

In terms of the results of these agreements, Table 5.5 and Figure 5.4 illustrate the striking increase in the number of African semi-skilled workers in the building industry.

Table 5.5
Semi-skilled workers in the building industry,
by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	32603	23127	3848	80366
1971	30862	27844	5573	96243
1973	31319	29800	5798	114484
1975	31172	31098	6284	131450
1977	25394	27062	5772	160427
1979	24404	32912	6196	133854
1981	27769	41442	8198	177224
1983	29219	33500	6472	166616
1985	18912	36977	6616	177415

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

At the same time, wage differentials between African and white (as well as opportunities for white worker upgrading through the Training of Artisans Act) led to a decrease in the number of semi-skilled whites. The amount of semi-skilled coloured workers increased only slowly. Table 5.6 and Figure 5.5 show the comparison between the number of semi-skilled Africans and the number of white artisans. The latter shows a steady decrease in the face of the former's rapid growth.

Table 5.6
Artisans and semi-skilled workers in the building industry,
African and white: 1969-1985

	white semi-skilled	African semi-skilled	white artisans	African artisans
1969	32603	80366	34274	140
1971	30862	96243	40363	643
1973	31319	114484	37565	-
1975	31172	131450	33676	263
1977	25394	160427	29675	237
1979	24404	133854	27221	101
1981	27769	177224	26890	833
1983	29219	166616	21280	366
1985	18912	177415	16818	547

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

In 1969, BIFSA requested the exclusion of the tasks of bricklaying and plastering (two areas of severest shortage on building sites) from work reservation determinations No.6 of 1959 and No.13 of 1963, in order that they may be performed by black workers. The request was refused on the grounds that the industry should first seek to attract more white workers to the trades.¹⁷⁸ One scheme established in this regard reflected the constant erosion of the traditional parameters of apprenticeship training in return for white exclusivity; set up in 1972, the building industry's training centre at Baragwanath could produce artisans in less than two years. The Minister of Labour reported that:

"young men are given a 15-week training course, and subsequent to that they are placed with approved employers for a year and a half. After that they get the full status and wage of an artisan".¹⁷⁹

The Department of Labour, in February 1971, finally granted exemptions from job reservation provisions in order to allow 'coloureds' to work legally as bricklayers and plasterers in the Witwatersrand and Pretoria areas.¹⁸⁰ In June, 15 contractors in Zululand were granted exemption to use African workers for bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, plumbing and painting.¹⁸¹ See Table 5.7 and Figure 5.6; these training efforts seemed to be reaching fewer white and more 'coloured' apprentices, resulting in a constant decline in the number of white artisans in the building industry and a parallel increase in 'coloured' artisans, until the numbers of the latter finally overtook those of the former in 1981.

¹⁷⁸ SAIRR Survey 1970: p.115.

¹⁷⁹ SA, Republic. 1972. *NAD* Vol.39, 5 May: columns 6647-6648.

¹⁸⁰ SAIRR Survey 1971: p.232. The amount of artisan work being performed illegally no doubt went on regardless of these exemptions. In the same month as the Department's announcements, the Durban Master Builders and Allied Trades Association reported that about one third of workers performing jobs reserved for whites, were blacks (*ibid*: p.233).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*.

Table 5.7
Artisans in the building industry, by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	34274	14803	1557	1404
1971	40363	18094	2320	6438
1973	37565	22559	2628	0
1975	33676	25425	3207	2635
1977	29675	21495	2751	2376
1979	27221	24468	4175	1016
1981	26890	25836	4287	8336
1983	21280	28131	3916	3667
1985	16818	24332	3835	5474

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

Table 5.8 and Figure 5.7 trace the numbers of apprentices in the building industry. The declining importance of artisans is reflected in the steady decrease among white apprentices, and the limited overall changes in numbers of Indian and coloured apprentices.

Table 5.8
Apprentices in the building industry, by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	3346	2894	250	11
1971	3892	4438	949	2013
1973	3856	5052	890	0
1975	3676	3338	650	663
1977	2830	3539	879	345
1979	1967	2771	132	132
1981	3188	2444	386	1815
1983	2147	4795	582	7389
1985	1922	3083	388	2153

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

The increase in African apprentices leapt up - relatively speaking - with legal changes in the late 1970's; this is discussed in later chapters. At the time, the Minister of Labour defended the extended employment of Africans; the decision to open to Africans "less skilled jobs which did not belong with the skilled artisans," he said, "was approved of jointly

by the trade unions and the bosses. Surely this is how an industrial council acts?"¹⁸²

In the building industry, a new category of operator - Class 1 - was introduced in the Transvaal by industrial council agreement to allow such an operator, "who may be a Black worker...to do numerous facets of the work being done by skilled builders...at present".¹⁸³ The Black Building Workers Act still prevented African artisans practising their trade in 'white' areas.

5.2.2. *The metal and engineering industry*

Leading up to the expiry of the 1968 metal industries agreement in April 1970, SEIFSA attempted to get white trade unions to agree to further rationalisation (downgrading) of about 300 job categories in return for pay increases and other concessions. Although they failed at that particular stage to make any inroads into the existing occupation schedules, they did to produce manage an agreement to establish committees to investigate possible revisions of each particular work schedule in the light of changing manufacturing processes. And in the following decade, all the top categories of manual jobs in this industry were significantly infiltrated by African workers (see Table 5.9).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² *HAD*, Vol. 34, 18 May 1971: column 7002.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*: columns 3122-3123.

¹⁸⁴ *SAIRR Survey* 1970: pp.115-116.

Table 5.9
Industrial Council Agreements on Fragmentation in the
Steel and Engineering Industries, until 1978

Year	Nature of fragmentation agreed
1968	All manual jobs regraded into 8 categories, with closed shop applicable to top four (A to D); many previously white jobs downgraded into lower categories.
1972	10.000 jobs in category D opened to Africans.
1973	8,000 jobs in category C opened to Africans.
By 1976	Africans could be employed 'under authorisation or exemption' in selected AB and B jobs.
1978	Grade A (artisan) jobs opened to Africans.

Source: from information in M. Lipton, 1986: p.64.

Table 5.10 and Figure 5.8 show a similar trend to the building industry, insofar as the metal industry's employment of semi-skilled Africans increased six-fold between 1969 and 1985.

Table 5.10
Semi-skilled workers in the metal industry,
by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	15320	7298	539	29132
1971	14050	7272	1089	48579
1973	14939	10995	1052	44111
1975	15535	12173	678	48898
1977	12665	10738	2274	101660
1979	10575	11197	1448	85080
1981	13218	18687	1587	118358
1983	10126	14002	1638	115698
1985	6190	25735	1095	188514

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

A steady decrease of white workers is witnessed here, with an overall percentage drop of 59,6 points between 1969 and 1985. The parallel trend among African semi-skilled workers shows the opposite - an increase - in much larger numbers; they grow by an overall 547,1 percent between 1969 and 1985. Table 5.11 and Figure 5.9 show the numbers of apprentices in the metal industry.

Table 5.11
Apprentices in the metal industry, by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	15079	195	42	0
1971	15649	317	48	0
1973	15425	446	134	0
1975	13553	982	73	72
1977	15675	1719	242	22
1979	15419	1075	566	146
1981	18045	2175	639	718
1983	18720	3548	959	1498
1985	17429	2225	701	2571

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

Here, yearly registrations of white apprentices maintain high and fairly steady numbers, peaking in 1983 at 18,720). With the new legal dispensation in the 1980's, the number of African apprentices quadrupled between 1981 and 1985, but was still only about one seventh of the number of white registrations. African artisans were allowed no significant place in the composition of the work-force until the late 1970's (see Table 5.12 and Figure 5.10).

Table 5.12
Artisans in the metal industry, by race: 1969-1985

	white	coloured	Indian	African
1969	64831	1657	210	0
1971	71409	1889	621	0
1973	74516	2364	455	0
1975	75343	3398	566	473
1977	72428	5027	778	360
1979	75613	5184	887	717
1981	77446	6650	1131	1915
1983	75513	9145	2040	2224
1985	70746	6306	1697	2731

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

To contrast the level of employment of officially semi-skilled and skilled levels of manual work in the industry, Table 5.13 and Figure 5.11 show details of white and African workers in semi-skilled and artisan positions.

Table 5.13
Artisans and semi-skilled workers
in the metal industry, African and white: 1969-1985

	white semi-skilled	African semi-skilled	white artisans	African artisans
1969	15320	29132	64831	0
1971	14050	48579	71409	0
1973	14939	44111	74516	0
1975	15535	48898	75343	473
1977	12665	101660	72428	360
1979	10575	85080	75613	717
1981	13218	118358	77446	1915
1983	10126	115698	75513	2324
1985	6190	188514	70746	2731

Source: calculated from data in Manpower Surveys, 1969-1985.

This industry, however, had been rapidly mechanising and deskilling jobs, especially since the war, and white craft workers had only managed to maintain a level of exclusivity in their trade through, as Webster argues, "contesting the definition of skill".¹⁸⁵ (That is, the 'craft' occupation will have been substantially modified and whittled down, but as long^{as} unions had the strength to keep such jobs on the scheduled list, they would continue to generally exclude workers without qualifications or union membership. Table 5.12 shows white artisans in the metal industry maintained their numbers with very little intrusion of other race groups.) Employers' demands that the unions fill vacant skilled posts normally resulted in exemptions being granted to employ non-union labour. By 1970, writes Webster,

"the number of exemptions had increased so rapidly that a SEIFSA circular informed its members that a special committee of the National Industrial Council had been set up to issue exemption certificates".¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Webster, 1979: p.123.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*: p.157.

An important measure to bridge the gap between the artisan shortage and the restriction on African workers was introduced by the SA Railways in 1972: this was the artisan's assistant scheme, which allowed for an artisan to rely on the help of up to four African (or white) assistants.¹⁸⁷ For the assistants, their position was in effect an apprenticeship, as they could "after a period [about five years]...be trade tested and become artisans". And for the artisan, it was an upward shift into a supervisory role, as "he would be responsible for their [assistants'] work...[and] for their output".¹⁸⁸

1974 saw the extension of the artisan's assistant scheme beyond the SAR into the private sector. The Minister of Labour triumphantly told Parliament that a "new scheme for artisan's assistants has been established in the mining industry...with the full co-operation and approval of the Mineworkers Union and the other trade union involved..."; further, he went on:

"In the engineering industry a similar scheme is being considered...and will probably be announced shortly. In the motor-car industry we have exactly the same scheme. As from July...Black operators may do certain facets of skilled work which they could not do before".¹⁸⁹

Table 5.11 indicates the continued overall increase in white apprentices between 1969 and 1985; but while fragmentation allowed a growing role for

¹⁸⁷ It was not a coincidence that the SAR should be the first to implement such a scheme. The Artisan Staff Association, representing white railway workers, was denied the right to strike (see Minister of Labour's comments in *HAD* Vol.39, 5 May 1972: column 6684) as well as the protective provisions of the Physical Planning Act (see UP Leader's comments in *HAD* Vol.29, 19 August 1970: column 2061-2062), placing it in a weak position to resist racial restructuring. As early as 1967, the chairman of the ASA said that: "Changes within the country's traditional labour pattern would have to be made if the needs of industry were to be met. The labour shortage on the Railways was acute and against the background of current expansion could reach a crisis point unless a solution was found soon..." (cited in *HAD* Vol.25, 28 February 1967: column 1553).

¹⁸⁸ SA, Republic. 1972. *Senate Debates*: column 3976 (Senator N.G. Eaton).

¹⁸⁹ SA, Republic. 1974. *HAD*, Vol.51, 17 September: column 3122.

African semi-skilled workers, the number of African artisans showed significant growth only after the legal changes in the late 1970's.

5.2.3. Government policy and fragmentation

The Minister of Labour was, despite his ferocious parliamentary attacks on the UP's "liberal" labour proposals, becoming far more obliging to the needs of restructuring the skilled/unskilled labour division. Exemptions from job reservation determinations in 1972 had allowed 4,686 black workers into previously protected jobs; this was 2,000 more than the previous year.¹⁹⁰ In 1973, this figure was 4,787.¹⁹¹

In May 1973, the Minister announced his intention to set up an Industrial Tribunal to examine the skill shortage and the necessity of particular job reservation determinations in the building industry. The sharp response from the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers and the White Building Workers Union - who in July warned the Master Builders Association against the Minister's intervention - indicated the extent to which the government's image had become tarnished among certain groups of white workers who felt most threatened by the new direction of policy.¹⁹² And when the Tribunal began its hearings - after a postponement - to the following year, the WBWU's Gert Beetge accused the Minister of a "cold-blooded sell-out of the white man". The Tribunal itself, said Beetge, was evidence that "the watering down of job reservation is a foregone conclusion".¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ SAIRR Survey, 1973: pp.300-301.

¹⁹¹ SAIRR Survey 1974: p.248.

¹⁹² SAIRR Survey 1973: p.248.

¹⁹³ SAIRR Survey 1974: p.294.

He was not wrong. But even before formal job reservation and the Black Building Workers Act was scrapped at the end of the decade, the building unions were to concede further serious trade fragmentation through the 1975 Transvaal and Durban industrial council agreements. An official of the employers' Master Builders Association described the Transvaal agreement as "a major breakthrough, affecting every building trade..."¹⁹⁴ This fragmentation was encouraged by the government as "a very important phase in our labour development"; the Minister of Labour benevolently told Parliament in 1973 that:

"during the course of years artisans' work is reclassified...and then given to the operatives. This means in practical terms that a large part of what was formerly artisans' work is today being done by Black workers... The engineering industry is probably the best example in this connection. With every biennial wage negotiation an agreement is reached between the trade unions and the industrial chiefs in regard to what sections of the work can again be reclassified, which means that the Black workers can do it... The building industry is constantly reclassifying its work, and to such an extent that a large portion of what was formerly the artisans' work of White builders is today being done lawfully by non-Whites".¹⁹⁵

The point here is that fragmentation provided a most expedient response - in both economic and political terms - to a perceived shortage in certain kinds of labour. For employers, fragmentation was a well-established and vital process in the constantly mechanising production environment; further than this, it was also a useful response to a shortage of artisan skills (real or supposed), allowing the employment of cheaper black (usually African) labour in previously highly-paid scheduled jobs. For Nationalist politicians, it was more convenient to allow and encourage fragmentation than to address its options, foremost among which was the large-scale upward mobility of black workers into previously white, *skilled* jobs.

¹⁹⁴ Cited in O. Cranks *et al.*, 1987, *op. cit.*: p.55.

¹⁹⁵ SA, Republic. 1973. *HAD*, Vol.43, 1 May: column 5476.

5.3. Industrial training policy and initiatives in the 1970's

By the early 1970's, then, job fragmentation and training had become in many ways two sides of the same coin in policy discussion about labour shortages and productivity. And while the employers had traditionally been the obvious exponents of fragmentation strategies, the state was now beginning to enthusiastically support the same options. To focus on African training, though, the state's role had been largely limited to outside the urban areas. There were two institutions in operation serving the state's traditional policy of homeland and border area development; they were the State Industrial Schools (SIS's) and the Ad Hoc Border Industrial Schemes (BIS's). Like the group training centres discussed later, these were established as collaborative efforts with industrialists providing buildings and the state subsidising staff salaries. The skill level of workers produced is semi-skilled. The SIS's serve manufacturing concerns in textiles, clothing, tyres, sweets, electrical cables, etc.; and courses last about 13 weeks each. Table 5.14 shows the number of SIS's and the numbers of workers trained there each year from 1970 to 1986.

Tab 5. 4
State Industrial schools: 1970-1986

Year	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
No. of Schools	2	2	2	2	3
Workers trained	448	276	367	916	971

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
No. of schools	5	5	7	7	7
Workers trained	1,336	1,183	1,306	1,582	1,725

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. of Schools	7	5*	5	5	5
Workers trained	1,699	715		735	n.a.

Year	1985
No. of Workers	5 n.a.

* Ciske
Source: SAIRR 1974: p.302; SAIRR 1975: p.250; DBE 1976: p.73, section 3.2.6; SAIRR 1979: p.226, Table 1.5; NMC 1983: p.220, para.3.2.6.

The BIS's offer a general pre-employment training in those trade-related skills which are most commonly in demand, such as arc- and gas-welding, woodwork, plumbing and bricklaying. The proficiency and theoretical background achieved in these skills is of course limited, as they are taught in the form of 'crash courses' lasting only ten weeks. Table 5.15 gives a breakdown of schemes and trainees from 1973 to 1982. Figure 5.12 represents the figures in Tables 5.14 and 5.15 from 1973 to 1979, the years in which data in both tables are available.

Table 5.15
Ad Hoc Border Industrial Schemes: 1973-1982

Year	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
No. of schools	15	17	17	20	19
Workers trained	2,098	2,596	2,376	2,962	3,526

Year	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
No. of schools	19	11	n.a.	n.a.	4
Workers trained	2,636	1,972	n.a.	n.a.	894

Sources: SAIRR 1973: p.326; SAIRR 1974: p.362; SAIRR 1975: p.250; SAIRR 1976: p.359; DET 1979: p.226, Table 1.5; NMC 1980: p.180, Table 3.2.8; NMC 1982: p.312, par.3.2.5.

From 1983, these statistics no longer appear. The NMC Annual Report of that year stated simply: "Training by means of *ad hoc industrial schemes* is continuing, but as these schemes operate within the decentralised areas, no separate figures are available..." (p.220, par.3.2.5).

In both the above institutions, the peak of activity was reached around 1977-1979. Since then, there appears to be marked drop-offs in both the numbers of schools/schemes and trainees; indeed, the government records themselves seem to reflect a dwindling interest, as they fail to maintain statistics into the 1980's. Attention was shifting to training in the main metropolitan areas.

In 1970, the National Party passed an amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act, which sought to increase the amount of industrial training embarked upon by the private sector; and in attempting to obtain the desired effects *within* existing structures, it placed industrial council decisions at the basis of this initiative.¹⁹⁶ In terms of the amendment, an agreement by an industrial council to establish or make use of facilities for training African workers "may be declared binding in

¹⁹⁶ This was the alternative to the United Party's Manpower Training Bill of 1969, which proposed, for the immediate encouragement of training, an increased financial contribution by the state and a levy system for the private sector; for the longer term, it suggested a manpower training board and an advisory council of experts (both representing employers and employees) to monitor labour training matters and to inform policy decisions (see *HAD*, Vol.25, 28 February 1969: especially columns 1624-8 and 1653-4).

an area additional to that in respect of which the industrial council concerned is registered, or in respect of any undertaking, industry, trade or occupation in any area".¹⁹⁷ Funds for training were to be raised by means of a levy scheme for employers.

This fairly half-hearted executive response to the training issue had come in the midst - and was for the most part reflective - of severe government criticism of United Party proposals to step up radically the training and employment of Africans in 'white' areas.¹⁹⁸ Even despite assurances from the Opposition that "...the United Party...stand[s] for a policy of white leadership... [which] applies not only politically but also socially and economically",¹⁹⁹ the National Party's 'swartgevaar' reaction to the labour issue had become almost hysterical by 1970. In one altercation, the Minister of Labour accused the United Party, together with "their Press organs right through to the Chambers which they control", of subversive "manpower agitation" and of generating "'labour crisis' propaganda". This agitation, he went on, "has one single objective only, and that is to destroy the existing social and political pattern in South Africa".²⁰⁰ Indeed, if anything was to be sacrificed, the Minister asserted, then it was economic growth itself:

"...this Government deems the survival of the Whites to be far more valuable than any temporary economic benefits".²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Industrial Council Amendment Act, No.21 of 1970; in *Government Gazette* No.2659, 9 March 1970.

¹⁹⁸ Sir de Villiers Graaff, Leader of the Opposition, proposed as one of the first steps toward a solution to the problem,

"a crash training programme to equip the work force drawn from 20-million people [ie. not limiting training to the 4-million whites - P.C.] for the jobs that are waiting for them" (*HAD* Vol.29; 19 August 1970, column 2059).

¹⁹⁹ S.J.M. Steyn (U.P. M.P. for Yeoville), op.cit.: column 1650.

²⁰⁰ SA, Republic. 1970. *HAD*, Vol.29; 19 August: column 2066.

²⁰¹ SA, Republic. 1970. *HAD*, Vol.30; 3 September: column 3313.

Despite the strong words and assurances to white workers, there were significant changes occurring in the forces acting within and upon the National Party and its government, changes which were preparing the ground for some considerable policy shifts. Hindson, discussing the changing form of influx controls, states that:

"By the end of the 1960's urban policy could no longer secure the conditions of reproduction of industrial capital. The structure of industrial demand was changing, and there was an increasing need for skilled and semi-skilled African labour".²⁰²

Hyslop notes that it was during 1971 that "big business and its allies moved decisively to a more activist stance on education". This, he argues, was a result of the 1968-9 recession and the realisation by prominent business-people of the dearth of much-needed black administrative and technical workers, as well as the "more politically perceptive sections of business...becoming aware of the strains on the fabric of working class life which current state policy imposed...".²⁰³ These concerns, he continues, were also being experienced by the strengthened Afrikaner urban capitalist interests within the National Party. Within this environment, the breakaway of Albert Hertzog's HNP in 1969 had "enabled Vorster to move in the direction of slightly more pragmatic policies".²⁰⁴

The Minister of Finance had said in his 1970 Budget Speech that the government was investigating ways of encouraging industrial growth in border areas and homelands, but that it was "not impossible" that at the same time "more non-White labour...[could] be found for those industries which remain in the white areas".²⁰⁵ The investigations - which were the

²⁰² Hindson, D. 1987. *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat*: p.74.

²⁰³ Hyslop, Jonathan. 1986. "State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class: 1955-76": pp.28-9.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*: p.31.

²⁰⁵ SA, Republic. 1970. *Budget Speeches 1970-'71*: p.4, 12 August.

responsibility of the Riekert Committee on the Decentralisation of Industries - focused on border areas and homelands, but clearly had broader questions about labour utilisation throughout the republic on its mind. Its report in 1971 included the recommendations of the Geyser Committee, which had made no public reports on its findings concerning its brief - the better utilisation of labour. And it is probably no accident that its recommendations should form part of a report on decentralisation; for the White Paper's formal acceptance and support of the following two significant trends could, in isolation, have caused some uneasiness within traditional party support. It recommended, firstly:

"The reclassification...of artisans' work in order that the less skilled operations of the work may be undertaken by semi-skilled workers..."²⁰⁶

And secondly, the encouragement of the movement of blacks into more semi-skilled and skilled jobs, through the training, "within the framework of collective bargaining and with the co-operation of the trade unions, of Coloureds and Indians". Also, the White Paper supported the training "of Bantu in the Homelands for employment in the Homelands and in the border areas" (border areas being, strictly speaking, 'white').²⁰⁷

But very little had been suggested - at a level closer to policy implementation - which touched directly on the deployment of *trained Africans in white industrial centres*. Diederichs had, in that same budget speech, referred only to "the provision of improved facilities for higher education and...encouraging immigration" as acceptable measures "to remedy the shortage of skilled manpower". Indeed, he had warned that:

"most of the facile remedies suggested [to solve the skill shortage] would disrupt the pattern of our social structure and

²⁰⁶ SA, Republic. 1971. *White Paper on the Report by the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Decentralisation of Industries*: p.6, section 18.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*: p.6.

endanger industrial peace without, in fact, making a significant contribution to the solution of the problem".²⁰⁸

The following year, the Minister of Labour had even made predictions which questioned the very necessity for any concern over the lack of skilled labour. "[A]ccording to an estimate," he told Parliament,

"the demand for White manpower will come to 1,112,200 in 1973... [and] the supply will be 1,134,850, ie. a surplus of 22,650".²⁰⁹

This sort of optimism was not, however, shared by certain other state departments. (It would certainly have been surprising to find so much energy being devoted to the question of manpower if such a complacent attitude had generally obtained.) In 1972, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council - through its member Leslie Lulofo - was able to tell the press, albeit cryptically, that:

"Top level negotiations have opened the way for at least a partial solution...to South Africa's skilled and semi-skilled manpower shortages... Certain broad principles with regard to labour availability and training have been hammered out as a result of negotiations thus far made between employers, employees and the Government".²¹⁰

Government policy initiatives after 1971, then, went beyond the Riekert Committee's formal recommendations with regard to African workers, and began to look at both the numbers and the skill-level of African workers in 'white areas'. The inflow of more African workers into semi-skilled jobs was, of course, already an established process which the government had for the most part preferred not make an issue. The Minister of Labour, despite previous statements of principle attacking

²⁰⁸ SA, Republic. *Budget Speeches 1970-'71*: p.3.

²⁰⁹ SA, Republic. 1971. *HAD*, Vol.34, 17 May: column 6926. Neither was the Minister counting on the recession of the early seventies to relieve the pressure on skills, for he added that the estimate was "based on an average growth rate of five and a half per cent per year...and a net immigration figure of 31,600 per year, of whom 11,050 men and 3,400 women will be economically active" (*ibid*).

²¹⁰ *The Star*, 18 February 1972; cited in Parliament by UP MP (Yeoville) SJM Steyn (*HAD* Vol.39, 5 May 1972: column 6606).

the upward occupational movement of Africans in the cities, was able to boast to the UP in 1972 that:

"there are 290,000 Bantu in the country who are employed as semi-skilled workers and operators... At ISCOR, roughly 1,000 Bantu are doing operator's work...that was done by Whites a few years ago".²¹¹

The recommendations from the 1972 Reynders Commission (into the republic's export trade) provided further evidence to support the need for a substantial review of current policies to address the skill shortage.²¹² The commission's conclusion was that "the productivity of labour in many industries was severely hampered, resulting in higher costs and decreased competitiveness on foreign markets".²¹³

The Commission identified (from witnesses' submissions) three main reasons for the shortage: legislation restricting the training and employment of black labour (the Industrial Training Act, the Apprenticeship Act, and the Physical Development and Utilisation of Resources Act); the traditional colour bar, and most particularly in "the resistance of some trade unions towards reclassification of jobs"

²¹¹ SA, Republic. 1972. *WJD*, Vol.39, 5 May: column 6652.

²¹² SA, Republic. 1972. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Export Trade in the Republic of South Africa*. The report noted soberly:

"Particularly towards the close of the last decade, the deficit on current account began to assume such proportions that it became particularly difficult to correct the shortfall with traditional monetary and fiscal measures. In fact, it became clear that the country was faced with structural problems which would require policies and strategies particularly adapted to the changed circumstances" (pp.x-xi).

The fact that Professor Reynders had the following year been appointed President of the Federated Chamber of Industries (see *FCI News*, April 1973: p.7) exemplified also the extent to which employers were having a say in defining the nature of such a review.

²¹³ SA, Republic. 1972. *Op. cit.* "Moreover," it was added, "they led to unduly high wages for skilled labour, which increased the inflationary pressure" [already a growing concern of the treasury] (*ibid.*).

and "an alleged lack of educational and particularly technical training facilities for Non-Whites (especially for Bantu)".²¹⁴

Recognising, with perhaps optimistic expectations, the beginnings of a change in government's attitude on labour and training issues, the report observed that:

"The announced relaxations are clearly designed to employ and train the entire labour force in more sophisticated work".²¹⁵

Fleshing out the implications of this, it suggested that:

"It serves no purpose to open up job opportunities for Non-Whites if persons qualified to fill them are not available. Perhaps the most important single factor contributing to increased productivity is adequate training".²¹⁶

The commission finally recommended, inter alia, that:

"(i) Increased and continuous attention should be given by Government, the trade unions and employers to the occupational mobility, particularly of Bantu employees... This concerns very largely the whole question of job reclassification.

"(ii) Increased and continuous attention should be given to the training and education of all races (including...accelerated efforts to improve the technical training particularly of the Bantu labour force)...".²¹⁷

A 1972 FCI policy document presents a most succinct picture of the way in which the private sector saw the different issues (and their

²¹⁴ *Ibid*: p.387, paragraph 24.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*: p.395, paragraph 48. As examples of the "recent expressions" of policy, the commission referred to the White Paper on the Riekert Commission, and Minister of Finance's budget statements, the latter including that:

"Within our basic social structure the Government's attitude toward labour problems remains flexible. In present circumstances, for example, a concession may be justified where additional Bantu labour is required to permit greater use of unutilized productive capacity." (South Africa, Republic. *Budget Speeches 1972-'73*, 29 March 1972: p.7).

²¹⁶ SA, Republic. 1972. *Op.cit*: p.395, paragraph 49.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*: p.397, paragraph 56.

relationships) around labour and training.²¹⁸ Pointing first to the "deterioration in the availability of White coloured and Asiatic workers",²¹⁹ "not only in respect of skilled but also semi-skilled occupations", the report identifies the pool of "as yet inadequately trained" African workers as the current and future basis for growing industrial employment.²²⁰ It then warns of the situation's implications for productivity and inflation:

"If the scope for Bantu employment and the intensity of their training is not greatly extended, an inevitable economic consequence will be escalating non-Bantu wages with an overall decline in labour productivity. Such chronic wage inflation can only be contained therefore by either exercising direct control over wages, or, as the Chamber recommends, by rapidly improving the training and utilisation of Bantu workers in manufacturing industry".²²¹

In the light of the inadequacy of the government policy limiting African training (and their subsequent employment) to homelands, the FCI stressed the "urgent necessity" for "extending such training facilities and to permit their [trained Africans] employment in the existing industrial complexes".²²²

Like the Reynders Commission, the FCI was also concerned with the reluctance of white unions "to approve the upgrading of non-Whites, and particularly Bantu industrial workers, for fear of job replacement and lower living standards for their White members";²²³ it therefore requested government to "actively facilitate and encourage the better utilisation of labour, and intervene in the determination of differences arising between employers and employees in the attainment of this

²¹⁸ South African Federated Chamber of Industries. 1972. "A Programme for Sustained Economic Expansion in South Africa".

²¹⁹ *Ibid*: point 13.

²²⁰ *Ibid*: point 14

²²¹ *Ibid*: point 15.

²²² *Ibid*: point 16.

²²³ *Ibid*: point 17.

concept".²²⁴ Two other recommendations of direct pertinence to this were also put forward: firstly,

"that more effective steps be taken to rationalise job descriptions in order to facilitate the better utilisation and training of manpower particularly in the 'semi-skilled' and 'operative' categories, and that no obstacles be placed in the way of utilisation of labour in these categories";²²⁵

and secondly,

"that a greatly accelerated programme to train non-White and particularly Bantu labour for skilled and semi-skilled occupations be introduced...";²²⁶

The government seemed well disposed to these recommendations. The Minister of Finance said in his 1972 Budget Speech that:

"I wish to emphasise that the Government is always prepared to consider adjustments of labour policy within the basic framework of our society, in order to promote more efficiency and productivity. The rigidity of our labour laws is, in fact, often exaggerated".²²⁷

Their flexibility, however, extended as far as the training and employment of semi-skilled workers. The Minister of Labour, while saying that "the Government does not prevent any industrialists from providing their Bantu workers with better training so that they may render better service",²²⁸ gave the question whether employers could train African workers in skilled jobs the following concise answer: "Not in white South Africa... And not in border areas either".²²⁹ His argument was that "the majority of factory operations are not skilled operations"; rather, they "consist of semi-skilled and operators' work".²³⁰

²²⁴ *Ibid*: point 18 (ii).

²²⁵ *Ibid*: point 18 (v).

²²⁶ *Ibid*: point 18 (iii).

²²⁷ *Budget Speeches, 1972-'73*, 29 March 1972: p.7.

²²⁸ SA, Republic. 1972. *HAD* Vol.39, 5 May. column 6652.

²²⁹ *Ibid*: column 6667.

²³⁰ *Ibid*: columns 6652-6653.

And here the training option was used to undermine the normally parallel demand by employers for *more* African labour:

"What is really necessary...is not more Black labour in these [urban] factories, but that more effective use be made of those Bantu whom the employers already have. That responsibility is their task".²³¹

The wave of strikes in Natal in 1973 brought a new urgency to labour issues. FCI President Harold Morcombe told a Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Industries meeting that improved productivity would have to form the foundation of employers' responses to the new demands by African workers:

"Industrial growth must in the future occur as a result of this [improved productivity] We cannot as in the past simply grow by using more and more labour and capital. It is only if we succeed in making this structural change that our industry will maintain and improve its competitiveness; only then will we be able to continue to export, [and] to meet the demands of higher wages of these workers who are already employed..."²³²

The themes of training and job rationalisation recur: the report on Morcombe's talk noted his contentions that firstly, "[p]roductivity improvement...was closely linked with the training of our labour for more productive and rational use"; and that secondly, "[s]killed labour must be economically and rationally used; it must be suitably augmented by semi-skilled labour and capital investment to ensure that it was used to its optimum".²³³

Stan Austin, President of the Pietermaritzburg Chamber, blamed job reservation and the artificial labour shortage it caused, for both inflation and the current labour unrest. In these terms, the strikes allowed employers to take a stronger position toward the government and white unions on the question of upgrading African workers; these workers were now *demanding* (and receiving) higher wages (if only relatively and

²³¹ *Ibid*: column 6653.

²³² "Training of Labour for Productivity Improvement": p.14.

²³³ *Ibid*.

in limited industries and areas), so they could no longer - employers argued - be used at low levels of productivity, ie. the lower-skilled jobs. But the process obviously cut both ways: while employers were being inadvertently assisted in their demands for better utilising African labour, the basis of that labour's attractiveness - its cheapness - was being challenged. So, while Austin hoped that "the relaxation of this [job reservation]...is a sincere move to the ultimate disappearance of this legislation", and noted with satisfaction the governments initiatives to train unskilled (African) workers, he called on the government - somewhat precociously - to protect employers' other flank:

"...I feel it is incumbent on the Government to give some guidelines not only to industry but to all facets of our economy in respect of minimum wages and not to leave industry in its present vulnerable position..."²³⁴

For despite the numerous statements which asserted the importance of training, employers seemed not to be taking the implementation of these needs very seriously. In one of the few articles written on training in the early 1960's, Rhodes University economist Arndt Spandau said that,

"[w]hile the training of White, Coloured and Asian apprentices is inadequate in many respects, the training of Bantu is almost non-existent. Even enlightened firms hardly provide any institutionalised training at all".²³⁵

While there were exceptions in ISCOR, SAR&H, Atlas Aircraft Corporation, and motor companies like Volkswagen, Ford and General Motors, the position of training on the shop-floor was generally marginal and subordinated to the imperatives of production:

"In the factories, most training is done on-the-job, ie. under the instruction of the foreman rather than under the auspices of a centralized Training Centre. Foremen and journeymen, however, are preoccupied with production rather than with the instruction of their charges".²³⁶

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ Spandau, Arndt. 1973. "Manpower Training in South African Commerce and Industry": p.6.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

Some momentum had by this stage gathered in the government's efforts to make some impact in the arena of African industrial training. In 1973, the Minister of Finance stressed not just the possibility but the "great need" for the training of African workers in 'white' areas; this was expressed as a means to improve productivity, particularly in the light of "the rising trend in Bantu wages - a trend with which the Government has expressed its sympathy...".²¹⁷ An interdepartmental committee was appointed to investigate "the desirability and practical feasibility of a system of pre-service training and in-service training of Bantu workers for industrial categories of work in White areas duly released for Bantu persons".²¹⁸

To implement the recommendations of this committee, the Permanent Committee for In-Service Industrial Training of Bantu Employees in White Areas - which also represented employer and employee bodies - was formed, headed by the Secretary for Bantu Education, Dr H.J. van Zyl. The committee announced, later that year, plans to establish two types of industrial training for Africans in 'white' areas. The one type was aimed at "orientating" African schoolchildren in basic trade skills through the establishment of eight "departmental industrial training (or technical) centres" in African townships. This reflects a serious concern on the state's part to prepare young Africans for the demands of the urban industrial economy, but as these institutions do not feed *directly* into the labour market, no further discussion will be pursued here. Table 5.16 shows the numbers passing through these centres between 1975 and 1986.

²¹⁷ SA, Republic. *Budget Speeches, 1973-'74*, 26 March 1973: p.5. This comment came, significantly enough, only two months after the mass strikes in Durban had begun to erupt.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 5.16
African pupils passing through
Departmental Technical Centres: 1975-1986

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
No. of centres	5	8	8	8	14
Pupils oriented	n.a.	n.a.	13,326	13,199	17,118

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. of centres	15	15	16	17	17
Pupils oriented	19,373	23,300	30,884	33,098	37,501

Year	1985	1986
No. of centres	21	21
Pupils oriented	48,652	44,942

n.a. = data not available

Sources: DET 1976: p.71, par.8.1; NMC 1979: p.60, Table 31; NMC 1980: p.99, par.4.3.3.4; NMC 1981: p.239, Table 3.2.10; NMC 1982: p.132, par.3.2.4; NMC 1986: p.76, par.5.2.3.8 & p.C14 (Annexure C), Table 6.2.

The other type of industrial training for Africans would serve industrialists' skill-needs directly through "group training centres".²³⁹ Table 5.17 shows the numbers trained at group training centres from 1975 to 1986. By 1977, eight centres were built, and in 1985 they were able to train the substantial figure of 15,750 workers. By 1986, almost 114,000 workers had passed through the nine centres which were by then in operation. Initially, only African workers were catered for in these centres, but with the passing of the Manpower Training Act in the early 1980's, a certain amount of non-African workers were trained there as well.

²³⁹ SAIRR Survey, 1973: pp.326-7. The orientation of pupils at the departmental training centres, noted an N.P. M.P. a few years later, was to serve "only as preparation for their later employment as operators..." (F.J. le Roux, Hercules; HAD Vol.62, 19 May 1973, p.7136).

Table 5.17
Workers trained at Group Training Centres: 1975-1986*

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
No. of centres	3	5	8	8	8
All workers trnd. (African workers)	174 n.a.	1,983 n.a.	3,759 n.a.	7,014 (6,619)	8,570 (8,283)

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. of centres	8	8	8	8	8
All workers trnd. (African workers)	10,658 (10,658)	13,401 (13,401)	14,068 (14,068)	12,873 (12,873)	12,700 n.a.

Year	1985	1986
No. of centres	8	9
Workers trained (African workers)	15,750 n.a.	12,599 n.a.

n.a. = data not available

* Government statistics here are confused, often not distinguishing between the numbers of African workers and the total number of workers trained in these schemes. I have attempted to reconcile their mistakes where possible.

Sources: DET 1975: p.60, par.8.1; DET 1976: p.71, par.8.1; DET 1977: p.120, Table 1.2.2; DET 1979: p.226, Table 1.5; NMC 1980: p.180, Table 3.2.8, and p.181, Table 3.2.10; DM 1983: p.52, Table 4.10; DM 1984: p.61, Table 4.12; DM 1986: p.72, Table 4.6.

The private sector's training institutions have been categorised into 'schemes' and 'centres'. The former are those activities run within a production-oriented company to train invariably its own workers for jobs within its own specific work processes. Centres are usually separate from one company, providing training to normally a number of companies or to a whole industry. Since the Income Tax Act of 1974 and the Black In-Service Training Act of 1976, many of these began receiving financial assistance from the state, and their records were thus included in aggregate calculations in the annual report of the Department of Manpower.

Table 5.18 shows the number of private in-service training centres and the number of workers trained between 1975 and 1986. The proportion of Africans trained here is smaller than at Group Training Centres, although government records are not specific. No racial breakdown is provided,

except for 1980 and 1981 where African trainees numbered 8,879 (whites: 11,573) out of 25,538, and 25,913 (whites: 43,796) out of 77,275 respectively. This suggests that African trainees comprise about one-third of the total trainees, in which case they would average a yearly figure of about 53,000.

Table 5.18
Private In-Service Training Centres*

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
No. of centres	1	1	2	2	2
Workers trained	574**		770	1,145	1,202

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
No. of centres	52***	218	377	517	661
Workers trained	25,538	77,275	164,261	202,638	201,004

Year	1985	1986
No. of centres	n.a.	n.a.
Workers trained	129,759	126,347

n.a. = data not available

* It should be remembered that these centres are only included in government statistics when they register with the Department of Manpower; hence the figures directly reflect increases in *registrations*, rather than always new establishments.

** This figure reflects only the number trained between April 1975 and April 1976.

*** 1980 saw the passing of the In-Service Training Act, which made many more centres eligible for registration and tax concessions; previously, the 1976 Black Employees In-Service Training Act had made tax concessions (and registration) available only to those centres training African workers. Twelve of the centres in 1980 were for African workers.

Sources: SAIRR 1975: pp.251-252; SAIRR 1976: pp.360-361; NMC 1980: p.99, par.4.3.3.3 & p.180, Table 3.2.8; NMC 1981: p.126, par.3.2.1; NMC 1982: p.132, par.3.2.1; DM 1986: p.80, Table 4.14.

Table 5.19 shows the numbers of private training schemes and their trainees between 1975 and 1986. Once again, the specification of numbers of Africans within the total is not continuous. The percentage of Africans varies from 58 per cent in 1980, to 42 per cent in 1981 and 1982, to 36 per cent in 1983. It is thus not easy to estimate with much accuracy the figures for more recent years. It is unlikely, however, that they will have fallen below 50,000 by 1986.

Table 5.19
Private In-Service Training Schemes*

Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Total schemes:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
(For Africans):	(61)**	(260)	(295)	(328)	(349)
All workers trnd:	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
(African workers)	n.a.	n.a.	75,000	72,000	99,421

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Total schemes:	562	690	732	989	1,119
(For Africans):	(409)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
All workers trnd:	150,174	226,244	247,750	221,351	256,141
(African workers)	(86,924)	(95,461)	(104,185)	(79,929)	n.a.

Year	1985	1986
Total schemes:	1,179	n.a.
(For Africans):	n.a.	n.a.
All workers trnd:	155,562	132,968
(African workers)	n.a.	n.a.

n.a. = data not available

* Again, government reports provide contradictory information, mainly as a result of confusing total figures with those applicable to African workers only. It was only in 1980 when training centres for other than African workers became eligible for tax concessions and had their statistics recorded by the Department of Manpower.

** By the end of August 1975.

Sources: SAIRR 1975: p.253; SAIRR 1976: p.361; NMC 1980: p.180, Table 3.2.8; NMC 1981: p.126, par.3.2.1 & p.240, Table 3.2.11; NMC 1982: p.132, par.3.2.1; NMC 1985: p.56, Table 2.20; DM 1986: p.82, Table 4.15.

Hyslop also notes that "favourable consideration was being given to the setting up of trade schools in the urban areas".²⁴⁰ It was made clear, though, that the training provided would not extend into the skilled category of work:

"The intention is to provide pre-service and in-service training to Bantu workers for industrial categories of work which by law they are permitted to carry out. The jobs for which they will be trained will therefore be on semi-skilled and operative level" (Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Education).²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Hyslop, J. 1986. "State Education Policy and the Social Reproduction of the Urban African Working Class": p.33.

²⁴¹ SA, Republic. 1975. *HAD*, Vol.43, 24 April: column 685.

"It is in respect of...operatives' work...that the Government is prepared to help with the training of [African] workers" (Minister of Labour).²⁴²

Cullinan therefore notes that these training initiatives by the state, as well as its 1976 In-Service Training Act (giving recognition and encouragement to private training schemes through tax rebates on training costs), were "a clear response to the development of newly fragmented techniques within existing industries and the necessity to provide training for semi-skilled operative work". As such, the training was limited to "only those skills and techniques essential to the efficient performance of the operator's task".²⁴³

5.4. Conclusion

In the 1970's, the pressure from capital for more skilled labour became intense; in the economic downturn, premium wages for scarce white artisans were considered unacceptable. Skill shortages were considered acute, but the state was not relenting in its policy to keep urban artisan positions white (or at least non-African). Fragmentation was pursued further, and the results of this in terms of growing numbers of semi-skilled workers and levelling numbers of artisans are indicated in the tables above). Also, the numbers of mainly semi-skilled workers being trained at the institutions established in the early 1970's reflect capital's growing reliance on this level of worker.

²⁴² SA, Republic. 1973. *W.A.*, Vol.43, 1 May: column 5480. Fitting this policy position neatly into recent commission recommendations regarding the relationship between training and job reclassification, he defined operatives' work as that "which today consists of portions of the former artisans' work which were reclassified and demarcated..." (*ibid*).

²⁴³ Cullinan, M.A. 1980. "Deskilling, Technical and Industrial Training, and White Craft Unions": p.35.

In fact, as it is suggested in Chapter 7, it would appear that the prolonged process of fragmentation has seriously undermined the need to expand the ranks of artisans at anywhere near the rate of growth among semi-skilled workers. Nonetheless, the growing pressure for skills, the renewed militancy of the African working class, and the changing class nature of the Nationalist Party comprise important forces which result in an extensive reformulation of state training policy (as part of economic and political policy generally) at the end of the 1970's.

Government initiatives to improve the provision of industrial training of (especially African) workers since the late sixties failed to provide an adequate response to the pressure for skilled labour and for increased worker productivity.²⁴⁴ Although a number of new schemes and incentives were introduced during the 1970's to provide and encourage worker training, both the skill-level at which it was pitched and the extent of its overall quantitative impact were found wanting. Within the limitations of their traditional economic - especially labour - policies, the government was not in a position to address the training needs on the scale on which they were being called for. A strategy was required whereby national priorities were ideologically reformulated to provide justifications for new and racially *verligte* labour arrangements. The Wiehahn, Kiekert and de Lange commissions were important instruments in providing this strategy. Their contribution to the reform process, and their particular recommendations on the issue of industrial training will now be examined.

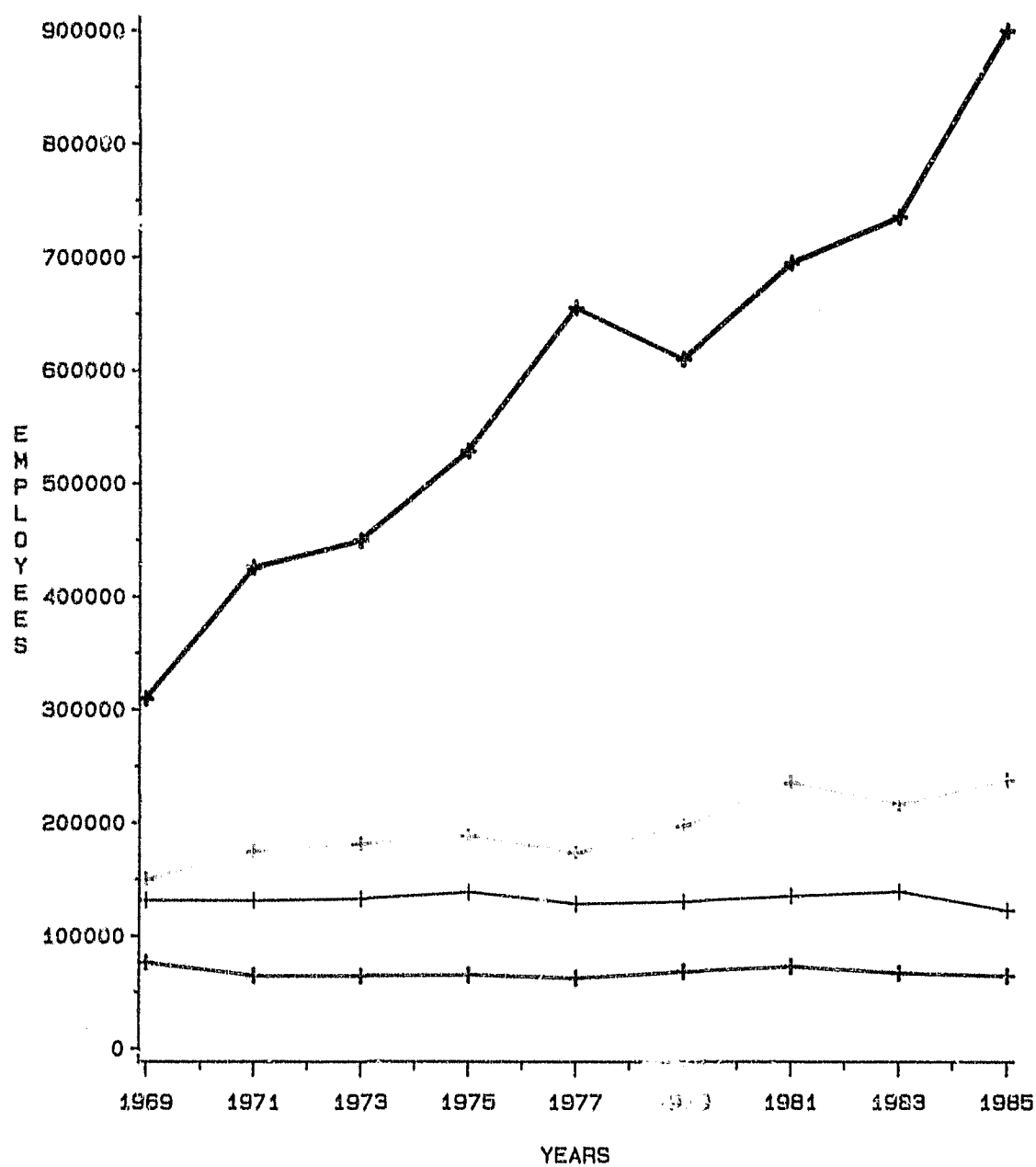
²⁴⁴ Concerns about productivity were being voiced as loudly as ever by the end of the 1970's; the National Manpower Commission, for instance, noted in its first annual report in 1979 that:

"From the figures it is very clear that the yield per worker has increased relatively little since 1970 and has even declined in certain cases, whereas the earnings per worker have increased far more rapidly".

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5

Figures 5.1 to 5.13

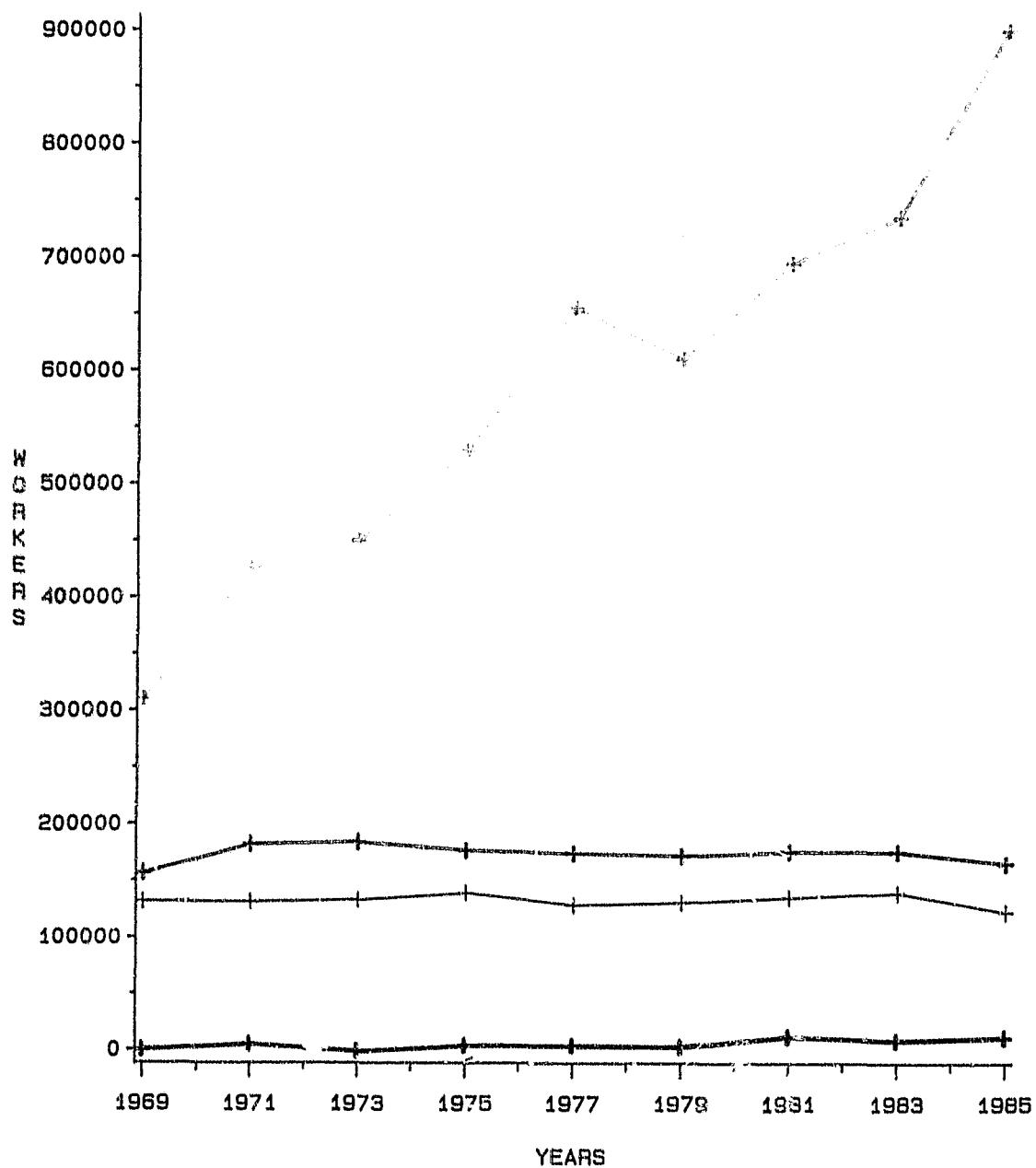
FIGURE 5.1
Semi-skilled employees in industry, by race: 1969-1985



KEY:
whites
coloureds
Indians
Africans

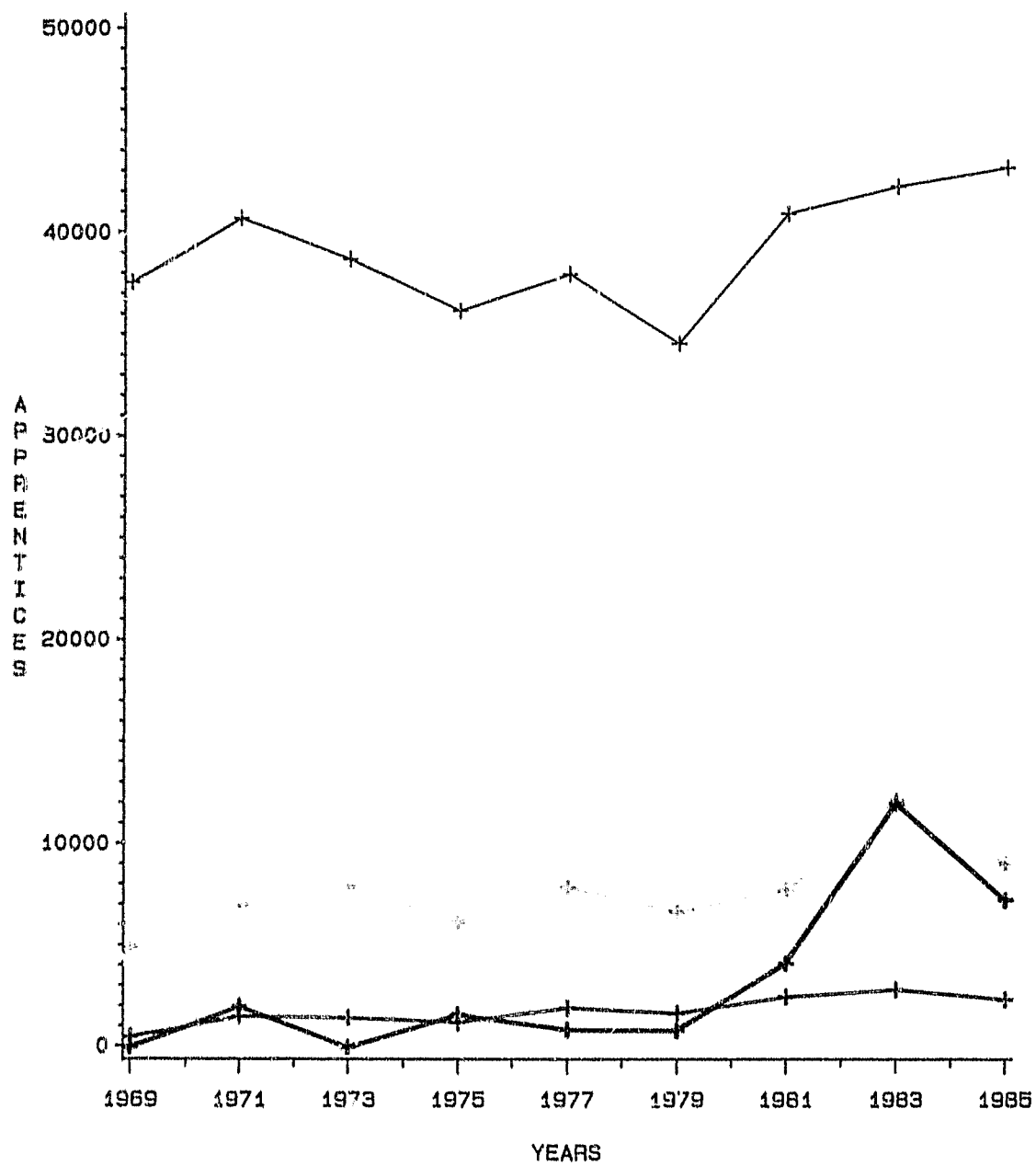
Source: see Table 5.1.

FIGURE 5.2
Artisans and semi-skilled workers, white and African: 1969-1985



KEY:
white semi-skilled workers
African semi-skilled workers
white artisans
African artisans
Source: see Table 5.2.

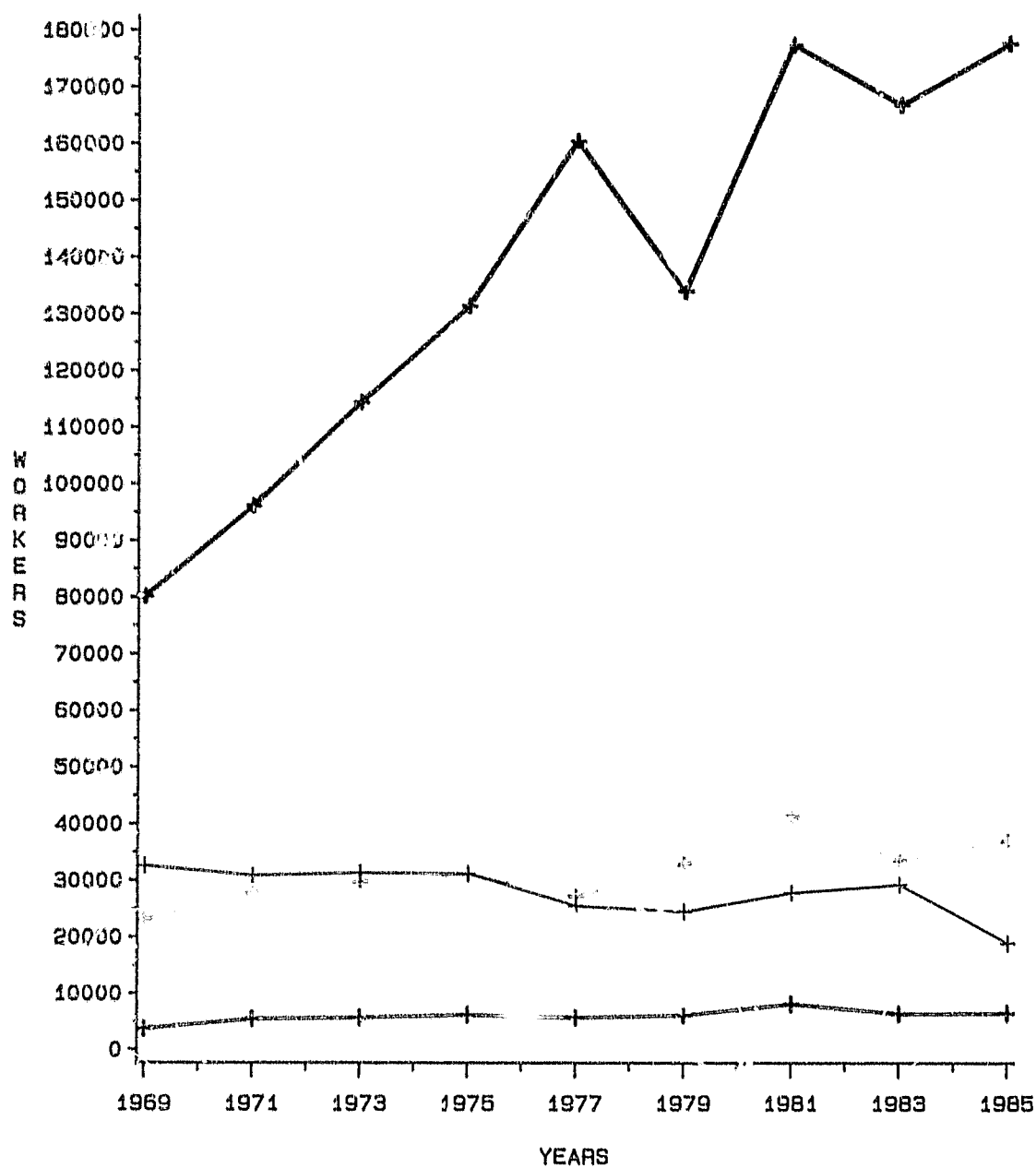
FIGURE 5.3
Apprentices registered, by race: 1969-1985



KEY:
whites
indians
Africans

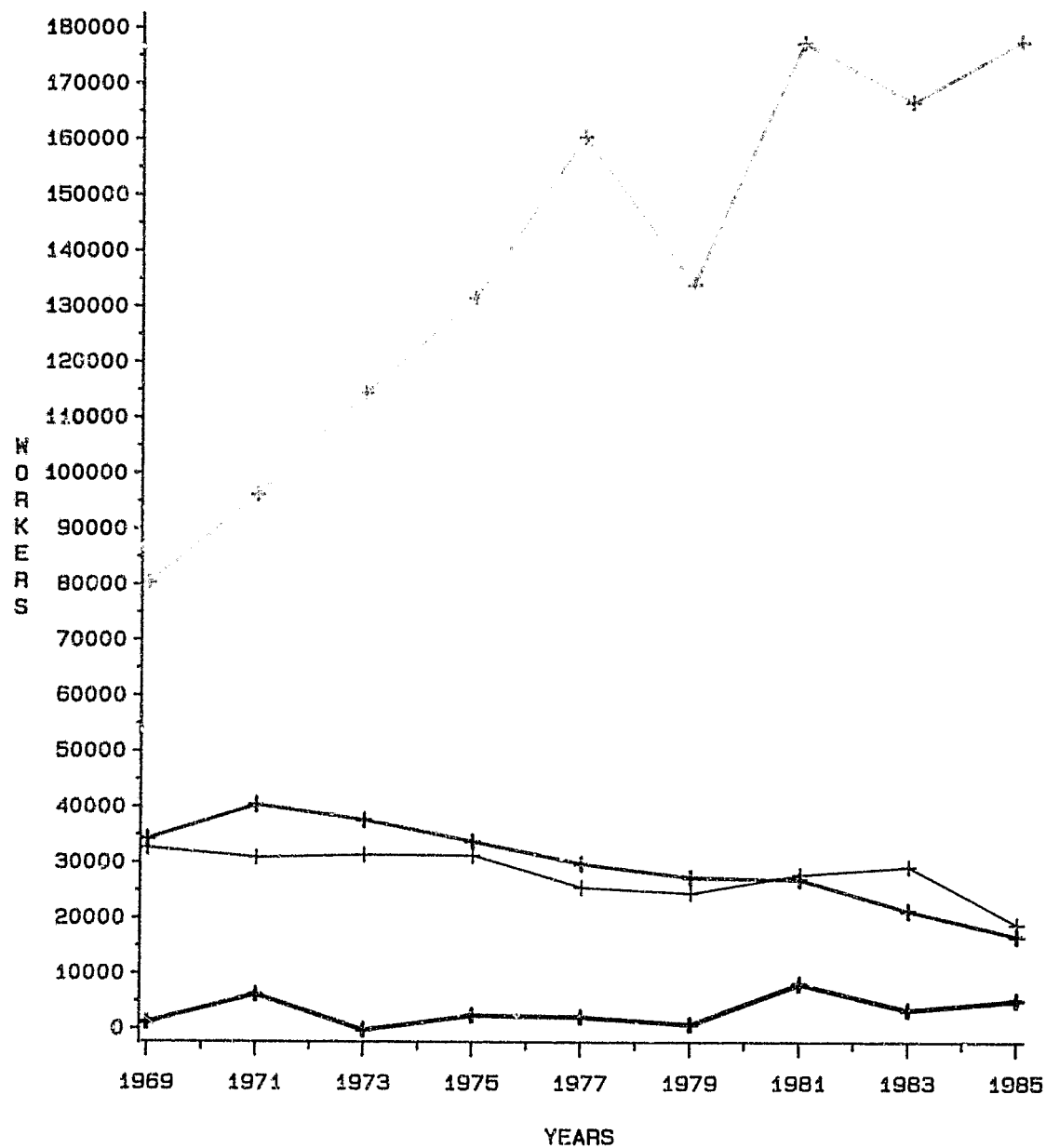
Source: see Table 5.3.

FIGURE 5.4
Semi-skilled workers in building industry, by race: 1969-1985



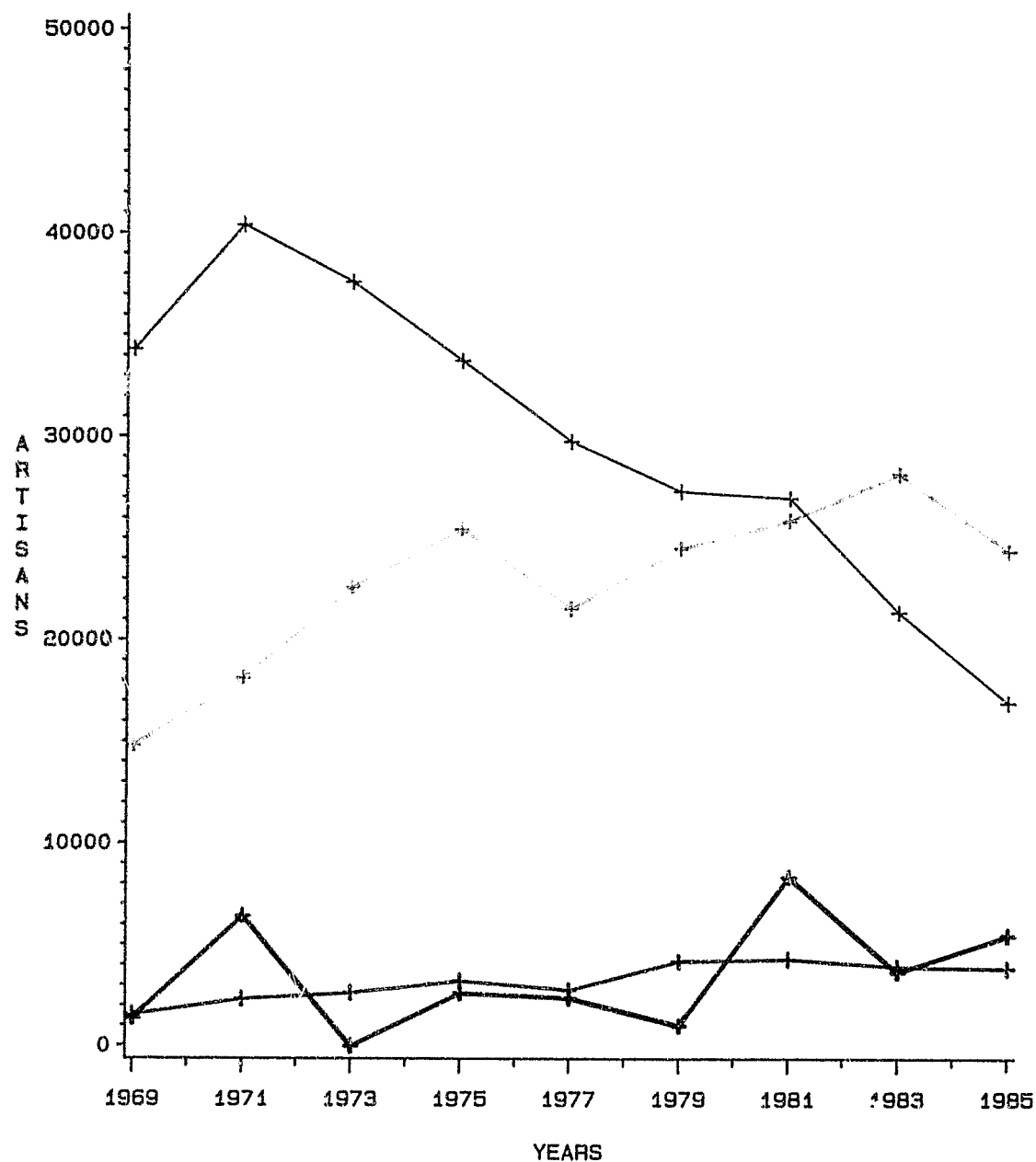
KEY:
whites
Indians
Africans
Source: see Table 5.5.

FIGURE 5.5
Artisans and semi-skilled workers in the
building industry, African and white: 1969-1985



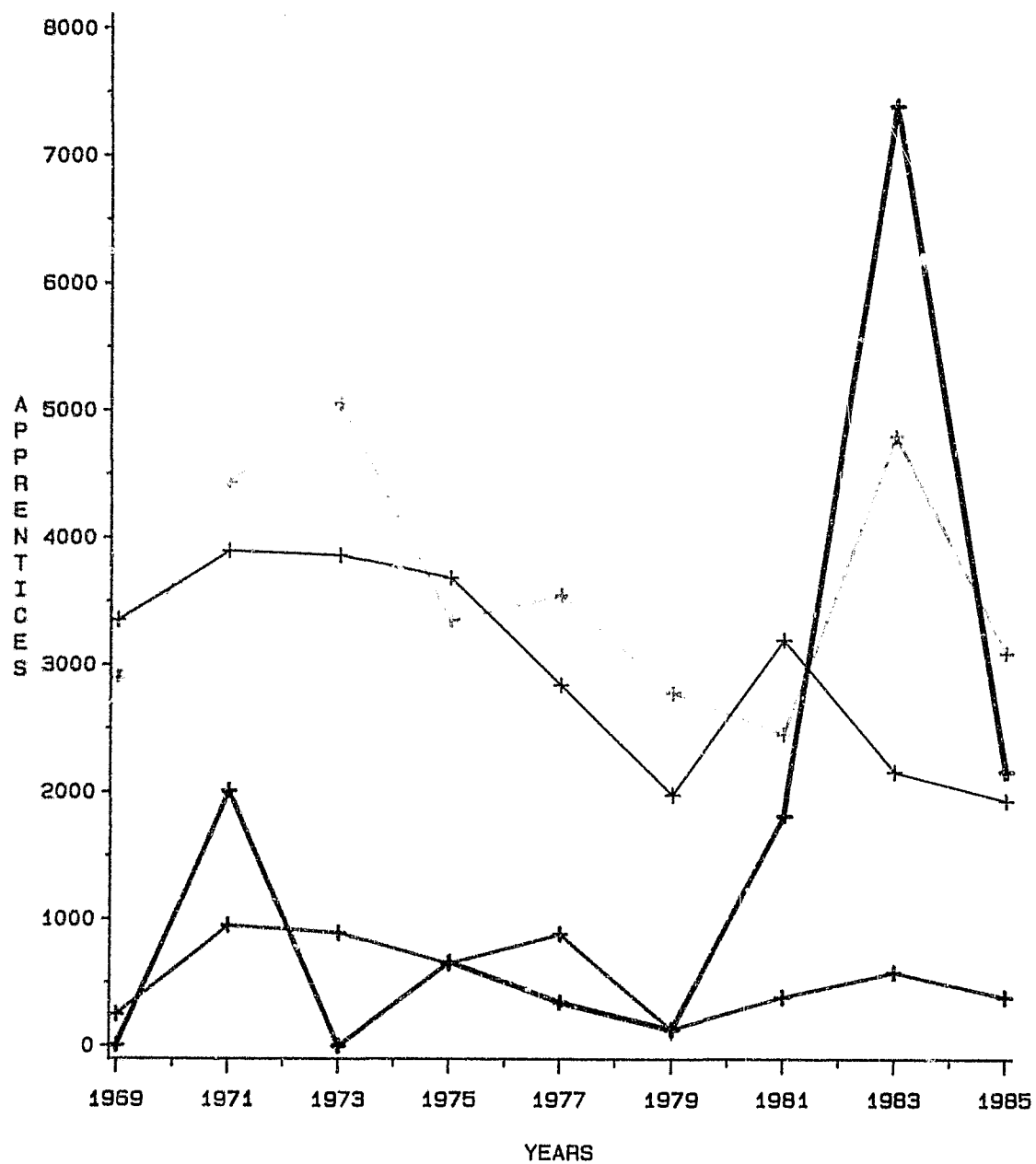
KEY:
white semi-skilled workers
African semi-skilled workers
white artisans
African artisans
Source: see Table 5.6.

FIGURE 5.6
Artisans in the building industry, by race: 1969-1985



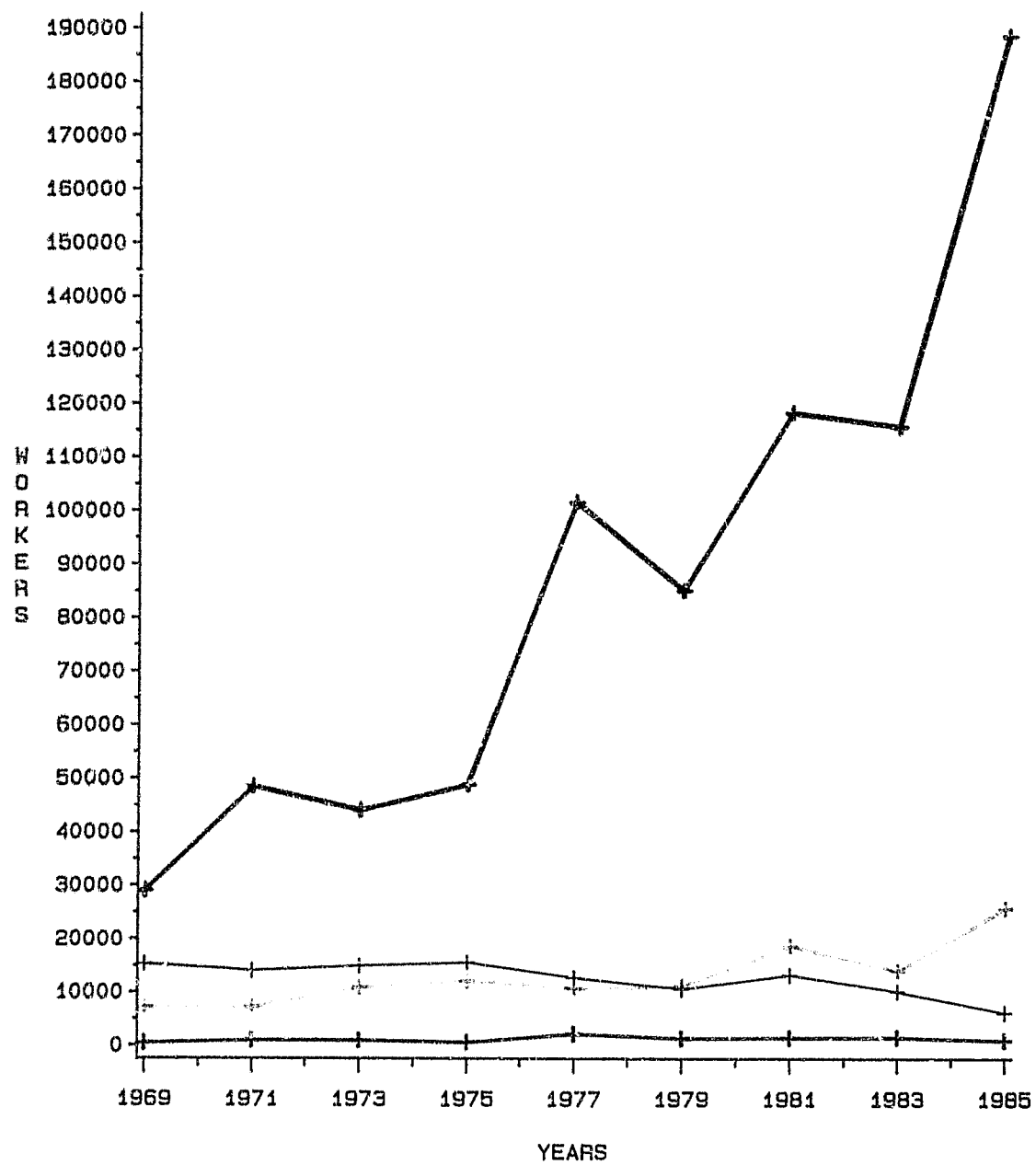
KEY:
whites
coloureds
Indians
Africans
Source: see Table 5.7.

FIGURE 5.7
Apprentices in the building industry, by race: 1969-1985



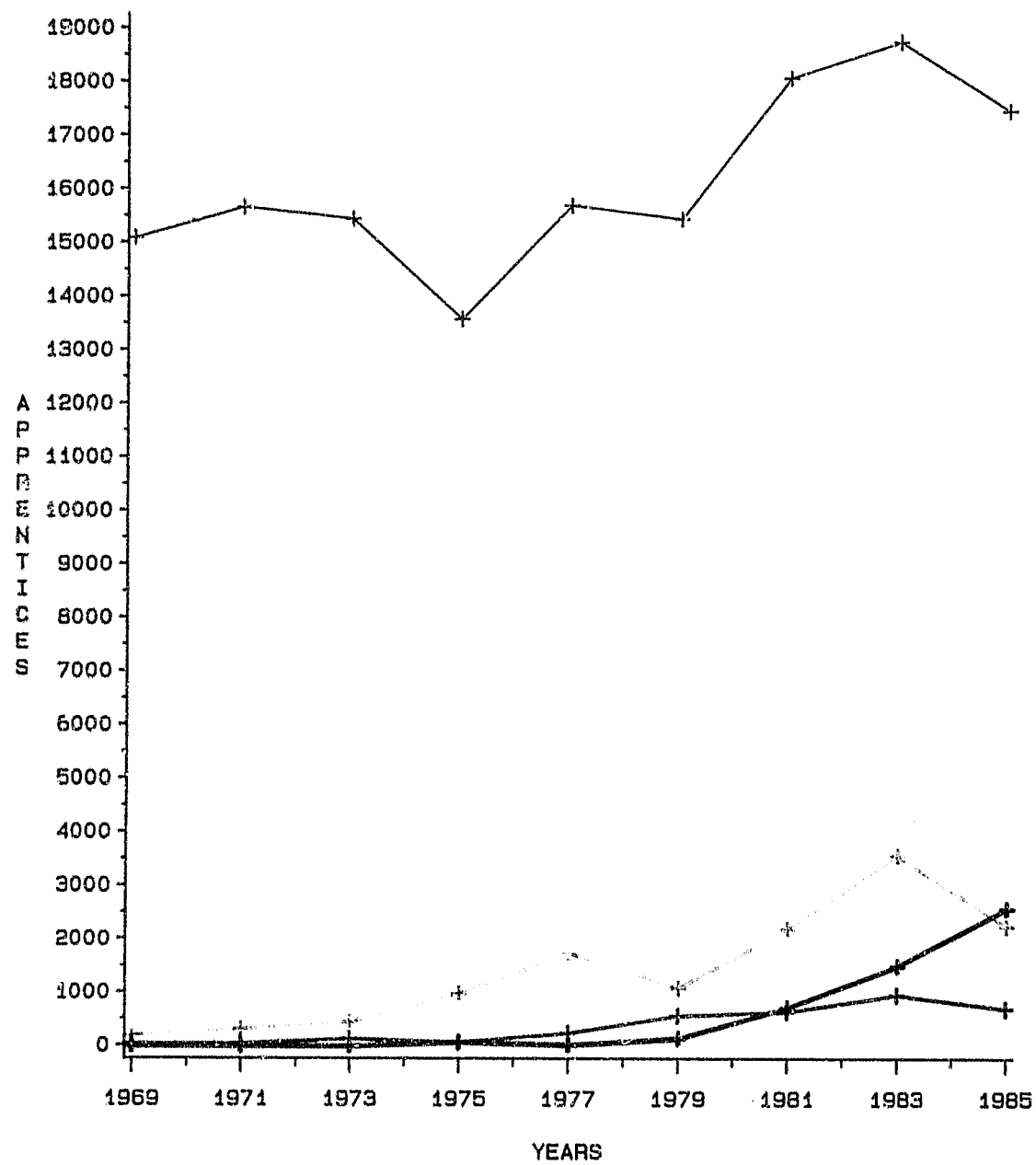
KEY:
whites
coloreds
Indians
Africans
Source: see Table 5.8.

FIGURE 5.8
Semi-skilled workers in metal industry, by race: 1969-1985



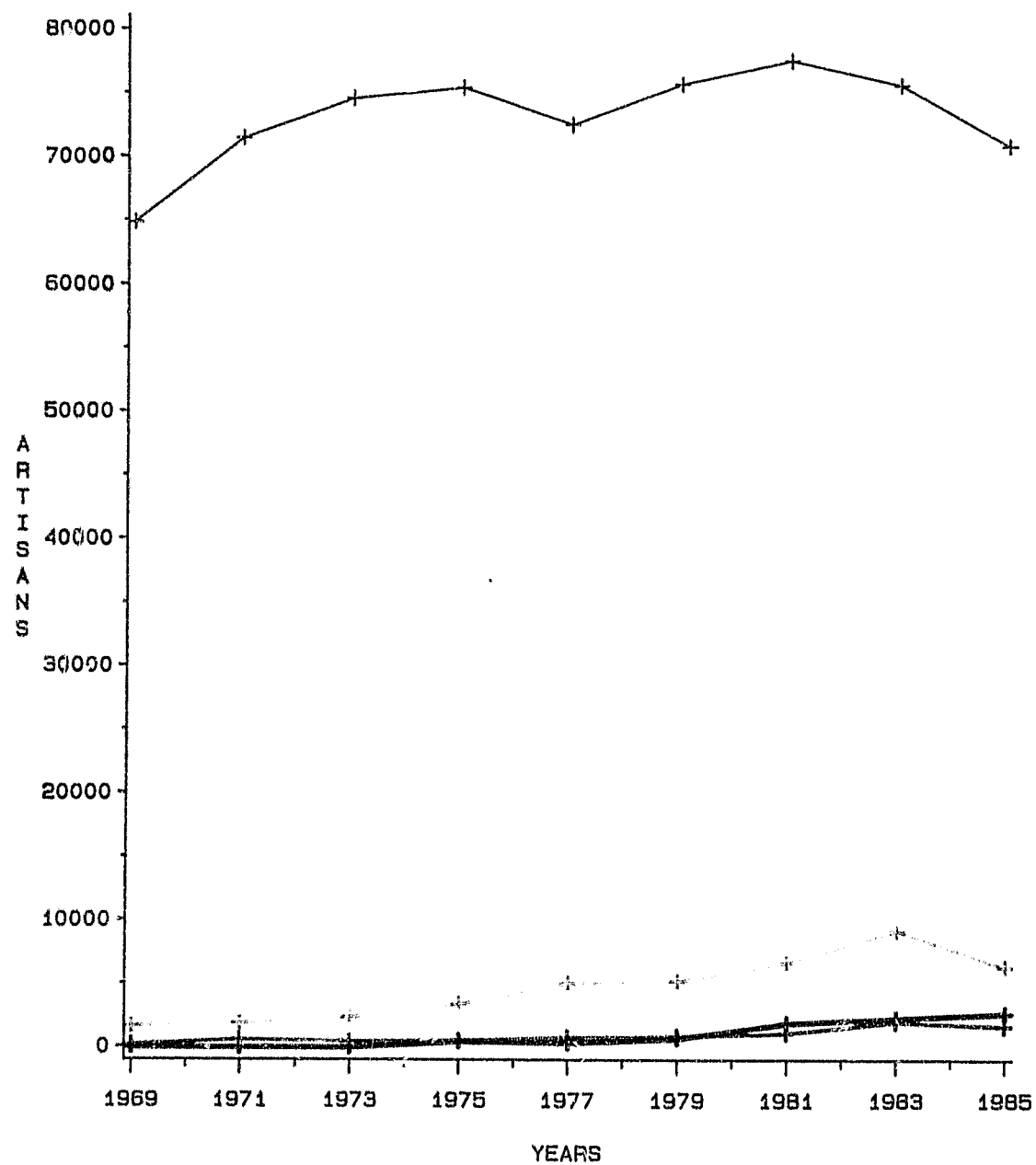
KEY:
 whitee
 coloureds
 Indians
 Africans
 Source: see Table 5.10.

FIGURE 5.9
Apprentices in the metal industry, by race: 1969-1985



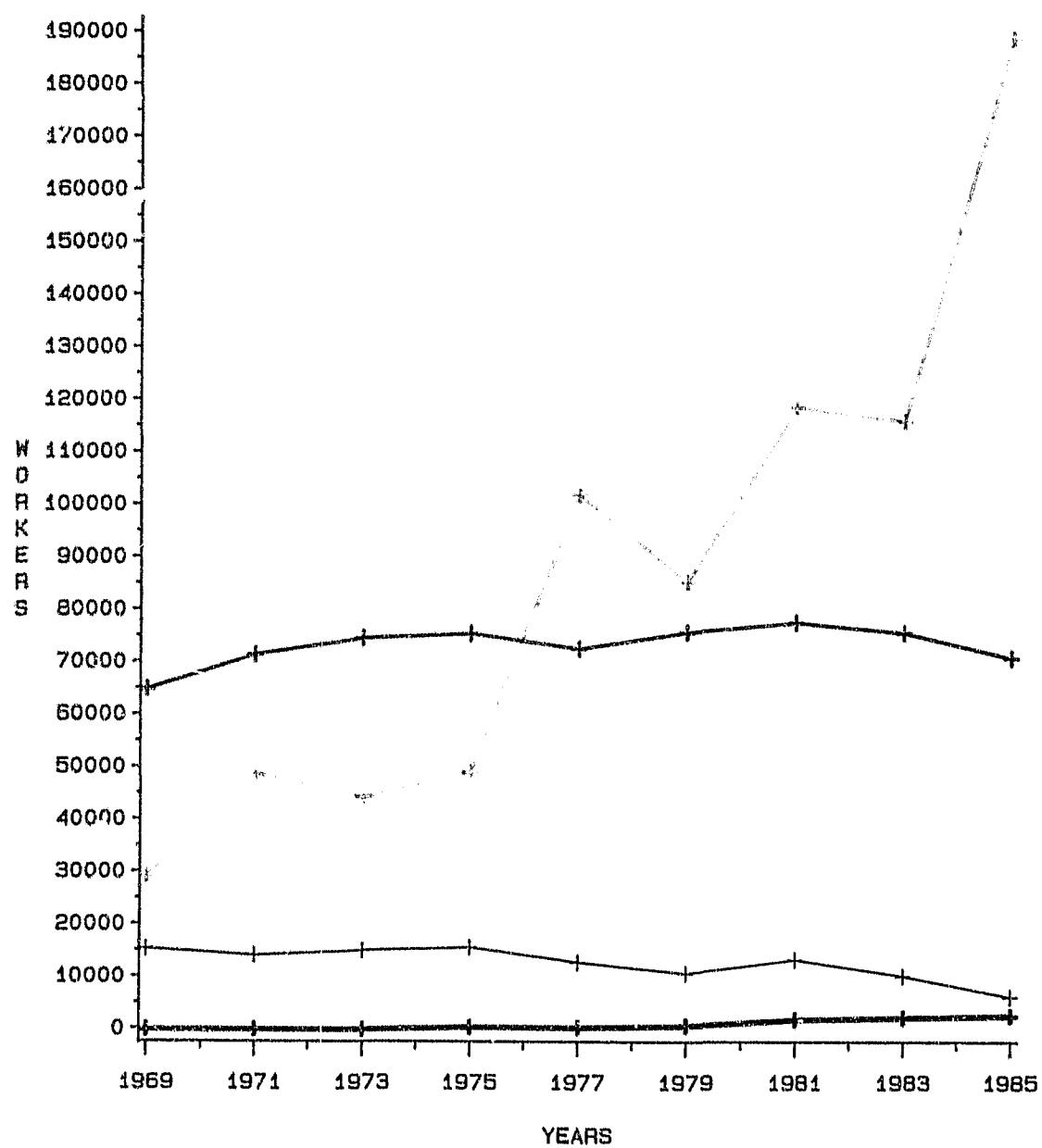
KEY:
whites
coloureds
Indians
Africans
Source: see Table 5.11

FIGURE 5.10
Artisans in the metal industry, by race: 1969-1985



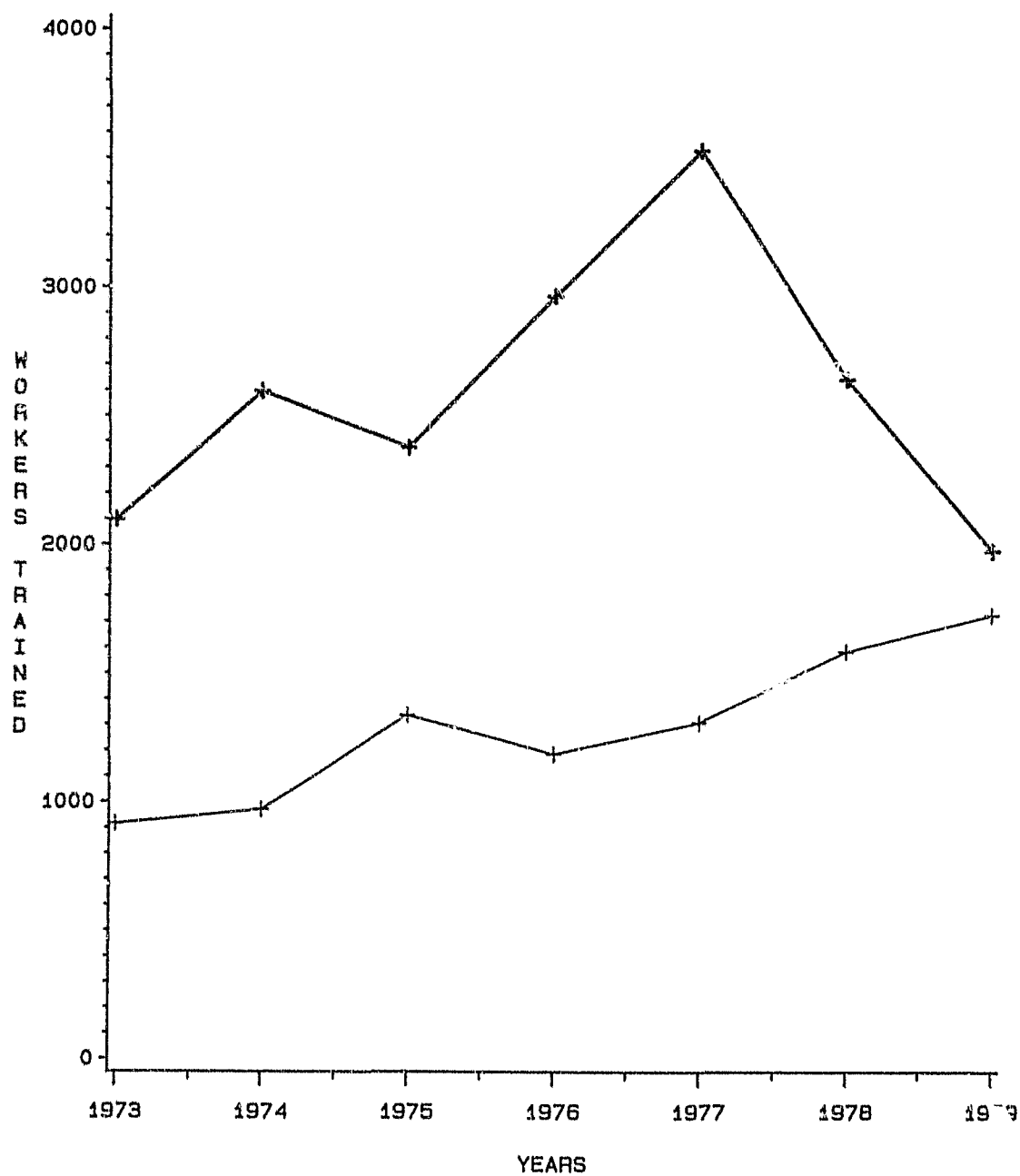
KEY:
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coloureds
Indians
Africans
Source: see Table 5.12.

FIGURE 5.11
Artisans and semi-skilled workers in the
metal industry, African and white: 1969-1985



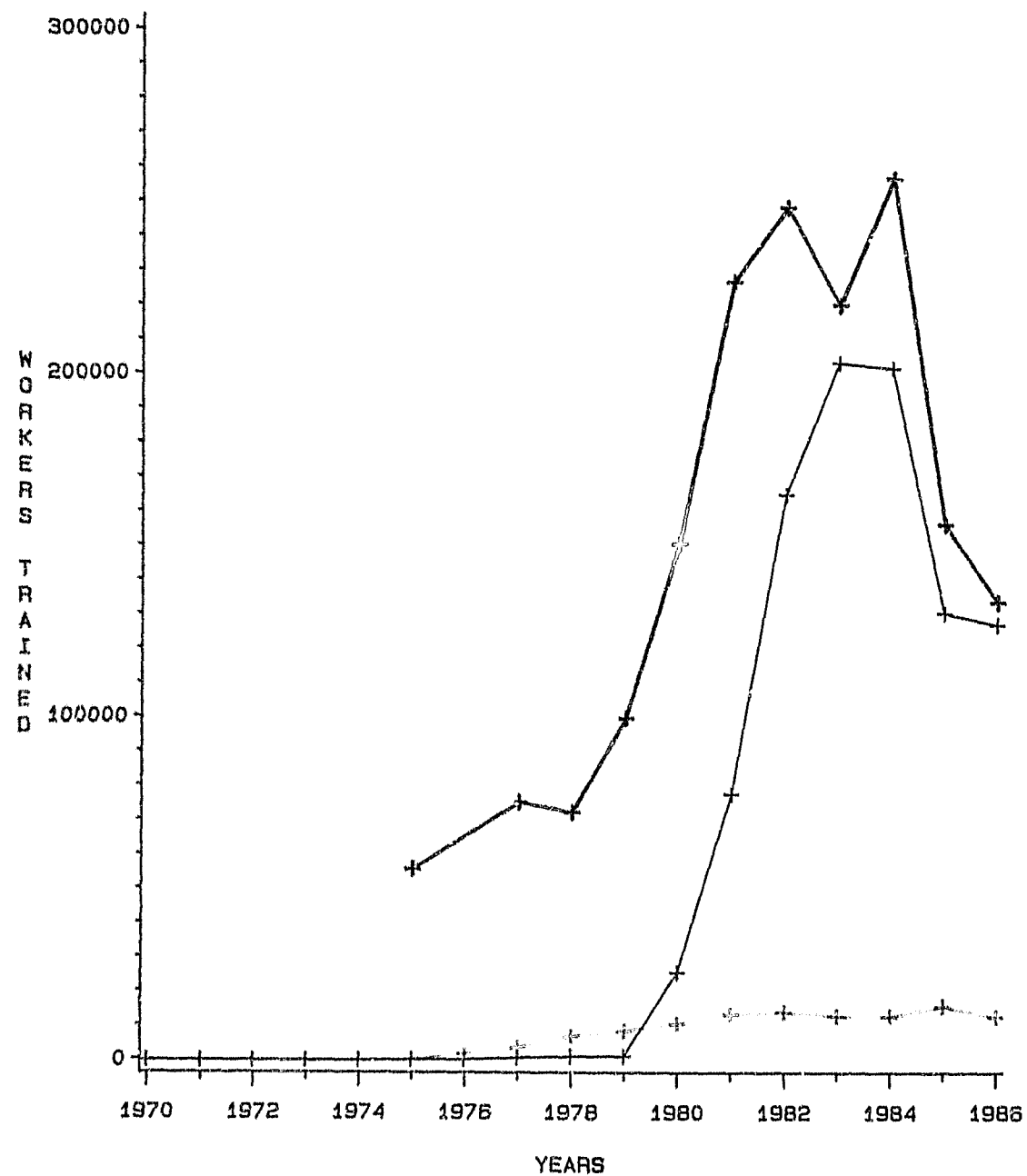
KEY:
white semi-skilled workers
African semi-skilled workers
white artisans
African artisans
Source: see Table 5.13.

FIGURE 5.12
Workers trained in State Industrial Schools
and Ad Hoc Border Industrial Schools



KEY:
state industrial schools
ad-hoc border industrial schools
Source: see Tables 5.14 & 5.15.

FIGURE 5.13
Workers Trained in Registered Training Centres & Schemes: 1970-86



KEY:
private industrial training centres
public industrial training centres
private in-service training schemes
Source: see Tables 5.17, 5.18 & 5.19.

CHAPTER 6

WIEHAHN, RIEKERT AND DE LANGE

6.1. Introduction: background to reform

The end of the 1960's, argue Saul and Gelb, was when the bill for the economic prosperity of the previous two decades fell due.²⁴⁵ The economy had boomed on contradictory foundations, whose effects began to manifest themselves more seriously in the absence of mitigating factors such as huge foreign investments.²⁴⁶ The repression of popular and trade union activity allowed the maintenance, for instance, of low-quality education and low wages. This contributed to under-trainability of workers (thus undermining the impact of what industrial training did occur on the demand for skills) and the limited size of the domestic consumer market. The impoverishment of rural areas (exacerbated by bantustan policy) and the mechanisation of production (boosted by the spate of mergers and take-overs in the slump of the early 1970's, spurring the growth of monopoly companies who favoured the capitalisation of industry) contributed to rising rates of unemployment.²⁴⁷

Burdened by these conditions, workers in Durban and other areas registered their demands militantly in 1973. In 1976, it was the black schools that erupted, voicing not just educational but political grievances. Both these outbursts were gradually consolidated into

²⁴⁵ Saul, J. and S. Gelb. 1981. "The Crisis in South Africa: Class Defense, Class Revolution": pp.16-17.

²⁴⁶ Foreign investments, and the 'floating' of the colour bar to minimise the effect of job reservation on the performance of skilled work, had been largely the basis on which capital had met the cost of a political dispensation whose repression of and control over the black workforce secured the basis for domestic profitability and attractiveness to foreign investors (Davies, 1979: pp.184-186; Lipton, 1986: pp.145-149).

²⁴⁷ Saul and Gelb, *op. cit.*: pp.17-20.

organisational resistance on a scale unknown since the banning of the liberation movements at the beginning of the 1960's. The intensity of the unrest, and the deep-rootedness of the contradictions in the historical development of South African capitalism, led to a realisation by the state that 'formative' rather than simply 'defensive' (usually repressive) strategies were required to maintain the longer term survival of white privilege within the capitalist order.²⁴⁸ O'Meara outlines the economic situation by the late-1970's:

"By 1978 the country was facing the worst economic crisis in its history and an actual *decline* of GDP of 0.25% in 1977-78. By the mid-1970's, confronted both with an international recession and growing industrial, political and economic instability with South Africa itself and the region as a whole, the very large doses of foreign capital which had sustained the growth of the 1960's began to dry up... Similarly, the recession dramatically increased the growing structural unemployment of african workers... Ironically...the shortages of technical workers in the economy accelerated".²⁴⁹

The years leading up to this point saw much concern being voiced by capital for effective economic and political responses on the part of government.²⁵⁰ But, as O'Meara notes, there was also increasing division and lack of direction within the ruling National Party government. Prime Minister Vorster was "unable to intervene decisively to give a particularly conservative or reformist direction", and by 1977 "a virtual political impasse had been reached in party, cabinet and state".²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*: pp.3-4.

²⁴⁹ O'Meara, D. 1982. "Muldergate and the Politics of Afrikaner Nationalism": p.3.

²⁵⁰ O'Meara identifies broad agreement among employers as to the nature of necessary reforms: firstly, "the need to ease substantially legislative restrictions on the mobility of african labour...to permit its more profitable utilisation"; and secondly, "the general demand that restrictions on the training and employment of skilled african labour be likewise abolished or reformed, to permit the reorganisation of production on the basis of higher productivity" (*ibid*: p.5).

²⁵¹ *Ibid*: p.12.

The realignment of class forces within the state (the crucial catalyst of which was the Muldergate scandal) brought to dominance the two groups most convinced of the need for thorough-going reform - the military and monopoly capital. Their common ground was the assertion that economic and political stability required a 'total strategy', a system of co-ordinated action, to address at once "military, psychological, economic, ideological, [and] cultural" threats to the status quo. The doctrine of total strategy argued that the only way to win the hearts of Africans was through their more effective incorporation into the capitalist system. The resultant benefits accruing to them would then supposedly elicit a commitment to the system, which in the long run provided the strongest bulwark against communism.²⁵² An important constituency for this strategy was urban Africans, to whom industry was increasingly looking for its semi-skilled labour. Reform envisaged, as Posel writes:

"measures which acknowledged and protected the existence of permanent urban African communities, and allotted them relatively privileged residential, educational and employment opportunities, distinct from those of temporary urban residents (allegedly) based in homelands or rural areas. Such measures, it was claimed, would improve urban Africans' access to skills while simultaneously buttressing economic and political stability by the creation of a relatively affluent urban African population with a 'stake in the system'".²⁵³

The reform process, as initiated through the above concerns, comprises a number of interconnected parts. This thesis is concerned with three of those: the legal restructuring of the racial division of labour; the reformulation of educational priorities in terms of skills demanded by capital; and the re-arrangement of influx control measures. Each of these areas received attention in one or more of the reports of three main commissions of enquiry (published in the period 1979 to 1981) which formed the basis for government policy alterations in the 1980's. The relevant

²⁵² *Ibid*: pp.12-13.

²⁵³ Posel, D. 1984. "Language, Legitimation and Control: the South African state after 1978": p.5.

recommendations of the commissions will now be outlined, and their implications for African training and occupational mobility discussed.

6.2. The Wiehahn commission

For the purposes of this thesis, the Wiehahn Commission was concerned to show the following:

1. that productivity had not improved despite the discussion and action over the previous decade on the need to upgrade worker competency;
2. that factors discriminating against prospective African apprentices were among the causes of a skilled-labour shortage contributing to low productivity (through inflated wages being paid to scarce skilled workers);
3. and that apprenticeship training was generally in need of assessment and improvement, in order that it produce better results in shorter periods of time.

Part 2 (on Training) of the Wiehahn Commission's report begins with an assessment of productivity in the South African economy between 1970 and 1978; the result reflected poorly on attempts made to improve the output per worker during that period. The commission reported that, according to its measurements, only marginal increases in output had been achieved in the manufacturing sector as against a more than doubling of wages. Despite the qualifications made about the interpretation of the indices, it is asserted that "...the figures clearly suggest that the training and retraining of workers merit serious attention in an effort to lower or avoid increases in labour cost per unit of output..."²⁵⁴ The report went on to admit that:

²⁵⁴ SA, Republic. 1980. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation, Part 2: Training*: p.6; also see Table 1.2, p.6.

"the industrial training dispensation...has a number of shortcomings which often thwart efforts to accomplish its declared aim of supplying a sufficient quantity of labour of the right quality at the right time and in the right place..."²⁵⁵

The report also recognised, albeit euphemistically, the discriminatory nature of the training, which had:

"...differentiated between population groups, affecting in particular the position of Blacks [Africans]... The most serious consequence has been an increasing shortfall in the country's skilled manpower resources".²⁵⁶

Although the Wiehahn Commission published its in-depth investigations into training in Part 2 of its report, it had felt the need to address, directly and immediately, the question of Africans as skilled artisans in 'white' areas in its initial report. Here, it was asserted that apprenticeships for Africans, as well as the opportunity to practice artisan skills, should be actively pursued and facilitated in the industrial centres. What is significant here - apart, of course from the *volte face* from the official position a few years earlier - is that other legal changes and state facilities were a prerequisite for this recommendation to be operationalised. Fundamental to this was the granting of legal "employee" status to African workers and their right to belong to registered trade unions;²⁵⁷ alongside this was the scrapping of Section 77 (the job reservation clause) of the Industrial Council Act,²⁵⁸ and the repeal of the Black Building Workers Act;²⁵⁹ these were

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*: p.40, par.3.52.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*: p.40, par.3.55. This concurred with the commission's reflection of employers' attitudes: "Industry was concerned about the shortfall in the annual recruitment of apprentices, which could be attributed to the practical restrictions in the indenturing of Non-Whites" (*ibid*: p.31, par.3.15).

²⁵⁷ SA, Republic. 1979(a). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation*: paragraph 5.16 and 5.17.

²⁵⁸ SA, Republic. 1980. *White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation*: p.5, paragraph 3.3 and 3.4.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*: p.13, paragraph 4.3.1.

all part of the broader scenario which Wiehahn addressed in order that the more specific proposals on training were to be implementable.

Further, the commission delivered, *inter alia*, the following recommendation on the 1944 Apprenticeship Act: that the Minister of Manpower lay down guidelines for use by Apprenticeship Committees when considering apprenticeship applications, for instance, "no discrimination or unfair advantage on the basis of race, colour or sex".²⁶⁰

Within the commission itself, white union resistance to these moves came through commissioners Tony Neethling (General Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering union) and Attie Nieuwoudt (president of the South African Confederation of Labour (SACLA)). Both reiterated, in their minority views, the traditional government position that African apprentices and artisans should generally remain limited to bantustans and townships. They argued that indenturing African apprentices would,

"by virtue of the numbers involved, eventually endanger the work security of skilled artisans in such areas... It could also have a detrimental effect on the wage structure and wage movements of artisans, to such an extent that Whites, Coloureds and Asians could be displaced...".²⁶¹

But despite their disagreement, and the attempts by the right-wing Mine Workers Union to lobby SACLA against Wiehahn's basic reforms, the report was made and largely accepted. SACLA, writes Friedman, was by then "a spent force... It lost its influence with the government and, by the mid-1980's, was a little noticed oddity".²⁶²

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*: p.34, par.3.2.2.2.

²⁶¹ SA, Republic. 1980. *Op. cit*: p.44, paragraph 5.27; and p.45, paragraph 5.34.

²⁶² Friedman, S. 1987. *Building Tomorrow Today*: p.166.

In an historically ironic comment regarding the 1951 Training of Artisans Act, the commission registered its basic disagreement with the dissenters as follows:

"Legislation of this nature should not be regarded as a 'welfare service' aimed at the protection of a small section of the community. The emphasis should always be placed on attracting adults from all population groups who had the necessary motivation and aptitude to become skilled artisans with the ultimate object of fulfilling a worthwhile role in the economy".²⁶³

What was also crucial was that training facilities be made available for both practical and theoretical aspects of apprenticeship, to avoid the problem of limited technical facilities for Africans, and possibly anticipate some reticence among employers and trade unions to indenture inexperienced African apprentices. In assessing the 1951 Training of Artisans Act, the commission recommended that:

"Where training centres are not conveniently and readily available for certain trainees, consideration be given...to the utilisation of any existing facilities for such training...".²⁶⁴

The same recommendation was made with regard to the provisions of the Apprenticeship Act.²⁶⁵ It was accepted that the public training centres be used for this purpose.²⁶⁶ The commission also recommended that the public training centres be used as sites for the implementation of constantly revised apprenticeship training methods and content. The Department of National Education was requested to:

"review continuously the practical and theoretical training provided at training centres in conjunction with the National Apprenticeship Board and with due regard to...
i) technological and structural changes in the economy;
ii) the rationalisation of trades to satisfy the needs of employers;

²⁶³ SA, Republic, 1979(a), *op. cit.*: p.35, par.3.31.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: p.36, par.3.33.1.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*: p.34, par.3.22.4.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: p.8, paragraph 4.1.3. and 4.1.4. In Part 2 (Training) of its report, the commission cited employers' submissions that "no technical colleges were available in industrial areas for Blacks and that the technical colleges in the homelands were too far removed from industries that required skilled workers" (p.30, par.3.7; SA, Republic, 1980. *Op. cit.*).

- iii) the updating of training schedules; and
- iv) the methodology of training".²⁶⁷

This 'streamlining' of apprenticeship training reflects the extent to which the nature and content of the training was becoming removed from the control of trade unions and geared, with the aid of state facilities, firmly towards the needs of employers.

Although the commission made no particular recommendations on this, it reported certain employers' suggestion that:

"The present apprenticeship system should be redesigned in a 'modular system'...[where] the tests taken at the end of each module would result in 'graded artisans' being produced with a consequent incentive for advancement. The 'modular training programmes' should be prepared by recognised training authorities within the industry concerned".²⁶⁸

Some employers also expressed the view that:

"A study should be made of the 'modular systems' of training overseas with a view to adopting these to South Africa conditions".²⁶⁹

This was in fact taken up by the National Training Board (in conjunction with the HSRC) in 1984, and a study published in 1986. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

6.3. The Riekert commission

The Riekert Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower²⁷⁰ also directed part of its focus onto training issues, recommending, *inter alia*, a general, deracialised law governing

²⁶⁷ SA, Republic. 1980. *White Paper on Part 2 of the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Labour Legislation*: p.12, paragraph 4.2.4.

²⁶⁸ SA, Republic. 1979(a), *op. cit.*: p.31, par.3.10.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: p.31, par.3.16.

²⁷⁰ SA, Republic. 1979(b). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Legislation Affecting the Utilisation of Manpower (RP32-1979)*.

all training for all races, to be administered by the Department of Labour and not the Department of Bantu Education.²⁷¹ But of greater importance was the attention it paid to the geographic mobility and legality of Africans in urban areas.

It was recommended and accepted that Section 10(1)(a), (b) and (c) rights should be transferable from one 'white' area to another, and that a worker's presence in any of these areas should be governed by the availability of work and housing.²⁷² The distinction, said the commission, should be drawn between permanent and contract workers, and preference (with regard to employment and housing) be given to the former. Illegal employment of contract workers (ie. employment without permission from labour bureaux on the grounds of non-availability of local labour, and the migrant worker's access to housing) would be more strictly policed, more heavily fined, and would rest on a "real shift of emphasis to the prosecution of employers".²⁷³ Permanent urban dwellers, on the other hand, would be able to look for work without registering as work-seekers, and would be able to have their contracts registered *after* finding a job.²⁷⁴

The divisive element here is crucial to this thesis. As Mann notes, the one side of the Riekert coin "involves a tightening of influx control, and a reinforcement of the *cordon sanitaire* separating the Bantustans from the metropolitan districts". On the other side is an

²⁷¹ This transfer of responsibility for African training could be seen as a reflection of the deracialising shift being made from a system controlling, as it were, Africans *as blacks* to one of controlling Africans *as workers*, where the division between rural and urban workers is accentuated and that between African and white urban workers is weakened.

²⁷² Ensor, L. and C. Cooper. 1979. "Summary of the Recommendations of the Riekert Commission"; pp.10-11.

²⁷³ *Ibid*: pp.20-22.

²⁷⁴ Hindson, D. 1987. *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat*: p.85.

"elite of relatively skilled, better-off, unionised workers...to be offered greater job security, residential rights in the urban centres, and preferential access to housing... The intention is to ensure that there are real objective reasons why 'qualified' Africans should desist from confrontation with the bourgeois order".²⁷⁵

Hindson and Lacey observed in 1983 that the policy had by then had considerable effect on the labour market:

"Tighter control over unqualified workers and increased mobility of local workers within the urban areas has produced a sharper division between strata of the african work-force. The centralisation of the machinery of efflux control has further deepened the division between the urban and rural populations and promoted the segmentation of markets and economic fragmentation of the working population within the bantustans".²⁷⁶

In this sense, segmentation of labour markets provides a useful concept in which to frame the emerging division between permanent and migrant African workers. Within this context, the effect of training in fostering intra-class divisions can be seen as closely tied to broader institutions of social control, such as migrant labour.

6.4 The de Lange commission

The de Lange Commission, like that of Wiehahn and Riekert, tended to lean on economic needs - 'manpower shortages' being a key term - to justify the changes it recommended. "The priorities [of education]", it asserted, "should be determined in the context of the current and expected manpower needs of the economy".²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ Mann, M. 1934. "Ideology and the 'Crisis' in South Africa, with particular reference to the de Lange Commission": p.48.

²⁷⁶ Hindson, D. and Lacey, M. 1983. "Influx Control and Labour Allocation: Policy and Practice since the Riekert Commission": p.112.

²⁷⁷ Human Sciences Research Council. 1981. *Provision of Education in the RSA: Report of the Main Committee of the HSRC Committee into Education*: p.13. Dr P.J. van der Merwe, Director General of Department of Manpower and de Lange Commission member, is reported as saying that:

The problem with the education system as it existed was that it "has not been able to succeed in creating harmony between the human material it produces and society's manpower needs".²⁷⁸ The answer, it argued, was a differentiated educational structure which emphasises vocational - work-oriented - education, and allowed only a minority (due to the relative cost) to pursue 'academic' educational futures:

"The majority of pupils require vocational training at school to enable them to enter the world of work. The minority of pupils require the development of academic skills with a view to continuing their academic training at a tertiary level... 50-80 percent of children in standards 5-8 receiving vocational education in future is in line with the manpower needs of South Africa".²⁷⁹

This differentiation, it has been argued, could foster class divisions within the African community; only wealthier African families could afford 'academic' education, while technical education is free.²⁸⁰ There are other factors, however, which tend to counteract the extent to which technical education might provide a novel and significant avenue to occupational or class mobility. For instance, the bulk of training in industry has remained at a relatively low level of skill. This is taken up in the following chapter.

"Structural change in the economy demands a different kind of labour force. The growth of giant high-technology firms, and of manufacturing and public services, demand both skilled black labour and a higher level of general literacy... [T]he de Lange proposals...are tailored to produce such a workforce" (*Sunday Tribune*, 13 December 1981; cited in "Training for Capital: de Lange Reports").

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*: p.71.

²⁷⁹ SA, Republic. *Report of the Work Committee on Technical and Vocational Education: HSRC Investigation into Education*: p.29; cited in Chisholm, 1984, "Redefining Skills: Black Education in South Africa in the 1980's": p.389.

²⁸⁰ As Chisholm notes:

"The majority remain where they were while an ideology of upward mobility and equality of opportunity, made possible by easing restrictions on the training of blacks, disguises the continuities between Bantu Education and present initiatives" (Chisholm, L. 1984. "Redefining Skills: Black Education in South Africa": p.390).

Skills shortages, as mentioned above, have been an important rationalisation for the whole direction taken in educational reform. It is necessary, however, to briefly raise some issues around the assertion of skill shortages in order to appreciate its broader ideological role. Buckland refers to a survey on African unemployment in South Africa which showed that 16,4 per cent of urban unemployed males and 11,2 per cent of rural unemployed females had passed standard eight or higher; more than 40 per cent of each group had between seven and nine years of schooling. He comments that:

"If in the current 'skills shortage' these reserves remain untapped, the relationship between schooling and skills requires careful investigation".^{2*1}

For while it would be wrong to deny the existence of severe shortages in certain skill areas, the point being made here is that, as Meth puts it:

"These same shortages can be highly functional to both the state and capital. On the one hand, they encourage the active fostering of the myth of upward mobility, whilst permitting 'rationalisation' of the labour process on the other".^{2*2}

This point is taken up empirically in Chapter 7, where it is argued that capital has not responded^{ed} as enthusiastically as expected to legal reforms in training, and that this in turn suggests that the existence of skill shortages may in some cases have been exaggerated.

^{2*1} Buckland, *op. cit.*: p.57. Buckland cites Blackburn and Mann's study showing that among non-artisan workers in a certain British town, 85 per cent of them were capable of doing 95 per cent of the jobs (Blackburn, R. and M. Mann. 1979. *The Working Class in the Labour Market*, cited in Buckland: p. 57). A similar study by Nattrass showed that, in Peterborough, "most jobs differ in this respect only that they involve different levels of debasement" (Nattrass, J. 1977. "Capital intensity in South African manufacturing"; cited in Buckland: p.57).

^{2*2} Meth, C. 1981. "Shortages of Skilled Labour Power and Capital Reconstruction in South Africa"; cited in Buckland, *op. cit.*: p.57. The 'bottom line' for Meth is that "it would be extremely difficult to prove [that] in the absence of these shortages, the South African economy could have grown much faster" (Meth, C. 1979. "Trade Unions, Skill Shortages, and Private Enterprise": p.82).

The "myth of upward mobility", as Meth calls it, reveals a technicism within the de Lange Commission's report which links up to its ideological commitment to free enterprise. For the commission, writes Buckland, lack of knowledge is assumed to be the remaining obstacle (after legal restraints are dismantled) to worker mobility and job improvement. However, the successful acquisition and deployment of this knowledge is subject to the internalisation of certain "cultural assets":

"Modern science, technology and management skills, which are the most powerful resources that man has ever had at his disposal to enable him to change his environment, are not yet the cultural assets of significant sectors of all our population groups".²⁸³

In this context, states Buckland, "knowledge is seen in terms of skills, with an 'appropriate value system' serving to legitimate the differentiated acquisition of skills".²⁸⁴

This brings us to consider the importance of the ideological underpinnings of reformed education and training policies, and the growing awareness among employers and the state that (in line with the basic assertion of the increasingly influential military that their battle was only '20 per cent military' and '80 per cent hearts-and-minds') change was required in both skill level and ideological orientation of black (especially African) workers. The emerging enthusiasm from the Riekert and Wiehahn commissions over the ability of free market forces to address socio-economic ills, strengthened the basis upon which skill training could begin to more overtly propagate the validity and necessity of "social skills".

²⁸³ HSRC, 1981, *op. cit.*: p.31.

²⁸⁴ Buckland, *op. cit.*: p.74.

6.5. The commissions and free market ideology

Davies argues that the "reform process was still painfully slow from capital's point of view until 1979".²⁸⁵ Hereafter, however,

"the state began espousing the merits of Friedmanite 'free enterprise', and its solutions to the country's problems through an economic growth policy that would transform race relations".²⁸⁶

The commissions discussed above were crucial instruments in this process.

The Rickert Commission recommended

"the improvement, modernisation and reform of the existing official institutional and statutory framework of the labour market in South Africa, with a view to the better utilisation especially of Black manpower".²⁸⁷

The Wichahn Commission's translation of this was in firmer reformist language:

"Many White and Non-White workers will...have to be trained and retrained to enable them to compete effectively in the free labour market and to meet the challenges emanating from technological change, the reclassification of work and the abolition of statutory job reservation".²⁸⁸

The commission therefore touched on the crucial issues behind the question of training in government and employer policy: competition in the labour market between white and African workers, mechanisation (and by implication deskilling), the reclassification of artisan's work, and job reservation, respectively. The state was finally associating itself with a new economic discourse which had for some time been the ammunition of its liberal critics.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Davies, J. 1984. "Capital, State and Educational Reform": p.345.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ SA, Republic, 1979(b), *op. cit.*: paragraph 1.8.

²⁸⁸ SA, Republic, 1979(a), *op. cit.*: p.13, paragraph 1.30.

²⁸⁹ By 1984, it was in fact being attacked by the Conservative Party for "selling out" white workers:

"The fact is simply that when it comes to throwing open the doors, whether in the sphere of training facilities or

The direction of reform, in both the state and private sectors, then contains important ideological elements aimed, *inter alia*, distancing the "rationality" of the capitalist economic system from orthodox apartheid. In 1980, the Personnel Consultant for SA Breweries expressed the need for business to go further than the provision of the simply technical aspect of skills in African training, and to realise the importance of ideological commitment - or "social skills" - among workers (see also Kraak's definition of skill, discussed in Chapter 3):

"It is quite true to say that our Black workers need better technical education and training. If, however, they are going to play a meaningful role as members of industrial society, they will need much more than purely technical ability. They will have to accept the value systems of this society and must be willing and, indeed, eager to contribute socially to the formal and informal organisation in a company. This means learning a range of social skills".²⁹⁰

It has been realised that the identification of white business interests with white political power is far advanced among African workers, and that this factor is potentially a major obstacle to the credibility of attempts to "deracialise" political and economic structures. As Davies notes:

"For some time capital has been waging an ideological campaign designed to distance itself from apartheid by asserting the incompatibility of capitalism and apartheid... The failure of Soweto students [in the 1976 uprisings]...to make this distinction...underlined the ineffectivity of the ideological

whatever, the Whites will, in the course of time, be submerged by the masses" (SA, Republic. 1984. *HAD*. Vol.116, 21 May: column 1119).

To which the Minister of Manpower's response was the following:

"...suppose we were to say it was the policy that no White worker may do work that is inferior to the work done by someone of a different race, it means that we must start at the lowest category of worker and then appoint all Black people below him. Surely that is unrealistic... [A]fter one has accommodated all the White workers, each according to his abilities, many employment opportunities are left, alongside those Whites, for people of different abilities... Surely you cannot say to a brilliant man: Just because you are Black you may not progress. That is not tenable. In any case, it is not fair" (SA, Republic. 1984. *HAD*. Vol.116, 22 May: column 1206).⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ Horner, J.A. 1980. "Training Black workers to play a meaningful role in the work environment": p.290.

venture [up to that point] among the targeted groups themselves, namely the aspirant and extant black petty bourgeoisie".²⁹¹

This association of capitalism and apartheid is especially significant to employers when seen in the context of certain predictions ^{concerning} the role of organised black labour in a future, more democratic South Africa. An influential academic from the University of South Africa (UNISA) foresees a situation of "fusion between trade union movements and labour parties", the yielding of collective bargaining "to determination through the political machinery", and of government-imposed "restrictive measures in favour of labour".²⁹²

Horner goes on to note disarmingly that "[this] picture for South Africa is a very uncomfortable one". And in a response aimed at softening the consequences of such a scenario materialising, he asks the question, "What sort of worker would be least 'destructive' or 'irrational' in this sort of society?"²⁹³ The thrust here is the need to convince workers of the personal and social benefit to be derived from a more "active participation" in capitalist production rather than from trade union or party-political sources. By pursuing the individualist notion of investment in (and corresponding returns from) human capital, it is believed that workers might forsake their mass base for personal achievement through training and improved performance on the shop-floor. This ideological aspect of training should be recognised, then, as one of a range of countervailing tendencies involved when considering urban African workers. The resultant ideological impact needs to be assessed alongside the place of these workers in the work-place, within segmented

²⁹¹ Davies, *op. cit.*: p.344.

²⁹² Bendix, 1978. "What are they there for?"; cited in Horner, *op. cit.*: p.292.

²⁹³ Horner, *op. cit.*: p.293.

labour markets, within trade unions, etc. in order that their ambiguous position in the matrix of class forces is shown.

6.6. Conclusion

The commissions of enquiry discussed above formed the ideological core of the state's reform initiative, and the recommendations - although concentrating on different areas - tended to have a concerted effect upon the field of industrial training of African workers. The government accepted the recommendations of Wiehahn which provided the opportunity for Africans to become artisans and for the movement of Africans into higher skilled jobs; it accepted the Riekert Commission's proposals that preference for jobs be given to Africans who held the necessary Section 10(1) qualifications, and that this group be allowed greater geographic mobility to follow or look for jobs more easily; and it accepted de Lange's recommendation that technical education (at school level especially) become a primary concern of the (especially African) educational system. The common reformist thread running through the commissions of de Lange, Wiehahn and Riekert can therefore be conceptualised in terms of the deracialising of aspects of the industrial process and the state through strategies aimed at co-opting sections of the African population and further marginalising others. The following chapter looks at the impact which these policies were to have in the 1980's. The expectation of increased artisan training is realised for the first couple of years into the new decade, but the statistical measures of capital's commitment to this trend reflect a hesitancy (if not sheer disinterest) on the part of much of the private sector in this regard. Indeed, this affects not just African apprenticeship, but apprenticeship training in general, which slows considerably in this period. The training of semi-skilled workers, on the other hand, increases apace. Chapter 7 also suggests, in the light of the earlier theoretical discussion of the place of class struggle (Chapter 2) and

empirical discussion of mechanisation and fragmentation (Chapters 4 and 5), some reasons for the situation in the 1980's.

CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING REFORMS IN THE 1980's

7.1. Introduction

The Wiehahn, Riekert and de Lange commissions recommended various adjustments of the constraints on the employment, geographic mobility, and training of African workers. The legal breakthrough which the 1980's brought was the scrapping of the statutory restriction of African workers from skilled work in 'white' areas. Carrying forward the momentum of the Wiehahn and Riekert recommendations, the government established the National Manpower Commission and the National Training Board - to represent employers, and registered unions and government departments in training activities and planning - and established a Manpower Development Fund of R10-million for long-term loans to training schemes and centres. The Department of Manpower also launched the "Manpower 2000" campaign in early 1980, to encourage the training and better utilisation of labour. Much of the emphasis in this campaign was upon drawing the private sector into the process of examining and addressing labour and training issues, mainly through the establishment of regional and local committees nation-wide.

Support from the National Party was remarkable, with comments like the following being made in Parliament:

"Our greatest immediate task is to prepare the millions of untrained Black people for the economy... What we do need is a crash programme of short, intensive courses".²⁹⁴

²⁹⁴ SA, Republic. 1980. *HAD*, Vol.87, column 6161; GPD Tarblanche, NP MP for Bloemfontein North. This comment is particularly interesting in the light of the furor made only ten years earlier when the Leader of the Opposition made precisely the same suggestion (see Chapter 5).

"The need for highly skilled labour is an immediate need... We should train our own people as rapidly as possible. This applies to every population group, White or non-White".²⁹⁵

The state was finally giving capital the permission (and indeed the encouragement) to train Africans into higher-skilled positions. But the general response of employers was milder than anticipated, as the following discussion will now show.

7.2. Employers' responses to reform initiatives

The general opening-up of artisan status - as well as other skilled jobs - to Africans would, it could be expected, have allowed employers to finally implement the long-overdue training which many of them had asserted constituted a crucial aspect of the solution to the skill-shortage. Furthermore, the state's own initiatives in worker training (directly through public training centres and indirectly through tax-concessions) could be expected to be in greater demand.

Most comments on the training performance of employers, however, were disparaging. Despite the concern with labour training expressed through the 1970's, Anglo-American's Dennis Etheredge was of the opinion that "[t]he year 1980 will be known as the year of the manpower crisis". He told businesspeople that as a result of the inadequate number of skilled workers, it would be impossible to achieve a growth rate of more than five percent for the following five years.²⁹⁶ Dick Sutton, Personnel Director for SA Breweries, told a conference of personnel practitioners that:

"Notwithstanding a number of exceptionally effective training programmes, the national effort to date has failed to provide sufficient trained labour to meet the current needs".²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ SA, Republic. 1980. *NAD* Vol.87, 30 May: column 7687; MP?

²⁹⁶ Quoted in *Manpower 2000 Bulletin*, No.7, December 1980: p.1.

²⁹⁷ Cited in *Manpower 2000 Bulletin* No.3, August 1980: p.2.

The chair of the East London Regional Committee of Manpower 2000 argued that the economy's growth rate "could have been nearer 11 percent had it not been for the shortages of skilled labour".²⁹⁸

The 1980's, it was argued, saw little change in the attitude of employers. Dr Jan Visser, executive director of the National Productivity Institute (NPI), was reported as saying that employers talked a great deal about industrial training - "almost as [they would] about the weather" - but that there was very little improvement in their performance.²⁹⁹ Hennie Reynders, chair of the National Manpower Commission, implied that through employers' insufficient action, the social-cum-moral imperatives of training were also neglected:

"Industrial training is important, not only so far as improving productivity is concerned but also in regard to the creation of opportunities for people from all population groups to raise their living standards. Unfortunately, relatively little attention is as yet given to this matter in industry".³⁰⁰

Even the supposedly more liberal multinational companies had done little to escape this accusation; a House of Commons enquiry into British concerns in South Africa reported that "a remarkable number of firms made no reference at all to training within their affiliated companies...[and] only a minority...had established formal training courses for African employees".³⁰¹

It was also asserted that productivity had worsened as a result of workers' wages increasing faster than their output; this, it was implied,

²⁹⁸ Quoted in *Manpower 2000 Bulletin* No.9, February 1981: p.1.

²⁹⁹ Quoted in *Manpower 2000 Bulletin*, No.14, July 1981: p.4.

³⁰⁰ National Manpower Commission. 1982. *Report on Training in Labour Relations and a Levy System for the Promotion and Financing of Industrial Training* (RP70/1982): p.v (Preface).

³⁰¹ Cited in E. Lear, 1985. "Training South African Blacks - is an AED Programme an alternative?" in *Industrial Relations Journal of South Africa*, 3rd Quarter: p.29.

venture [up to that point] among the targeted groups themselves, namely the aspirant and extant black petty bourgeoisie".²⁹¹

This association of capitalism and apartheid is especially significant to employers when seen in the context of certain predictions on the role of organised black labour in a future, more democratic South Africa. An influential academic from the University of South Africa (UNISA) foresees a situation of "fusion between trade union movements and labour parties", the yielding of collective bargaining "to determination through the political machinery", and of government-imposed "restrictive measures in favour of labour".²⁹²

Horner goes on to note disarmingly that "[this] picture for South Africa is a very uncomfortable one". And in a response aimed at softening the consequences of such a scenario materialising, he asks the question, "What sort of worker would be least 'destructive' or 'irrational' in this sort of society?"²⁹³ The thrust here is the need to convince workers of the personal and social benefit to be derived from a more "active participation" in capitalist production rather than from trade union or party-political sources. By pursuing the individualist notion of investment in (and corresponding returns from) human capital, it is believed that workers might forsake their mass base for personal achievement through training and improved performance on the shop-floor. This ideological aspect of training should be recognised, then, as one of a range of countervailing tendencies involved when considering urban African workers. The resultant ideological impact needs to be assessed alongside the place of these workers in the work-place, within segmented

²⁹¹ Davies, *op. cit.*: p.344.

²⁹² Bendix, 1978. "What are they there for?"; cited in Horner, *op. cit.*: p.292.

²⁹³ Horner, *op. cit.*: p.293.

7.3. Training for the market's changing skill-profile

In a recent analysis of employment statistics in South Africa between 1969 and 1985, Crankshaw asserts that his results

"confirm the conclusion reached by other studies of dependent economies which have identified a trend towards de-industrialisation, manifested by relative decline of employment in manufacturing with an accompanied increase in employment in the service sector. This decline of employment in manufacturing is linked to a decrease in the numbers of unskilled employees, with a simultaneous increase in semi-skilled manual employment" (my emphasis).³⁰⁸

It should be remembered that by the late 1970's, employers in most industries had managed to circumvent many of the traditional restrictions on the employment of African workers, whether through fragmentation of (white-monopolised) skilled work, ministerial exemption from statutory constraints, or the usage of off-the-job training facilities to by-pass traditional channels of apprenticeship training.³⁰⁹ Fragmentation was the most important of these strategies: with the tendency toward monopolisation of capital and mechanisation of production, together with the history of skill fragmentation in the face of white unions' 'craft' protectionism, the advancement of Africans had - even in the 1970's - been mainly from unskilled into semi-skilled occupations (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5).

Lever points to a number of factors which acted to stunt the growth of demand for artisans, including:

"The business cycle and the recession of the 1970's;
Mechanisation/automation of artisan skills;
Fragmentation of artisan work;

³⁰⁸ Crankshaw, O. 1987. "The Racial and Occupational Division of Labour in South Africa", p.1.

³⁰⁹ Although this remained a small area of company training efforts, the Motor Industries Federation had - as early as 1973 - established independent facilities to train black (initially only 'coloured' and Indian) apprentices, after the Motor Industries Employees' Union had refused to permit members from providing artisan training to blacks (SAIRR Survey, 1972: p.268; and SAIRR Survey, 1973: p.222).

Increased role of technicians/technologists...".³¹⁰

The basic outcome of all this, he states,

"is both a devaluation of the status and role of the artisan in the economy, and a devaluation of the system of apprenticeship training...".³¹¹

An NPI sample study showed that the private sector's formal training provisions reflected a strong bias in favour of non-artisan training. The nation-wide study, performed at the request of the National Manpower Commission (NMC), sampled 2,194 companies providing training to their workers between 1978 and 1980. The responses revealed that on average over these three years, roughly one-third of all Africans receiving training were trained at the semi-skilled level; a smaller but comparable percentage were trained in unskilled work³¹² (see Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1). Figures 7.2 and 7.3 represent the comparison between training for Africans and for whites in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, and in skilled and artisan jobs respectively (within the sampled companies). Two striking themes appear: firstly, the overwhelming majority of whites being trained in the more skilled positions; and secondly, by far most of the training is being performed at lower levels of manual skill.

³¹⁰ Lever, J. 1985. "Artisan Unions since Wiehahn": pp.15-16.

³¹¹ *Ibid*: p.16.

³¹² This training for unskilled work is obviously very rudimentary and brief, providing the worker with little more than basic directions for simple manual tasks.

Table 7.1.
Number of African workers trained by sampled companies
according to skill-level, 1978-1980

	Unskilled	Semi-skilled (operator)	Skilled (technician)	Artisan
1978 (whites)	41,671 (464)	61,712 (15,398)	199 (3,794)	203 (14,244)
1979 (whites)	61,776 (4,491)	61,507 (14,934)	298 (4,758)	620 (16,110)
1980 (whites)	61,874 (7,865)	67,295 (19,932)	492 (6,291)	623 (18,764)

Source: NMC, 1984, "In-Service Training in the Republic of South Africa 1980/81": pp.88-90, Table 6.8.

Looking at aggregate and industry-specific figures for the 1980's, it is also clear that the extent of artisan training is very limited compared to that provided on lower skill-levels. The following three tables show the numbers of workers trained at private training centres (Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2), group training centres (Table 7.3 and Figure 7.3), and private training schemes (Table 7.4 and Figure 7.4) between 1980 and 1986. A breakdown is given of total figures, of figures for the building industry, and of figures for the metal industry (following from the brief examination of fragmentation in these two industries in Chapter 5).

Table 7.2
Workers trained at Group Training Centres:
total, building and metal industries, 1980-1986

	Total trained	Building operations	Engineering operations
1980	10658	3148	1214
1981	13401	2886	1402
1982	14068	2693	700
1983	12873	2882	884
1984	12700	2977	824
1985	15750	2753	636
1986	12599	1058	208

Source compiled from DM, 1984: p.61, Table 4.12; and DM, 1986: p.80, Table 4.13.

As was mentioned in Chapter 5, group training centres were set up in the early 1970's with the original aim of training Africans for semi-skilled

jobs in 'white areas'. Although the centres have extended the scope of their training (since Africans were generally permitted to become artisans), their main thrust remains the same (see also Table 5.17 in Chapter 5).

Table 7.3
Workers trained at Private Training Centres:
total, building and metal industries, 1980-1986

	Total trained	Building operations	Engineering operations
1980	25538	2108	4796
1981	77275	1887	11191
1982	164361	4831	26318
1983	202638	4690	35574
1984	201004	6573	25608
1985	129759	1111	14933
1986	126347	3820	15239

Source compiled from DM, 1984: p.61, Table 4.12; and DM, 1986: p.80, Table 4.13.

While these institutions have an emphasis on short courses for semi-skilled work, it is difficult to generalise further about the particular levels of training at private training centres and private training schemes, as they cater for the whole spectrum of education and training in the commercial and industrial environment. However, as Table 5.19 in Chapter 5 shows, the period before 1980 saw large enrolments at private training schemes; these would have been limited largely to semi-skilled Africans, as it was only to Africans for which the 1976 Black Manpower Training Act (permitting tax rebates) was applicable, and in terms of which schemes could register.

Table 7.4
Workers trained at Private Training Schemes:
total, building and metal industries, 1980-1986

	Total trained	Building operations	Engineering operations
1980	150174	2337	26852
1981	226244	9654	29442
1982	247750	9798	22649
1983	219430	8474	19373
1984	256141	6090	17896
1985	158562	6569	11241
1986	158562	2785	11538

Source compiled from DM, 1984: p.61, Table 4.12; and DM, 1986, p.80, Table 4.13.

The main conclusion to be drawn here is with apprentices indentured over this period, shown in Table 7.5 and as represented in Tables 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7); the latter, as a reflection of manual *skilled* training, is a fraction of the former, which reflects mainly *semi-skilled* training.

Table 7.5
African and white apprentices registered, in total
and in building and metal industries: 1980-1986

Year	white (total)	African (total)	white (build.)	African (build.)	white (metal)	African (metal)
1980	8568	82	266	14	3145	27
1981	9232	495	366	323	3115	238
1982	10659	741	366	161	3894	390
1983	9867	656	427	135	2723	295
1984	9851	654	487	125	2872	262
1985	9246	666	447	76	2840	331
1986	8032	582	276	41	2694	258

Source: DM, 1984: p.61, Table 4.12; and DM, 1986: p.80, Table 4.13.

What is evident is a considerable absolute increase in the number of African apprentices after the general performance of artisan work in 'white areas' was legalised in 1980. This trend, however, neither lasts longer than a couple of years, nor reaches any significant proportion of the number of white apprentices registered. Moreover, even the two-year growth of African apprenticeships that did occur was overshadowed by a greater increase in white apprenticeship over the same period. After

1982, the ratio of white to African apprentices was still nearly 14:1. For, despite the lifting of legal restrictions on African artisans, most employers were still not prepared to meet the costs of the training which production supposedly required. As Volkswagen's training manager noted in 1982: "Companies haven't exactly come rushing forward to indenture blacks [Africans]".³¹³

Figures 7.5 and 7.6 represent the numbers of African and white apprentices in the building and metal industries respectively, to give the idea of the variation in particular industries around the general trend. The building industry, where African artisans showed a huge percentage increase in 1980, in 1982 terms meant a signing of only an additional 3 apprentices. In any event, this dropped off almost as sharply, and by 1982 had nearly reached its starting point. The metal industry showed a similar increase between 1980 and 1982, but stabilised up to a ratio of over 1:10 with white apprentices. Both industries showed the effects of the economic recession, with declining overall numbers of all races of apprentices. But at the same time, there is still nothing close to a significant narrowing of the difference in the number of white and African apprentices.

7.4. New training systems for changing needs

Increasingly, there has been a shift among government and private sector policy-makers toward a more structured, monitored and goal-based training and assessment approach for industry. The form most enthusiastically pursued is termed "modular training"; this involves breaking down into modules the various functions necessary to complete a particular task, then training a learner in each function at a time.

³¹³ "Black training policies - still hidebound?": p.74. Volkswagen was the first motor manufacturer to employ, in 1981, African artisans.

The method is said to allow, as a *Financial Mail* article put it, the "placing [of] vast numbers of semi-skilled workers in the factory in a relatively short time", while leaving artisans free "to concentrate on the highly skilled elements of their trades...[by removing] much of the drudgery".³¹⁴

Trade unions are wary of the implications which such an approach to training hold for the broader question of downgrading skills and the status of the artisan in the labour process. The same *FM* article notes that: "Trade union concern is that the modular approach is a fragmentation of the artisan's job and that the employers are 'training up cheap skilled labour'".³¹⁵ This is an important point, as it illustrates the tension which still exists between the sorts of skills which employers are most concerned to generate and those which are guarded by craft unions as an important constituent of the value and security of their trades.

The relevance of training methods to the nature and status of trades themselves is also reflected in the following study. After interviews with 15 trade unions on the role of trade unions in artisan training, a University of South Africa academic listed among his conclusions that:

"The fragmentation of trades is a matter of concern to trade unions. They desire trades to remain within their present parameters and not to be changed or whittled down without in-depth study and adequate justification".³¹⁶

Among the most significant policy interventions in this area was the National Training Board-commissioned study by the Human Sciences Research Council on the training of artisans, performed in 1983-4. Here, too, was a comment that, among trade unions,

³¹⁴ "Training Troubles", in *Financial Mail* 16/9/83: p.12.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ Nel, P.S. 1986. "The Role of Trade Unions in Artisan Training": p.26.

"There was...a fear of fragmentation and thereby a reduction of standards of trades if some of the newer concepts of off-the-job and particularly modular training were considered".³¹⁷

The HSRC/NTB investigation was particularly significant insofar as they went to some lengths to incorporate - and finally to even sway - the opinions of white trade unions whose membership included artisans. However, it is clear that - from the initial research at least - there were strong tensions between the attitudes of the unions and the commission's final recommendations. For instance, it is finally recommended:

"that the necessary steps be taken to convert the present apprenticeship training system to one using modular performance-based institutional training coupled to controlled on-the-job training experience".³¹⁸

However, this method contrasts starkly with apprentices' traditional on-the-job training under only a qualified artisan, which the report records as enjoying the support of 47 per cent of trade unions in their responses to the commission's initial questionnaires; the same proportion considered the latter method unsatisfactory.³¹⁹ Unions favoured almost unanimously (88 per cent of respondents) the system of on-the-job training only, under the combined supervision of an artisan and an instructor. On a continuum of "totally unstructured" to "very highly structured", this system is relegated by the report to the second-lowest position, being more structured (and thus, in the terms of the commission, more effective) only in respect of the "sit-by-Nellie" (artisan-supervised) method.³²⁰ The most advanced system on the scale is the one referred to in the long quote above and favoured by the commission. It is stated that:

³¹⁷ HSRC/NTB, 1985. *Investigation into the Training of Artisans in the RSA*: p.107.

³¹⁸ HSRC/NTB, 1985: p.222.

³¹⁹ See *ibid*: p.103, Table 5.4.

³²⁰ See *ibid*, p.108, Table 5.10, for the full continuum, comprising seven systems "arranged in order of progressive structuring".

"There is universal support for the principle that a more structured approach to training be instituted where this is not already the case".³²¹

In order to reconcile the initial trade union responses with this apparently startling statement (employers and their organisations were on the whole in agreement with the above principle from the start), it is necessary to consider the series of symposia (involving the 19 industries involved in apprenticeship training, over 30 trade unions, and various other organisations who had initially submitted memoranda to the commission) which the commission decided to organise as the research work of the various sub-committees neared completion. For the report notes that while it would seem that

"the apprenticeship system is supported as the mainstream for the supply of artisans ... it also appears that there was some misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of some of the terminology used in the questionnaires as well as a fear of the possibilities of apprentices being victimized by employers in some systems".³²²

In the light, then, of the "better mutual understanding" which resulted from the symposia, the commission was able to rally what it presents as all but unanimous support for its new, "streamlined" artisan training system. By the end of the symposia, it is reported, "there appeared to be wide consensus on all matters discussed",³²³ despite the initial divergences. Indeed, comments chairman A. Pittendrigh in his preface, it was the "representatives from trade unions which, more than any other factor, brought about consensus of ideas".³²⁴

But behind the consensus stands a very changed trade union role in the sphere of apprenticeship training. The commission notes accommodatingly that:

³²¹ *Ibid*: p.109.

³²² *Ibid*: p.107.

³²³ *Ibid*: pp.12-13.

³²⁴ *Ibid*: p.xi.

"trade unions insist that they be involved in all aspects of apprentice training and see this as an integral aspect of the trade union's function. In performing this function their role is seen to be that of:

- (a) protecting standards in the interest of their members,
- (b) ensuring that only persons with ability to undertake an apprenticeship are indentured,
- (c) ensuring that apprentices in fact receive proper training".³²⁵

This exposition of what trade unions are now prepared to accept as the limits of their responsibility in the training of their traditional 'under-studies' reflects, when held up next to the proposed new system of artisan training, the extent to which the 'psuedo-craft unions' have lost control over the nature, creation and availability of skills in the labour process in South Africa.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter examines the implemenation of industrial training reforms in the 1980's and the response of employers to the long-demanded lifting of legal restrictions on African artisans. It is argued that while the state's policies have been far more closely aligned with the labour requirements of industry, those requirements themselves are somewhat different to what they were even two or three decades ago. In particular the process of skill fragmentation has continued to undermine the demand for artisans, and to make capital more reliant on other levels of skills, important among which would be those of operative workers.

The call by capital for Africans to be permitted to do skilled work in 'white areas', therefore, has not been followed up with the provision or training as enthusiastically and actively as might have been expected. This is reflected in comparative data on enrolments in apprenticeship training and in institutions focusing more on semi-skilled levels of work. It might also be suggested that the shortage of skills may in some cases

³²⁵ *Ibid*: p.78.

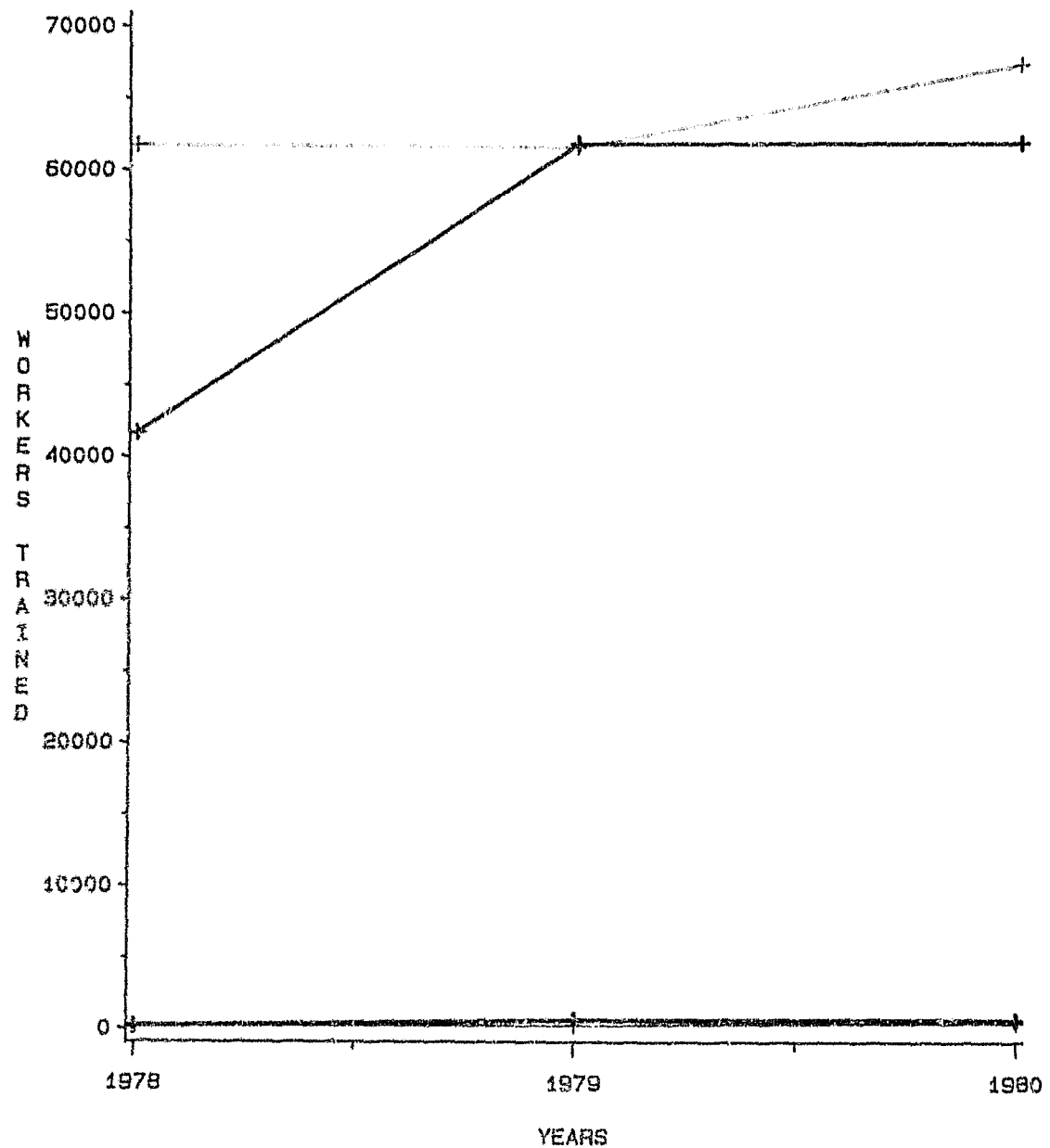
have been over-estimated. The effect, in any event, is that the possible route for Africans into the middle class allowed by the increased provision of training, is a narrower and less certain one than many have anticipated. By far the most industrial training remains limited to levels of work not normally associated with middle class jobs. Occupational mobility through training is more likely to be limited to *within* the working class.

Further, both the state and capital are enthusiastic about 'fragmenting' apprenticeship training into a system of separate training modules. Some trade unions have recognised the undermining effect of this approach on the remaining power of craft unions (by removing further from labour the control over the production of craft skills), but they are not in a strong position to resist. Their weakness is a reflection of the incapacity of artisan work to offer a long-term contribution to the growth of an African middle class.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 7

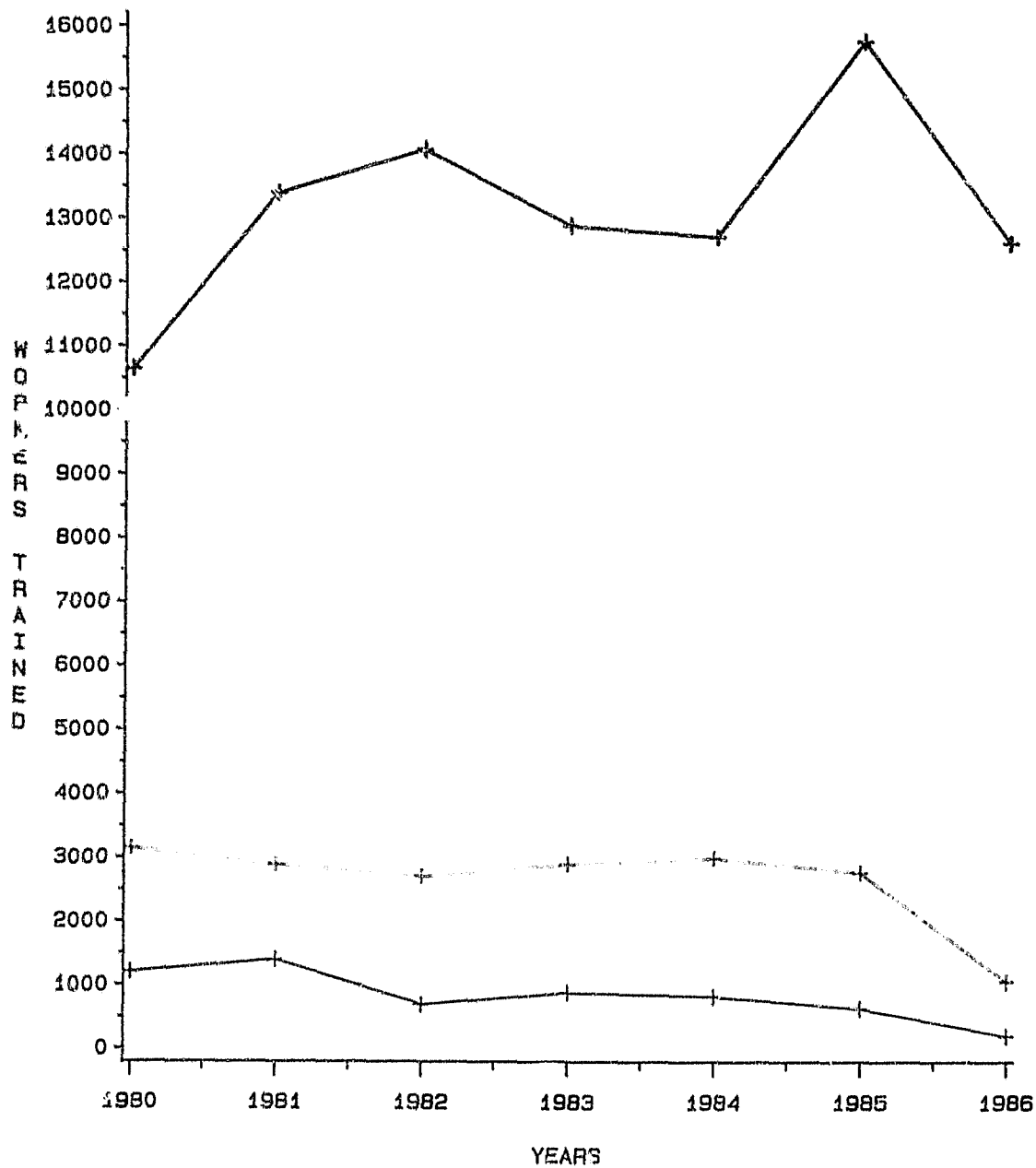
Figures 7.1 to 7.7

FIGURE 7.1
African workers trained by sampled companies,
by skill level: 1978-1980



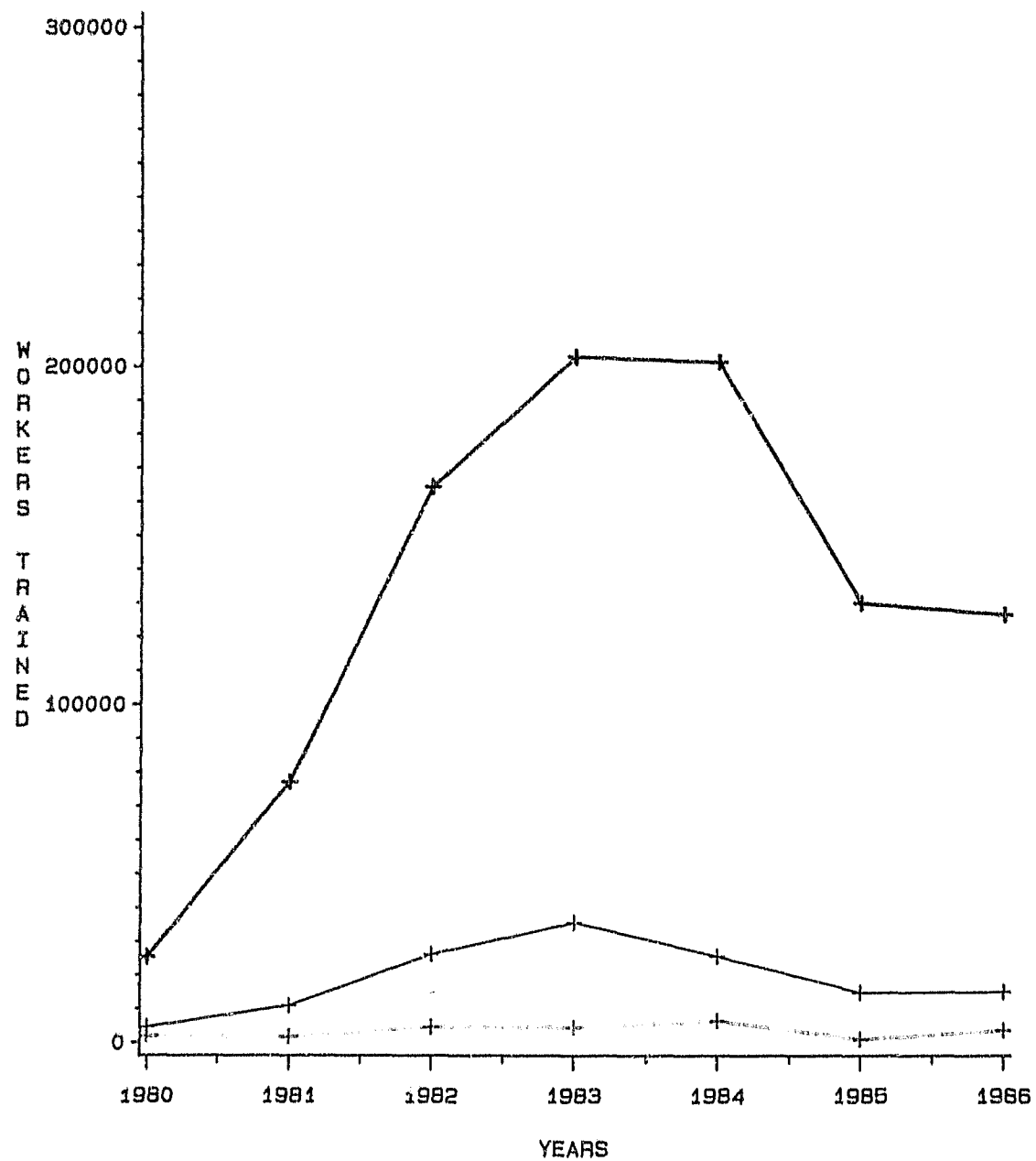
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unskilled
semi-skilled
skilled
artisan
Source: see Table 7.1.

FIGURE 7.2
Workers Trained at Group Training Centres
in total, building & engineering courses: 1980-1986



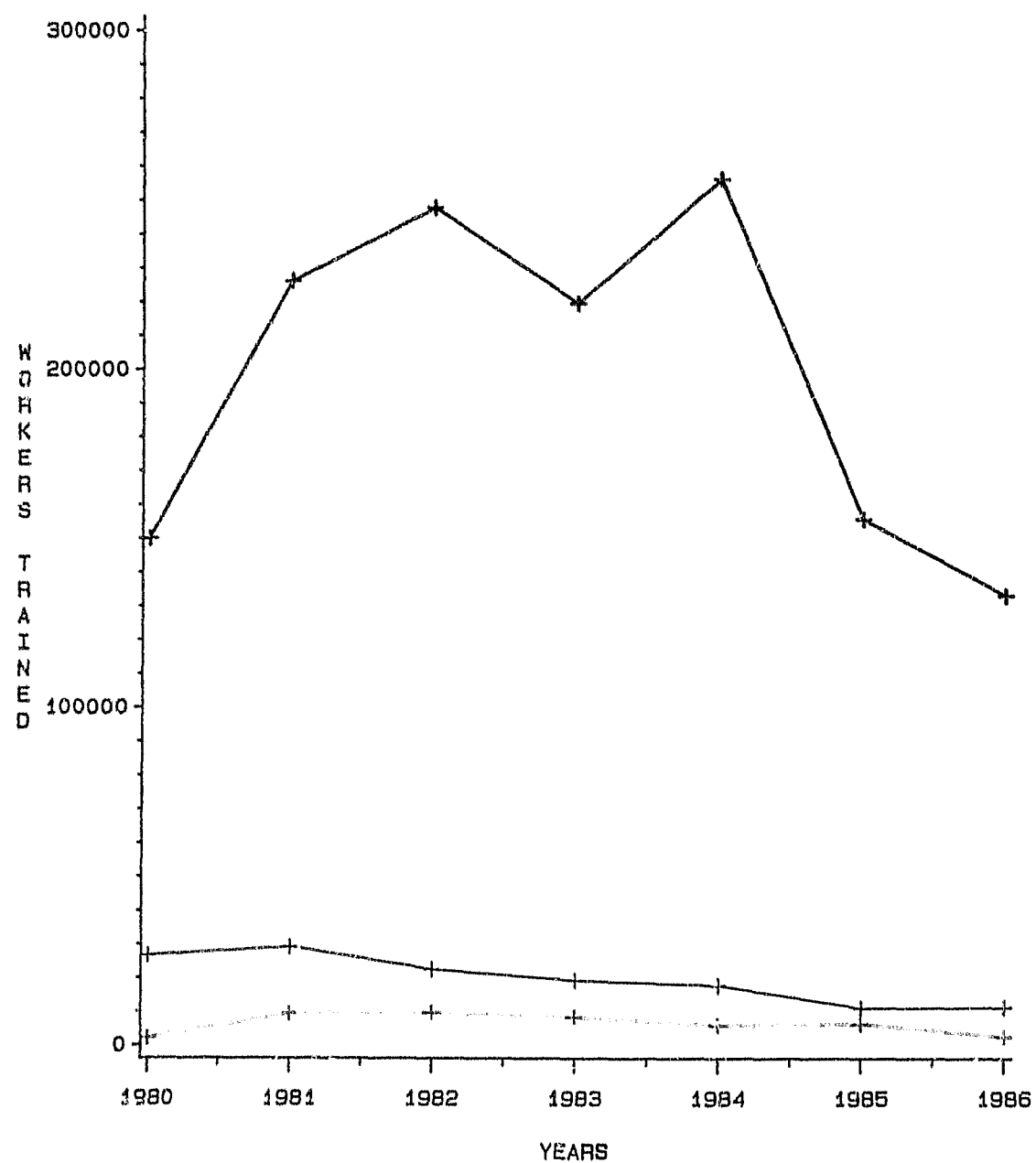
KEY:
total trained
building operations
engineering operations
Source: see Table 7.2

FIGURE 7.3
Workers Trained at Private Training Centres
in total, building & metal industries: 1980-1986



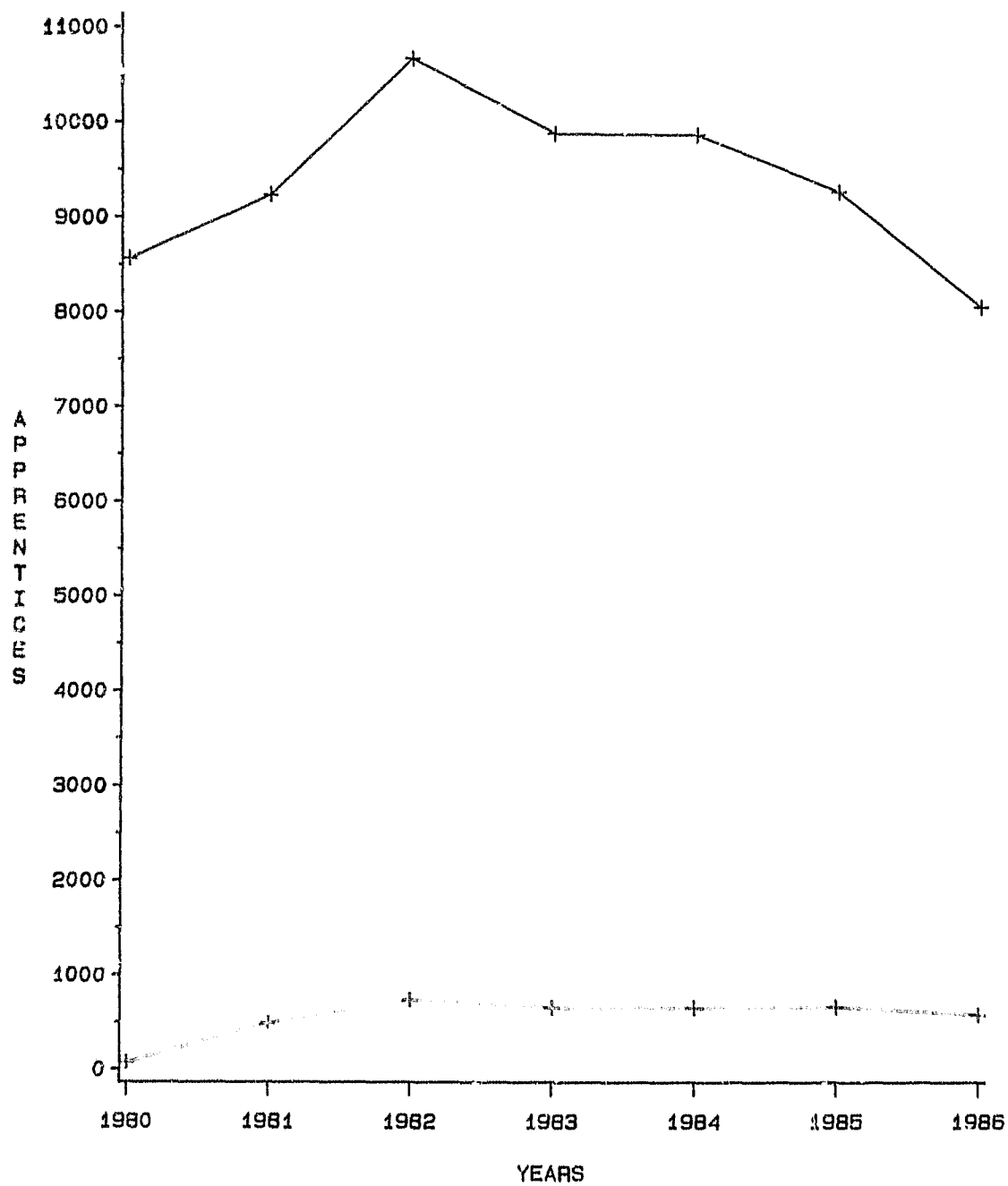
KEY:
total trained
building industry
metal industries
Source: see Table 7.3.

FIGURE 7.4
Workers Trained in Private Training Schemes
in total, building & metal industries: 1980-1986



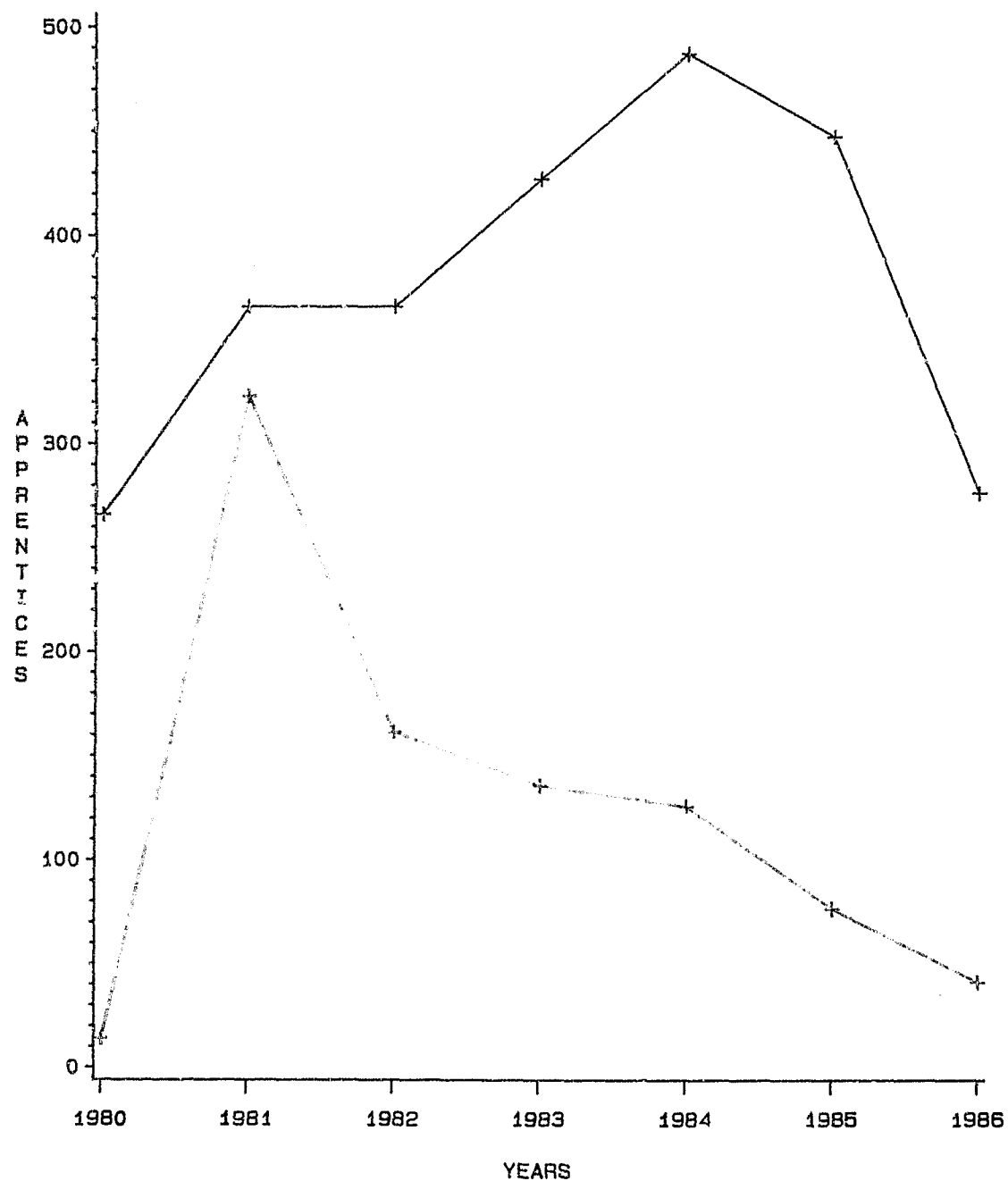
KEY:
total trained
building industry
metal industries
Source: see Table 7.4.

FIGURE 7.5
African and white apprentices in industry: 1980-1986



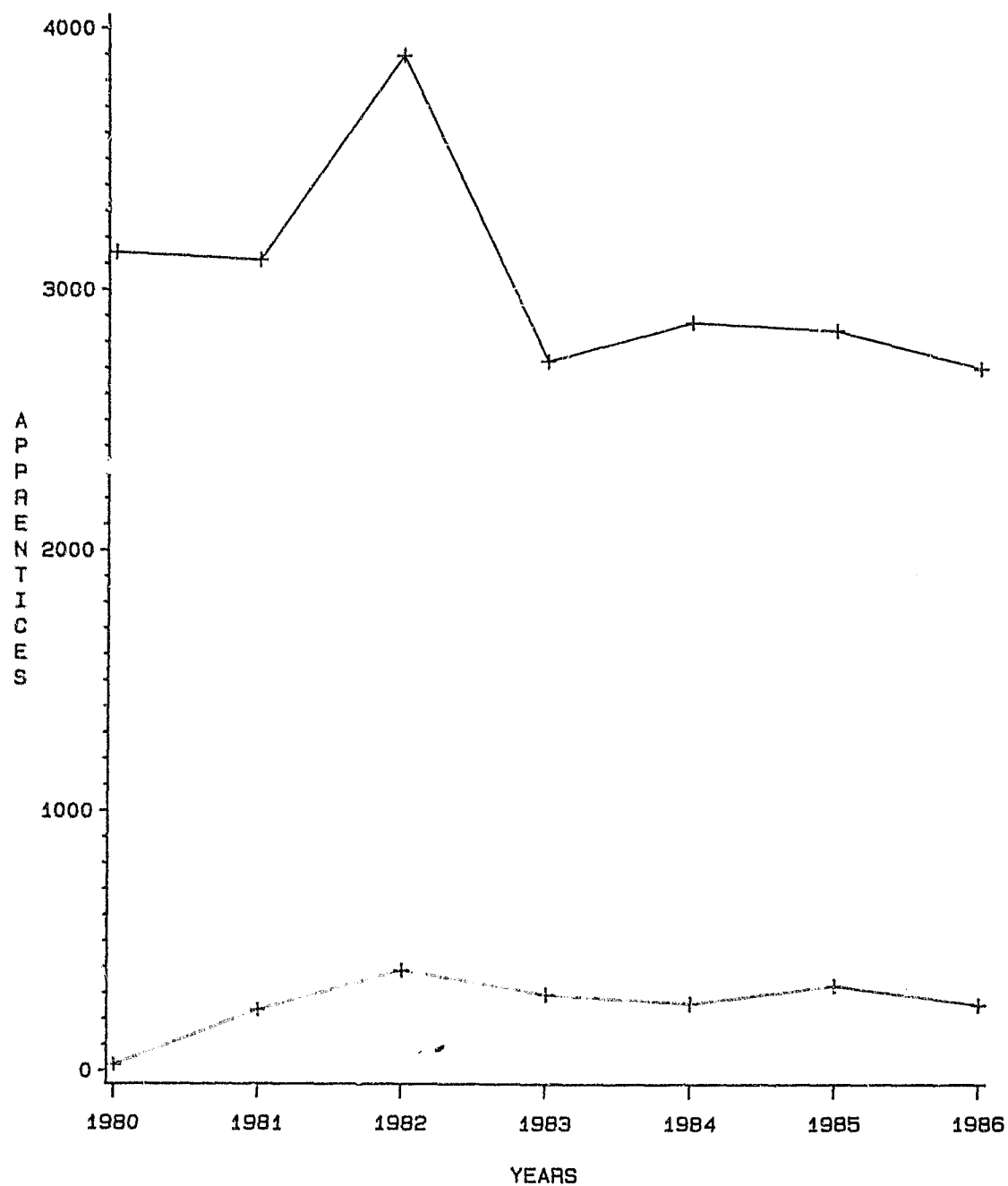
KEY:
whites
Africans
Source: See Table 7.5.

FIGURE 7.6
African and white apprentices in building industry: 1980-1986



KEY:
whites
Africans
Source: see Table 7.5.

FIGURE 7.7
African and white apprentices in metal industry: 1980-1986



KEY:
whites
Africans
Source: see Table 7.5.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the relationship between recent changes in industrial training policy and the growth of an African middle class in South Africa. This has been done through an historical analysis of government policy and of changes in the labour process. While the former has allowed the preparation of increasing numbers of Africans for more skilled (including artisan) jobs in industrial centres, the latter has (through mechanisation) led to deskilling and the relatively decreasing demand for artisan skills. The result has been a limited degree of success in the expressed aim of fostering an African middle class through industrial training, as most of such training has been directed at levels of skill not usually associated with middle class positions.

The usage of a class analysis, however, requires that the subject of this thesis be problematised in a particular way before it is empirically tested. The problem should not be phrased in terms of government training policy being the *cause* of class formation. Rather, it needs to be argued that class formation and class struggle be regarded as fundamental social processes which provide explanations for the policy itself. Such an appreciation of class also places struggle between classes at the basis of changes in the workplace which affect the implementation and results of policy. To clarify this point, the following summary outlines this study's problems and its endeavour to resolve them.

Social life in a capitalist society such as South Africa is rooted in the economic division between owners and non-owners of means of production. The daily production of surplus value depends upon the reproduction of the relationship wherein the majority of people have no

option but to sell their labour-power to an employer; the relationship also requires extended reproduction within political, religious, educational, etc. institutions. Reproduction is then the outcome of the successful struggle by the dominant class to impose its interests. This struggle occurs through the direct confrontation between employers and workers in the workplace; it also occurs through apparatuses of the state, which comprises various (and opposing) class interests. The state is therefore a site of class struggle, and the direction of policies which the state propagates results from the prevailing balance of class forces.

The 1970's in South Africa saw the struggle between classes heightening on a number of fronts, particularly (a) the increased militancy and mobilisation of the African working class in popular and industrial movements, (b) the declining strength of the organised white working class and the continued undermining of craft unions, and (c) the contest for leadership within the National Party of agents representing different fractions of the capitalist class, resulting in a state more closely aligned to the needs of large, mechanising capital.

This meant that economic and political pressures to allow the greater involvement of African workers in the mainstream of industrial activity finally outweighed the power of the traditional Nationalist support-base (the white working class) to resist the employment and training of skilled Africans. The difference was that in the 1980's, decades after capital's representatives in Parliament had first called for skilled Africans, capital's success in mechanising production had severely undermined the need for artisans (the largest section of skilled manual workers). Instead, capital was training many more Africans for *semi-skilled* positions. Its continued complaints about a shortage of skills appeared to have overstated the case, in the light of the labour market's changing skill-profile.

So while it is true that the state was becoming more receptive and responsive to capital's calls for a 'more efficient utilisation of manpower', there are aspects of their historical relationship which need to be taken into account when explaining the outcome of current policies. Firstly, there had been departments within the state which had - long before 1980 - realised the need to address the skill needs of a growing economy. Although the Department of Labour in the 1960's was outspoken in its opposition to Africans 'infiltrating' white skilled jobs, it was not opposed to permitting (on a large scale) exemptions from restrictive laws for employers to employ Africans in normally white jobs, especially in the early 1970's (see Chapter 5). Secondly, the department was in the 1970's to openly support the fragmentation of skilled jobs, which was said to allow 'white advancement' into higher-skilled or supervisory positions to oversee the increasing number of Africans being employed to perform the more menial tasks. And thirdly, certain departments of the state began to make more of the issue of skills shortages. This supported the legitimacy of employers claims that the situation was a most serious one, and gave further strength to the ability of employers to use skill-shortage arguments against craft unions in negotiating fragmentation agreements.

These points illustrate the complementary role of the state in capital's strategy of deskilling. So successful was this strategy that the number of artisans has risen only fractionally between 1969 and 1985 compared to the increase of semi-skilled workers (see Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.6 and 5.13). The state's support for this trend has continued into the 1980's, with the Department of Manpower (through the recently created National Training Board) becoming a strong proponent of the modularisation of industrial skill training (see Chapter 7). And while some white unions have protested this approach as representing a 'fragmentation of training' and a further undermining of craft skills, they have not been in a position to effectively influence the state or

employers in another direction. Their losing battle against craft-deskilling over many decades has left them with little power on this front.

The historical collaboration of the state and capital in the deskilling process and the resulting slower demand for artisans by industry, has thus undermined the basis upon which industrial training could have bolstered the growth of an African middle class. While there have been absolute increases in numbers of African apprentices and artisans since 1980, government records reflect a brief and unsteady rate of growth. Furthermore, the aggregate statistics show that:

- (1) the relative increases and drops among African apprentices are not remarkably different from the fluctuations among coloured apprentices, who were not directly affected by the legal reforms (see Table 5.3 in Chapter 5); and
- (2) the absolute numbers of African artisans are by 1985 still a small proportion of numbers of white artisans (see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5).

The ranks of semi-skilled workers, on the other hand, have grown steadily since 1969 (see Table 5.1 in Chapter 5), and industrial training efforts in the 1970's focused strongly on this stratum (see Table 5.17 in Chapter 5). Training schemes and employers' perceptions of training priorities have suggested little change in this trend in the 1980's (see Chapter 7). The result has been that the level of training most actively pursued by capital cannot be expected to contribute to the growth of a middle class. Broader class struggles have undermined the possibility of the continued growth of an African 'labour aristocracy' of skilled workers. Factors of cost and control have guided capital's efforts to evolve a division of labour which relies less on craft workers and more on semi-skilled machine operators working under supervision.

The practice and policy of training, as an activity in the reproduction of social relations, has been shown in this study to derive from struggles between classes within the workplace and within the state. The role which the state has played in reproducing the relationships necessary to capitalist production has been shown to be a complex and ambiguous one, due to the changing force of various class interests within the state. With the closer alignment of the imperatives of profitability and the nature of government labour training policies in the 'reform period', this relationship remains a complicated one. The particular contradiction important to this study is the following: that while the state and capital have espoused the political and ideological benefits of a stable middle class of Africans (demonstrating by their existence the 'colour-blindness' of capitalism), the struggle for control and profit on the shop-floor has severely restricted one important strategy in fostering this class - namely, artisan training.

Moreover, the predominantly semi-skilled training that has occurred, while admittedly encouraging differentiation within the working class, has fed into an increasingly unionised labour environment. Insofar as such training leads to African workers holding more responsibility and control in the work-place, it could enhance the strength of labour *vis-a-vis* employers. This question, though, would require a study at least as detailed as this one.

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