pt. I: Report of Chief Inspector, Native Affairs Department, pp. A29f which minimized deficiencies in the mine compounds.

66. SNA, 16/2195/1902, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chamber of Mines, 8 October 1902 (confidential).

67. Transvaal Native Affairs Department, Annual Report for the Year Ending 30 June 1904 (Pretoria, 1904), Annexure 8, pp. 819-821.

68. See TLC, "Report on the Mortality of Natives [on the mines]", pp. 557-565. The report was the work of a committee of mine doctors commissioned by the Chamber at the suggestion of Lagden. For improvements effected and the fall in the death rate see, Transvaal Native Affairs Department, Annual Reports for the Year Ending 30 June 1904 and 30 June 1905. The introduction of African mine workers from the British Central African Protectorate led to a rise in the death rate again, Ibid., pp A10-A12.

69 SNA, 5, Secretary of State to High Commissioner, 18 November 1901 (telegram, paraphrase). The Colonial Office kept a close watch on mine labour conditions and several times urged vigilence on the Transvaal Native Affairs Department. See, for example, CO 753/P.S.50/1904, A. Lyttelton to Milner 25 March 1904 (telegram).

70. TLC, pp. 295f and 810f. Cape Report of Delegates, op. cit. SNA, 7, WNLA Fortnightly Report, 10 November 1902; 34/1794/1903.

71. SANAC, Minutes of Evidence, Vol. IV: evidence of Harold Strange, p. 778.

72. SNA, 11/1308/1902; 28/1124/1903; 54/1280/1905.

73. Ibid., 54/1280, I/1905.

74. On Transvaal government's knowledge of the secret WNLA-Mozambique

agreement see SNA, 60/3513/1905, C. Rodwell, Imperial Secretary to W. Windham, Secretary of Native Affairs, 2 December 1905; and C.O. 879/89/801, Governor General of Mozambique to High Commissioner, 22 November 1905 (private), enclosure 1 in no. 50, pp. 36-37. Apart from the B.C.A.P., the Chamber and the government were also involved in correspondence concerning possible recruiting in North Africa, Gold Coast, East African Protectorate, Uganda, Hungary, southern United States, Barbadoes and Japan amongst other places. A sampling of the correspondence can be found in GOV 731/P.S.37/ 1904.

75. SNA, 1, Secretary of State to Milner, 24 August 1901, H.C. 9/01 and Milner to Chamberlain, 6 December 1901 (Transvaal, no. 312), and Lagden to High Commissioner 5 December 1901.

76. Ibid., 261, A. Wheelwright to Lagden, 12 September 1903.

77. Ibid., 261, Lagden to Windham, 16 November 1906.

78. Ibid., 261, Lagden to Selborne, 31 January 1907.

79. For example, SNA, 40/12/1904.

80. Ibid., 261, Lagden to Selborne, 28 November 1906; 55/1282/1905, Lagden to Windham, 8 May 1905 on other alleged breaches of the monopsony by the Robinson group.

81. The thirty shilling agreement was actually negotiated late in 1900 in Cape Town. SNA, 8/1234/1902, Chamber of Mines circular, 25 October 1900.

82. "A Descriptive and Statistical Statement...", op. cit.

83. Chamber of Mines circular, 13 November 1902, SNA, 16/2361/1902. The agreement was amended again early in 1903.

84. HC 17/86, employment statistics, Transvaal gold mining industry. TAD, Colonial Secretary Archive /hereafter CS/ 1085/3142/1905, "Influx and Exodus of Natives from Mines and Works, July 1904 -- June, 1905", enclosure in Asst. Secretary of Native Affairs to P. Duncan, 17 August 1905. Donald Denoon, A Grand Illusion, op. cit., suggests wrongly that there was no longer a labour shortage by late 1905 (pp. 134-135).

85. Ronald Hyam, Elgin and Churchill at the Colonial Office (London, 1968). G.H.L. le May, British Supremacy in South Africa, 1899-1907 (London, 1965). G.B. Pyrah, Imperial Policy and South Africa, 1902-1910 (Oxford, 1955).

86. CMAR for 1906, passim.

87. Robinson's enemies were legion, most with long memories. The Cape Times spoke for them at his death, refering to the "loathsomeness of the thing that is the memory of Sir Joseph Robinson" (7 November 1929). Imperial officials also disliked Max Langerman, JBR's key associate. Joseph Chamberlain once described him as "touchy, unreasonable and wild" and did not think his presence on the Legislative Council would be "useful", HC, 106, Chamberlain to Milner, 10 March 1903 (cypher, telegram).

88. C.O. 879/89/801, J.B. Robinson to Elgin, 27 April 1906, 8 June 1906, 11 June 1906, 14 June 1906, 17 June 1906, 14 September 1906. Robin-

son's exact relationship with the British Liberal party requires investigation. In 1908, he was created a baronet on the recommendation of H.H. Asquith. Later he was raised to a peerage by the same government. It seems he had purchased one of Lloyd George's titles. The outcry, not least in the House of Lords, was so great, Robinson had to be asked to decline the honour. See The Times, 31 October 1929.

89. The letter is reprinted in CMAR for 1906, pp. 14f. The firm of Lewis and Marks was already recruiting in Mozambique outside the WNLA monopsony but in a very small way. See, GOV, 210/224/1906, Selborne to Elgin 11 June 1906 (Transvaal Confidential) and Elgin to Selborne, 7 July 1906 (Transvaal Confidential).

90. Lionel Phillips of Wernher, Beit/Eckstein carried on extensive negotiations with Wilson, apparently on behalf of the Chamber. See, SNA, 60/989/1906, A.E. Wilson to Lionel Phillips, 19 May 1906; Lionel Phillips to A.E. Wilson, 23 May 1906; A.E. Wilson to Lionel Phillips, 24 May 1906; Lionel Phillips to A.E. Wilson, 26 May 1906; A.E. Wilson to Lionel Phillips 29 May 1906; enclosures in Selborne to Elgin, 11 June 1906.

91. Ibid., C.H. Rodwell, Imperial Secretary, to A.E. Wilson, 29 March 1906, enclosure in Rodwell to Lagden /6/ April 1906.

92. Ibid., Selborne to Elgin, 24 June 1906 (telegram).

93. Ibid. C.O. 879/89/801, Selborne to Elgin, 21 May 1906. GOV, 210/59/1906, Lagden to Selborne, 30 October 1906 (Private), enclosure in Selborne to Elgin, 5 November 1906 (Transvaal Confidential); and 210/227/1906, F.D.P. Chaplin to Colonial Office, 3 July 1906, enclosure in Elgin to Selborne, 14 July 1906 (Transvaal Confidential). CMAR for 1906, Central Administration of Eckstein group to High Commissioner, 29 October 1906 (and several other nearly identical letters from other groups and individual mines). These are examples only of a torrent of protest which poured in upon Elgin from the Transvaal government, various mining houses and the Chamber.

94. SNA 60/989/1906, Elgin to Selborne, 21 May 1906 (telegram).

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid., Selborne to Elgin, 5 July 1906 (telegram).

97. Ibid., Elgin to Selborne, /?/ 1906.

98. C.O. 879/89/801, J.B. Robinson to Elgin, 4 June 1906.

99. SNA, 60/989/1906, Selborne to Elgin, 28 September 1906.

100. Ibid. J.C. Baldwin to Governor General, Mozambique, 19 November 1906 (confidential).

101. CMAR for 1906, pp. 22-23, Rand Mines Ltd., To High Commissioner, 29 October 1906.

102. Ibid., p. 29, President of Chamber of Mines to High Commissioner, 1 November 1906. This letter and the preceding were of course written for the Secretary of State and were forwarded immediately to him.

103. SNA, 60/989/1906, Governor, Johannesburg to Secretary of State, 1 December 1906 (telegram, confidential).

104. Ibid., Baldwin to Selborne, 27 November 1906.

105. Ibid., Selborne to Elgin, 3 December 1906 (confidential).

106. C.O. 879/89/801, Fred. Graham (Colonial Office) to J.B. Robinson, 21 September 1906. GOV, 210/61/1906, J.C. Baldwin to Selborne, 19 November 1906, and Baldwin to Governor General, Mozambique, 19 November 1906, enclosures in Selborne to Elgin, 3 December 1906 (Transvaal, Confidential).

107. CMAR for 1906, p. 37f, Private Secretary to High Commissioner to President of the Chamber of Mines, 10 November 1906. See also J.N. deJongh (President of the Chamber) to Private Secretary to High Commissioner, 19 November 1906 which came as close to an outright attack on Elgin as it was safe to come in official correspondence.

108. C.O. 879/89/801, J.B. Robinson to Elgin, 14 September 1906.

109. C.O. 879/94/866, Selborne to Elgin, 17 June 1907 (separate, confidential)

110. Ibid., H.W. Just (Colonial Office) to Foreign Office, 16 April 1907.

111. C.O. 879/94/867, Selborne to Elgin, 28 August 1907 (confidential).

112. SNA, 71/372/1906.

113. Ibid., 71/3771/1906.

114. Ibid., Minute by Legden, 29 November 1906.

115. S.T. van der Horst op. cit.

116. SNA, 32/1678/1903., H.R. Skinner to WNLA, 19 March 1903 (confidential).