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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
HISTORY WORKSHOP

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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APARTHEID AND SECONDARY INDUSTRY: THE PRODUCTIVITY DEBATE
(with particular reference to the Witwatersrand)

This paper is a preliminary outing in a proposed general history of South African industrial relations in the period 1956 to 1979. Although the emphasis is on the development of new managerial strategies and practices with regard to industrial labour requirements, the period covered is that of 'high apartheid', after the Nationalist party's grip on the state was firmly consolidated and before it adopted the language of reform. It was a period during which measures central to the creation and maintenance of apartheid were designed to control and subordinate the black working class according to the "traditional labour pattern of society"[1] in all regions of the country.

Legal and administrative instruments created to affect the pattern of labour utilisation in industry included influx control, labour preference and racially discriminatory industrial relations institutions; mainly adaptations and refinements of long standing methods of labour regulation. Employers tried to stamp their own interests on these policies, favouring some aspects and rejecting others in accordance with their company philosophy, the type of labour required, or as Luckhardt and Wall put it, "the unwritten laws of capital accumulation".[2] Whites as a whole and Afrikaners in particular made tremendous economic progress as a result.[3] This tended to undermine the little non-racial class consciousness which had existed amongst white working men and women.

The fighting tradition of the Garment Workers Union of South Africa during the 1930's and 1940's have been celebrated at previous History Workshop Conferences.[4] The academic collective for

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1. Star, 26/9/56. Report of speech by Senator de Klerk, Minister of Labour to Congress of the Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuurvereniging in Maritzburg. "It will be the Afrikaner's calling in the industrial world to develop the traditional relationship between White and non-White and to perpetuate it in the field of labour".

2. K. Luckhardt and B. Wall, Organise ...or Starve! The history of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, London, 1980: "No law forces employers to break strikes, import scab labour from the reserves or invite Special Branch police to victimise the workers".

3. Statistical proof of this is given in J. Lazar, Conformity and Conflict. Afrikaner Nationalist Politics 1948-61, D.Phil, Oxford University, 1987, Chapters 4 and 5.

the 1987 Conference in the preface to the recently published selection of papers from that Conference call for the history of the white working class to be examined in its wider context.

> Should not our commitment to research with an independent agenda lead us to look at the rest of this working class and confront audiences with its peculiar and unpalatable character?[5]

The opportunity presents itself now to rise to this challenge by discussing the extent of white working class commitment to and support for apartheid. This will be attempted through an analysis of workplace situations; the conflicts and debates surrounding employers' attempts to increase the productivity of South African industry by altering the racial division of labour. This conceptual framework relies on the Marxian labour process studies of South Africa by Lewis, Webster and Crankshaw.[6] They acknowledge that it is wrong to assume that industrial relations proceeded in a vacuum unaffected by wider political and ideological movements in the wider society, but inevitably given the parameters of their approach, leave this dimension relatively unexplored. To quote Crankshaw,

> The factors which do determine trade union strategy include a variety of non-class relationships such as the supply of labour, the form of the state, the organisational structure of the trade unions, the relationship between the leadership and the rank and file,and trade union ideology. This form of explanation [i.e. labour process] is able to specify how the relations of production set the parameters of trade union strategy without excluding the determining role of other social relationships.[7]

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4. e.g. Elsabe Brink's play, Factory Vrouens, compiled from plays written and produced by working women.

5. T. Lodge, P. Bonner, D. James and I. Hofmeyr,(ed), Holding Their Ground, Johannesburg, 1989, p.iv.

6. J.Lewis,Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, Cambridge, 1983. E. Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, Johannesburg,1985. O. Crankshaw,Trade Union Strategy and the Labour Process,TUCSA Trade Unions in the Transport and Building Industries, M.A.Thesis, Wits, 1989.

7. Crankshaw,op. cit., p. 10.

Whilst Lewis' thesis is that it was the "process of industrialisation which produced a fractured working class"[8] he nevertheless concludes that, in the Garment Workers Union in the 1950's,

> Whilst the occupational structure made possible continued non-racial alliance, political and ideological traditions determined the form of this alliance.[9]

Thus the racial segregation of branches of the union and of workplaces has to be explored in terms of these political and ideological traditions, rather than arguing that the fragmentation of the South African working class was simply the strategy of a divide and rule by the 'ruling class'. The relationship between the state ,the broad range of capitalist interests and the working class is a matter for empirical investigation.

Bones of Contention: Influx Control and Job Reservation.

Representatives of industry continually laid the charge that the Nationalist government was interfering unnecessarily in an otherwise harmonious working environment. The government was artificially protecting the white worker whilst at the same time protecting Africans with Section 10 rights through influx control (the Urban Labour Preference Policy) Thus establishment of viable manufacturing enterprises was, according to industrialists, hampered by various problems related to productivity of labour. In April 1958 Federated Chamber of Industries President Charles Marx, addressing fellow industrialists noted;

> It is already evident that the influx control regulations are causing the Natives to make demands that they never envisaged two or three years ago. They know that if they lose one job they will be sent to another. To add to the problem of this control induced labour shortage, employers are also finding that Natives refuse to work overtime.....Job reservation and Influx Control have a similar result. If hitherto happy employer-employee relationships are upset by regulations for which employers are not responsible and which they cannot ameliorate, it will be well nigh

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8. Lewis, op. cit., p10.

9. Ibid, p. 148.

> impossible to deal with that aspect of the productivity complex which is now becoming the weak link in our economy.[10]

As Posel's research shows Influx control policy in practice had a series of unintended consequences .[11] The point made by Marx on the breakdown of labour discipline amongst Africans was amplified by another FCI officer, Mr C.P.C.Barclay, at a meeting of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs. It confirms Posel's conclusion that secondary industry in the 1950's demanded a differentiated labour supply with a definite bias towards 'raw' migrant labour prepared to work for the low wages offered.

> Today's Native eschews physical labour; economics may force the urban Native to do this type of work but it is not long before he hears of other less strenuous jobs and leaves. We fully realise that a surplus of Natives in urban areas brings about crime and other evils but where surpluses exist the Natives will usually be found to be urban Natives and not rural types. The latter are absolutely essential to fill such vacancies in heavy type of work...Urbanised Natives in these industries realise their indispensability and become insolent. They even tell their foremen what work they are prepared to do and what not.[12]

One state initiative pressed for by the FCI to deal with the latter was a government initiative to enforce labour discipline on township youth. The FCI's official journal, The Manufacturer, explained,

> Juveniles in urban areas especially if they have undergone periods of unemployment after leaving school ...in many instances have proven absolute menaces to the smooth running

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10. Industry and Trade, May 1958, p. 40 , The adverse effect on production of influx control and job reservation was a common theme, especially amongst Transvaal Industrialists.

11. D.B. Posel, Influx Control and the Construction of Apartheid,1948-61, Unpub. D.Phil, Oxford University, 1988, pp. 326-330.

12. Transvaal Intermediate Archive, West Rand Administration Board records, 219/1/3, vol. 1, IANEA, Transvaal Divisional Committee Meeting, 21/10/58.

> of a factory...Potentially at least, urban Native juveniles form a labour pool of the best possible type of labour; they are not subject to disabilities and because of better schooling in the urban areas their adaptability and understanding of machine methods is much greater....Training to be given to the inmates of the Camp would be partly technical and partly (of the utmost importance) disciplinary, social and moral in character.[13]

A Department of Bantu Affairs Report detailing the establishment of new 'Youth Camps' noted that "provision has long since been made for adult unemployed, either by sending them back to their home areas if they refuse to accept work, or by sending them to work colonies where an attempt is made to rehabilitate them".[14] The Manufacturer welcomed the establishment of the corrective training camp at Elandsdoorn, 125 miles from Johannesburg, to which 'won't works' could be committed for two years, "the threat of which has already assisted a number of Native juveniles to become more work conscious".[15] However the content of the scheme was a grave disappointment in that "camp activities are of a predominantly agricultural nature".[16]

The need for a growing pool of trained, competent and 'disciplined' labour, alongside the usual complement of unskilled migrants was considered crucial if South African industry was to make the transition to mass production manufacturing. This involved tumultuous changes in the division of labour which had to be fought out in particular with the various constituencies in the registered trade union movement.

Judging by employers' rhetoric, the efficiency and productivity of the white worker were entering a terminal decline in the late 1950s. The FCI blamed an unfree market in labour for this malaise.

> Much has been said about the slackness of the white worker....he need assume no responsibility and should the employer have cause

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13. The Manufacturer, March 1957, Report by C.D.C. Bain, Secretary, 'Non-European Affairs'.

14. Department of Bantu Administration and Development Report, 1958-9, UG51/1960, p. 24, 'Youth Camps'.

15. The Manufacturer, November 1957, Report by C.D.C. Bain.

16. Ibid.

> to reprimand him he merely resigns his position, secure in the knowledge that it is easy to find other employment. Unfortunately competition can only come from the very people apartheid is trying to debar: the non-European.[17]

Again it was the response of young workers which was singled out for particular attention.

> The youth of today can command virtually any reward without necessarily possessing either the qualifications or the application to their jobs which such rewards demand.[18]

Afrikaner youth were admonished at the 1957 national congress of the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut.

> Do not speak of the Native and the immigrant problems. We have only one problem- The laziness of the Afrikaner people. The young Afrikaner of today is not prepared to use elbow grease.[19]

A West Rand schoolteacher, Mr A.H. Uys, concluded from his own survey that there was general dissatisfaction among employers throughout South Africa with the character of their young white employees. He was told by "an employer" that if it were not for the law "which made it obligatory to employ Europeans he would employ Natives".[20]

Perhaps these complaints about slack workers and lazy youth are perennial, but they reached a fever pitch as the effects of apartheid on the labour market became obvious. Saamtrek, the SATUC newspaper, noted the "veritable crop of accusations of inefficiency, indolence and laziness".[21] The white trade unionists whose members were under attack, rather than denying the charge, contended that the problem was essentially a political one.

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17. Industry and Trade, January 1956, p. 37, Address given by E.A. Wakeley-Smith of the Transvaal Chamber of Industries in December 1955.

18. The Manufacturer, March 1957, Editorial, p. 5.

19. Star, 26/9/57.

20. Star, 8/7/58.

21. Saamtrek, 5/10/56, Editorial.

> What exactly do the government think they are preserving when they shelter the European workman from any competition from the non-European in skilled trades? Do they really think that we who live in South Africa and are aware of the real situation, aware of the inefficiency which pervades all departments of life today, aware of the sloven-liness of the work executed will swallow the story of job reservation in order to preserve "standards of living". It would be more honest to tell the truth, that job reservations are there to ensure a contented electorate of workers who enjoy a privileged position because of the colour of their skin.[22]

A truth which, considering the policies of the unions themselves, most of the registered trade union movement was happy to live with!

Trade unionism and the White worker

The South African Trade Union Council (known as TUCSA after 1962) which formed in 1954 in opposition to the Industrial Conciliation Bill took a very similar line to the FCI, decrying government interference, defending the status quo in industrial relations. Its constituent unions from both the industrial and craft traditions with their commitment to Industrial Council agreements felt the government's overt racial protectionism was, at the very least, unnecessary. Although the industrial unions had an expanding black membership, debates in SATUC invariably revolved around how best to protect white living standards. The black workers in TUCSA unions were either Coloured or Indian, Africans being barred from membership in the organisation's constitution. Blacks were only organised into the first instance to prevent undercutting, white workers were reassured. The way these debates were conducted was greatly infuenced by a desire to remain legal and respectable in the prevailing political climate. In the discussion on the I.C. Bill at the 1956 SATUC Conference, the President T.C. Rutherford admitted that "the great moral injustice to non-white workers has been soft-pedalled" reason being that

> We knew that any contention that the non-white worker was not getting a square deal as far as human rights are concerned would not impress the government in the slightest degree.[23]

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22. AEU Monthly Journal, March 1858, Editorial.

In the craft union sector the slogan of 'equal pay for equal work' was a sham claim to protect the interests of workers regardless of race as many union practices, designed to frustrate outsiders from qualifying as artisans, gave the employers a *carte blanche* to pay Coloured, Indian and African workers at lower grades of work much less. Whites were warned not to give blacks de facto access to skilled work.

> More and more of late the leaders of the trade union movement have found it necessary to appeal to apprentices and young journeymen to REFRAIN from passing their knowledge and skill to UNQUALIFIED persons by allowing them to do the active work while the qualified man adopts the role of supervisor.[24]

Employers would be tempted to replace them altogether;

> I would like to inform members that it is becoming increasingly common practice for some of our members to allow their Natives to do the work. If, for some reason or other, the members are discharged they then complain. This development seriously embarrasses the union when investigating dismissals on behalf of members concerned.[25]

At the operative level the feared process was already well advanced in the private sector by 1965, with the 'rate for the job' declining in one East London firm from R36 a week to R6.50 a week.[26] Nowhere was the downward pressure on wages more severe than in the clothing and textiles sector.(see below)

A portion of white workers were already solidly behind the Nationalist race protection strategy as a result of the intra-trade union struggles which began in the late 1930s. Three federations which had been formed out of the break up of the Trades and Labour Council between 1948 and 1950 catered for these

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23. Saamtrek, 23/3/56.

24. Saamtrek, 7/10/55, Address to South African Boilermakers Society Congress by T.C. Rutherford.

25. AEU Monthly Journal, August 1960, Report by J. Faure, National Organiser.

26. Daily Dispatch, 25/3/65, Report from TUCSA Conference, East London.

workers, principally white operative and supervisory workers on the mines, railways and municipalities where the Industrial Council system did not operate. They were the South African Federation of Trade Unions, the Co-ordinating Council of South African Trade Unions and the Federal Consultative Council of South African Railways and Harbours Staff Associations.[27]

These unions responded with militant, sometimes hysterical racism to alterations in the racial division of labour. In the mining sector the mine workers, reduction workers and engine drivers pledged solidarity with their Northern Rhodesian brothers on the Copper Belt in their struggle against African Advancement policies, "the first engagement in a battle which could spread to South Africa".[28] Sure enough the mid-1960s they had to confront an "alleged manpower shortage"[29] i.e. shortage of whites to fill reserved posts. The 2000 member South African Engine Drivers and Firemens Association spelled out the position of the unions to the right of TUCSA.

> Our Associations, catering as they do for white operative employees can never consent to the suggested solution to the labour shortage, knowing as we do that at the first sign of depression or even a halt in the present expansion, it will be our members who will be swelling the ranks of the unemployed,with non-white labour firmly entrenched. Remember "a job once surrendered to non-white labour can never be recovered".[30]

After 1956 sections of the Nationalist oriented trade union movement maintained an expansionary momentum. The amended Industrial Conciliation Act made it possible for Yster y Staal, an organisation with its base amongst ISCOR operatives to apply to the Industrial Registrar to make fundamental changes in its scope so that it could potentially take in practically every white worker in the metal industry.[31] Nationalist agitators right up

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27. These unions had a combined membership of 133,000 in 1955 which went up to 145,000 in 1958; Lewis, op. cit., p. 158.

28. Confederation News, 24/1/55.

29. The Indicator, January 1965, p. 10.

30. The Indicator, April 1965, Editorial by Ken du Preez, General Secretary.

31. Star, 30/11/57.

to Ministerial level were not slow to spot their opportunity as the following observations from the General Motors plant at Port Elizabeth in 1956 demonstrates.

> I went through the plant and noticed the high degree of racial integration on the job. Afrikaner girls doing work a few feet from Coloured men who in turn were doing identically the same work as Afrikaner men. Africans and Coloured were doing the same jobs in the same places and were actually interchangeable in practice. GM says it doesn't care about skin colour, it just wants good labour. There is in any case an absolute shortage of white labour,European labour turnover of over 100% as year led the company to hire more and more non-Europeans for more and more jobs. This led to numerous complaints by white workers, one so vehemently expressed that it brought the Minister of Labour Senator de Klerk to the plant. To GM officials he seemed to understand their problem and offered no specific objections to the policy. Yet at a National Party rally in Port Elizabeth de Klerk made a rabble rousing speech about the threat to European living standards and culture etc.[32]

The move to organise white workers in Port Elizabeth's motor assembly plants sent the alarm bells ringing in SATUC's regional office.

> The prime movers seem to belong to Yster y Staal from Pretoria. These people are applying for job reservation to apply to these assembly plants .... claiming that the previous attempts to organise these workers failed because attempts were made to form mixed unions. At present the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Motor Industry Employees Union have the matter in hand because it affects them more than anyone else. I have suggested to the MIEU that they organise a Coloured section, at any rate to prevent them becoming organised by the *wrong people*.[33]

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32. University of the Witwatersrand Archive, Prof. L.H. Samuels Papers, 6.6, Unpublished paper on the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs by E.S.Munger, Stellenbosch, March 1956, p. 8.

33. Church of the Province of South Africa Archive, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Records of the

In fighting a rearguard action against Y & S the craft unions abandoned much of the widely vaunted struggle against the Industrial Conciliation Act, dragging the established trade union further to the right.

T.C. Rutherford presided over this policy orientation in the early years of SATUC;

> The tragedy of the movement in this country is that a large proportion of our members, and even a number of leaders in the Movement, comprise people who have been driven off the land. They still retain the innate conservatism of the people of the land and prefer to rely on the promises of the capitalists of their own language and cultural *groups....They remain part of the movement*, and due consideration must be given to their views, even at some considerable sacrifice on the part of the rest of us in the meantime....We must cultivate the confidence of of our inexperienced but nevertheless important group of colleagues, by heeding their ultra-conservative traditions.[34]

It seems that this conciliatory approach met with little or no success. The government patronised and encouraged their supporters in the trade union movement and held conservative craft unions at arms length for offering opposition, however loyal, to the proposed amendment of the Industrial Conciliation Bill. The Amalgamated Engineering Union's response, for example, was hardly confrontational. In applying for an exemption to retain its small coloured membership in the Cape, the General Secretary wrote that "the amendment of our constitution to conform to the requirements of the new Industrial Conciliation Act is receiving our attention and it has already been decided that from a given date, no Non-European applicants will be accepted into membership".[35] Yet not

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Trade Union Council of South Africa, Part Two, 1955-86, Eastern Province Region, Mr Ledger, Eastern Province Regional Organiser to Hartwell, Gen. Sec., SATUC, 20/8/59.

34. CPSA, WCL, Records of the Iron Moulders Society, Minutes of the 11th Biennial Meeting, 2/12/55, Official Opening, p. 5.

35. CPSA, WCL, TUCSA 2, Da1, E.H. McCann, Gen. Sec., AEU to Sen. de Klerk, Minister of Labour, re: Industrial Conciliation Act No. 28 of 1956, 13/8/57.

only did the union have an official, Vic Syret, banned under the suppression of Communism Act for acting as Secretary to the 'Non-European Metal Workers' Joint Committee',[36] but found the Department of Labour was allowing Y and S to encroach onto its organising terrain. The appointment of Y and S officials L.J van den Berg and J.A. Kruger to the National Apprenticeship Board was considered a particular affront as "neither of them has served an apprenticeship, and they represent a union which caters for employees in occupations which are mainly unskilled, and at the most the Union"s potential membership of apprentices could be no more than 80".[37]

A protest to the dept of labour concerning the erosion of SATUC members'representation on state bodies earned only a savage and sarcastic rebuke.

> The government will not allow its policy on labour matters to be formulated for it by an organisationwhich speaks for only a minority of workers... Your council is only one of four trade union federations which the Department consults from time to time on matters affecting workers.[38]

Perhaps to strengthen its hand against this kind of criticism, SATUC cautiously tried joining the other three federations to form the South African Confederation of Labour in October 1957. However the consensus within the SATUC NEC was to give only nominal commitment to the new body which contained hostile elements.[39] Dulcie Hartwell and Johanna Cornelius picked out Gert Beetge as a dangerous opponent. At the time Beetge was launching the White Building workers Union in direct opposition to the craft unions in the building industry. He had been expelled from the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers in 1950 for witchhunting 'communists' in the wake of the Suppression of Communism Act. An implacable Afrikaner nationalist, later a founder

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36. Saamtrek, vol. 123, 7/1/55.

37. CPSA, TUCSA 2, Da1, File 1, Ralph Budd, Chairman and Pro-tem secretary, AEU, to Dulcie Hartwell, Gen Sec., SATUC. 13\10\55. The majority of Y and S members were production machine operatives; it is of interest that Budd refers to them as unskilled, as the usual designation of this work was 'semi-skilled'. It is difficult to disentangle an objective definition of skill from this ideologically charged work situation.

38. CPSA, WCL, TUCSA 2, Da60, J. Hannah, Secretary for Labour to Hartwell, 16/2/57.

39. CPSA, WCL, TUCSA 2, Ca1.1, NEC Meeting September 1957.

member of the Herstigte Nasionale Party as well as passionate trade union organiser, Beetge made a particularly unpleasant bedfellow for any union with black members.[40] Any advantages gained greater trade union unity were soon outweighed by pressure from the other affiliates to remove the right of veto of constituent bodies. Fearful of being bound by pro-government sentiment SATUC withdrew in early 1958.[41]

The Industrial Unions

For SATUCs industrial unions, negotiations over wages and conditions in Industrial Councils were the mainstay of union activity. Faith in this bureaucratic style of trade unionism was strong amongst even affiliates of steadfastly non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions. The Natal based Textile Workers Industrial Union argued;

> The Industrial Council can do great things. We want more money and the bosses want more profit. But we sit down and discuss these problems. There is a good atmosphere at our talks. Let us fight like gentlemen here and have a cup of tea after the meeting.[42]

Only a savage wage cutting campaign, initiated in person by Philip Frame as Chairperson of the Industrial Council in 1957, gave momentum to a campaign for democratisation and exposed the failure of the established system to offer any protection from an assault on black workers' living standards.[43]

In the clothing industry in the late 1950s all the forces described were at work. Attention was focussed on the industry by the attempt of the Minister of Labour, Senator Jan de Klerk to enforce Section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act despite the opposition of both parties to the Industrial Council. De Klerk was part of a clique of Nationalist leaders who had cut their political teeth on the Rand as party organisers for whom an unambiguously racist appeal had brought the fruits of success. Rob Davies[44] and Dan O'Meara[45] stress the importance of economic

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40. Interview with Gert Beetge, by Suzanne Gordon, 13/6/86.

41. Lewis, op. cit., p. 158.

42. Rob Lambert, Political Unionism in South Africa, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, 1955-65, Unpub. Ph.d., University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, p. 295.

43. Ibid, pp. 298-314.

44. Rob Davies, Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa,1900-1960, Brighton, 1979

issues in their account of the defeat of the United Party-Labour Party axis in 1948, but this was inextricably infused with an appeal to an exclusive Afrikaner identity. Du Pisanie, the MP for Germiston elected in 1948 explicitly rejected the 'bread and butter' approach to white working class politics.

> I asked [the workers] what they could possibly gain by only concentrating upon money and so-called other benefits...while at a given moment they are robbed of their nationhood, their national pride, their white skin and their Christian religion.[46]

However in the struggle over job reservation in the clothing industry this approach went sour and the contradictory class composition of the Nationalist movement was temporarily exposed.

The Clothing Industry: A Guinea Pig for Job Reservation

The situation in the clothing industry on the Rand became extremely volatile as low wage zones emerged beyond the jurisdiction of the Industrial Council. Production in these areas was to be based entirely on non-union African labour. Clothing manufacturers were gained exemption from the terms of the Industrial Council agreement; it was possible for companies to apply direct to the to the Department of Labour despite the opposition of the Council.[47] Central to the clothing industry controversy was the successful application of Vekawerksklerefabriek for exemption. It was widely publicised that the directors of Vekawerksklerefabriek were leading Nationalists, champions of the white workers' cause[48].

The Department supported Veka's application for exemption for its Standerton factory in 1954 and listed disadvantages of situating in the area.

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45. Dan O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme, Cambridge, 1983.

46. Star, 6/9/52.

47. CPSA, WCL, Records of the Garment Workers Union of South Africa, Bch8, Uncontrolled Areas, Secretary for Labour to Acting Secretary, Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry, Transvaal, 15/12/54

48. House of Assembly Debates, 6-10 June 1955, pp. 7147-7259.

> The employer has to rely on the services of natives between the ages of 18 and 20 years because the older natives treat work in a clothing factory with contempt. He states that the youth have very little sense of responsibility with the result that your production is very low during the first few years of training.[49]

Looking back however Mr. A.J.J.Wessels, the Managing Director cited very different difficulties encountered in the training and supervision of black workers.

> The problem of the trainer foreman was at first made more difficult by the general attitude of the white towards the non-white. As a matter of fact this problem was the greatest of all. Instinctively and unconsciously the white foreman resented the advent of the new worker. It took years to surmount this difficulty. Colour consciousness one has to accept as part of our social heritage; but colour discrimination cannot be allowed to perpetuate if one is serious about the building of an efficient workforce.[50]

The the Garment Workers Union administered a parallel union for African women led by Lucy Mvubelo. The following extract from a report by that union on conditions at Veka in 1955 reveals that foremen were engaged in abuses far too systematic to escape management attention, which contrasted sharply with Wessels' stated efficiency norms.

> Workers clock on, and if they are late they are flogged by means of machine belts. Whipping is done by the European supervisors....Women workers also get the thrashing from these male supervisors. The employer had informed the wage board that he paid aid for some workers, but, I would state that these boys are living in a hovel, an old bioscope with broken windows and doorless.[51]

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49. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch8, Sec. for Lab. to Acting Sec., Ind. Council for Clothing Ind., Tvl., 15/12/54.

50. National Management and Development Foundation, Conference on The Economics of Increased Bantu Wages And Productivity, an address by Mr. A.J.J. Wessels, 3/10/61.

51. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch8, Garment Workers Union of African Women, Report of the Visit to Charleston and Standerton, 17/11/55.

In 1958 women from the Veka Factory wrote to the Garment Workers union of African Women "in distress". A newly employed white supervisor had persecuted and assaulted a 15 year old girl, who had been working in the factory for two years, for alleged faulty sewing. The other sixteen women in the workteam followed the girl outside in sympathy, only to find themselves immediately locked out and arrested. The ensuing court case, in which the women were being defended by Oliver Tambo, had already cost over 100 pounds. Asking for financial solidarity the women added that "we live in a very poor community and as you have heard we are only paid 15 shillings a week which is not enough to buy food for ourselves, let alone maintaining a family".[52]

The "unfair competition" from uncontrolled areas resulted in an exodus of clothing factories from the Witwatersrand, despite the fact that the Garment Worker's Union had acceded to wage reductions for beginners to levels prevailing in the Cape.[53]

The position of the Germiston based Nationalists in the ranks of the Garment Workers Union who had campaigned against the

leadership of Anna Scheepers and Johanna Cornelius was completely undermined by the rapid collapse in size of the Transvaal clothing industry, which simultaneously reorientated itself towards black labour. Both factions had in 1956-7 mobilised through meetings, marches and work stoppages. Du Pisanie, the mentor of the Nationalist garment workers, urged the immediate implementation of recommendations of the Industrial Tribunal, which were soon overturned in a court case brought by the Garment Workers Union of the Western Province.[54] Of all the representatives who were called to give evidence, only the Germiston branches of the GWU supported the racial demarcation of tasks.[55] Members there were hostile to the entry of coloured women into the industry. Du Pisanie told a meeting of 150 workers in late 1957

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52. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch8, E. Dlamini, M. Nyandeni and E. Ndlovu to Lucy Mvubelo, 16/4/58.

53. Germiston Advocate, 7/9/56.

54. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch3.1, Verbatim report (Afrikaans) by J. Coetzer of a meeting of white Garment Workers, Market Hall, Germiston, 4/12/57

55. Report by the Industrial Tribunal to the Hon. Minister of Labour on Reservation of Work in the Clothing Industry, 2/10/57, pp. 25-6

> It is a blessed scandal, it is a really mean thing for leaders to do to reduce workers wages. They sold the workers to the bosses. They do their utmost to chase out whites and replace them with coloureds. They have failed because you, the white workers of Germiston,did not play ball... The demarcation of work will remain. The law on apartheid will be carried out in all industries.[56]

Scheepers and Cornelius went to considerable lengths to placate white prejudices without jeopardising their overall control of the union. Pre-empting the passage of the Industrial Conciliation Bill, the segregrated branches of the Union were changed into constitutionally separate unions bound together in a Federal structure.[57] They also steadfastly followed up reports of breaches in factory segregation.[58]

Du Pisanie's crusade to save white women workers from the followers of "Stalin, Lenin and Sachs"[59] peaked at a time when white production workers were a dying breed in the industry. By 1959 attendance at meetings had swollen to 2-3,000 as unemployed white garment workers, though still government supporters, vented their fury at Minister de Klerk's failure to safeguard their jobs.[60] In the boom of the 1960s new avenues of employment opened to white women and the job reservation agitation faded into nothing.

Change in State -Capital Relations, Style or Content?

Organised industry and the Nationalist government, although both elements of the ensemble of ruling forces in South African society, had a particularly uneasy relationship during the premierships of Strydom and Verwoerd.Afrikaans-speaking capitalists, as recipients of government patronage, were largely an exception, although in the heat of the 1960 Emergency the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut put its name to a memorandum from all the main employers organisations calling on Verwoerd to address "Native grievances".[61] The older established English-speaking

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56. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch3.1, Verbatim report...

57. Rand Daily Mail, 20/4/56.

58. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch4, Job Reservation, Second Meeting of the Provisional Central Executive of the Garment Workers Union of European Employees, 19/5/56.

59. CPSA, WCL, GWU, Bch3.1, Verbatim Report.....

60. Star, 24/3/59, Rand Daily Mail, 11/4/59, 24/4/59.

business sector developed its own style of liberal rhetoric, a current of thinking reflected in influential liberal academic publications of the time. Whilst highlighting the injustice involved in racist white labour practices this view played down or ignored the stake of the mining industry in particular in the racial oppression of Africans. South African Industry and Trade's Editor at the time Ralph Horwitz portrayed Government Ministers with entertaining invective, as racist monsters whose ignorance of and disregard for economic laws was having a catastrophic effect on South African industry.[62] A readership survey revealed that of a total readership of 18 to 20,000 executives throughout industry, 97% reviewed the Editorial coverage favourably[63].

Public criticism of Government policy by captains of industry reached a peak in the months after the Sharpeville massacre and the assumption of Emergency powers to repress popular mobilisations organised by the PAC and the ANC. Afrikaners within the ranks of principally English speaking employers organisations were placed in a difficult position. There was little toleration of dissent in the Afrikaner community at this time. S.W.J.Liebenberg, a Past Vice president of ASSOCOM wrote to the organisation's executive thus:

> There is so little unity these days in any sphere of South African life that to destroy that which remains would be a sheer act of vandalism.....no other association has achieved this either on economic or cultural grounds. It is for this reason that I formally make this appeal to ASSOCOM not to destroy that which we in the Afrikaans community hold so dear...Those who break into the news continuously with no apparent reason but to secure publicity and make a nuisance of themselves in Government circles surely seem incapable of assessing the damage they are causing the Association and the embarrassment which Afrikaans-speaking members find themselves placed as a result.[64]

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61. Star, 3/6/60, Industry's Plan to Safeguard the Future.

62. Industry and Trade. Editorials. Particularly August 1954, February 1955, April 1955, November 1955, June 1956, August 1956, September 1958 and March 1959.

63. Industry and Trade, March 1959, p. 47.

64. Cape Province Archive Depot, Records of Assocom, Executive Council, Minutes of Meeting, 17/10/60.

In fact this reponse reveals a degree of hypersensitivity as speakers at employers gatherings often couched their arguments purely economic terms and claimed to be avoiding party politics. As the sixties wore on there was an absolute decline in direct criticism of Government policy both in management journals and on public occasions, but this can only partly be attributed to the faster economic growth cutting the ground from under the feet of earlier arguments. The confrontational approach to government had proven counterproductive and inflamed white sectionalism as the letter quoted above suggests. Moreover the electoral trend in the Republic was consolidating rather than reversing the political hegemony of the Nationalist party. The Transvaal Chamber of Industries reorientated its approach to Goverment to the extent that in 1971 a circular was issued to reassure members that effective lobbying of Government was continuing.

> The Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Act and the early concepts of Industrial Decentralisation the effects of which had a particularly deleterious impact on industries in the Pretoria\Witwatersrand\ Vereeniging Industrial complex have always been a subject with which the TCI as well as the FCI were deeply involved...The Industrial Planning Committee researched the whole subject very thoroughly and made a series of submissions...The silence on the part of the Chambers may well have led to the belief that there was a lack of activity in this contentious sphere but, in actual fact, nothing could be further from the truth.[65]

The Physical Planning Act sought further than any previous measure to force employers on the Witwatersrand to use less African labour. The Council of Reef Municipalities made representations for this legislation to be implemented as early as 1955;

> It was stated that the overall ratio in Springs, for example, is 2.7 non-Europeans to every European, while in certain industries it is 28 to one. The latter type of industry causes an unnecessary burden on the local authority which has to provide housing for the non-Europeans employed.[66]

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65. Natal Chamber of Industries, documents collection, Transvaal Chamber of Industries, Circular to All Members, 20/7/71.

66. Star, 6/10/55.

The Act was doomed to failure however because whites were no longer interested in the jobs on offer and companies were able to battle with the influx control authorities for exemptions. Rapidly expanding companies filled the labour gap by employing coloureds and Indians, although these workers, having greater mobility than Africans, were frequently dissatisfied with the conditions of service offered. One Company, Domani Stainless Steel (Pty) at Wadeville, Germiston were advised by personnel consultants to improve renumeration and co-ordinate their staffing policy or face continuing chaos on the labour front.[67]

By the late 1960s influx control was being enforced with draconian rigidity and employers found that there workers were being constantly harassed. Management at Stewarts and Lloyds (Eagle Tube Works) brought a particularly harsh case to the attention of other Germiston Industrialists.

> On 21st November 1967 an employee was sent to purchase food 200 yards from the works. He was arrested for not being in possession of his I.D. without being given an opportunity to return with the patrol van to fetch it. He had already been sentenced to 90 days or a R30 fine when the card was produced in court the following morning. A protest lodged with the Department of Bantu Administration and Development resulted in a warning to the company not to dispatch Bantu employees on errands or face the consequences.[68]

Official dissapproval could also take the form of refusal to cater for an expanding class of factory workers.

> Mr C.E. Jarvis, of Hume Pipe Co. Ltd. said that his company had to recruit an additional 200 non-European employees who could not be accomodated in their compound. He had made arrangements through the Non-European Affairs Department of Johannesburg City Council to accomodate them in Katlehong, but recorded that no cooking facilities or other amenities were available in the accomodation offered. There was no water borne sewerage. Difficulty DID exist in recruiting non-Europeans under these conditions.[68]

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67. NIPR/CSIR C/Pers 184, R.H.Blake (ed), Labour Turnover: An Investigation, September 1970.

68. TIA, Town Clerk, Germiston, 492/45/22, Germiston Industries Association, Minutes of Monthly General Meeting, January 1968.

The debate and dispute between the state and private capitalist interests remained over a wide range of issues, but was conducted at a more discreet level in the 1960s. A further reason for this was the emergence of a potentially severe threat to the technologically advancing capitalist economy; that of international opprobium resulting from the application of apartheid. The threat to foreign investment and contacts upon which the whole economy was critically dependant spawned the South African Foundation to act as a PR shield deflecting the demand for sanctions, from "enemies abroad".

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69. Ibid., September 1964.