

FOREIGN AFRICAN LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Foreign African Labour has been allotted a specific role in the apartheid system - a system under which, all aspects of the life and relations of the majority of the population of South Africa are so ordered as to provide for the collective and individual benefit, privilege and comfort of a racially defined minority, and for the maximum profit for all those, South Africans and foreigners, who are engaged in exploiting the human and natural resources of southern Africa.

Pretoria's propaganda projects an image of workers freely choosing and preferring to go and work in South Africa because of the superior conditions and facilities offered there. The reality is quite different. Foreign African labour is deliberately recruited and brought to South Africa, because it is in the interests of employers there and because it benefits the South African economy. The need for this labour flow has historically led to policies that have deliberately operated to the detriment of the economic development of South Africa's neighbours.

Individually, foreign African workers suffer from the same disabilities and repression as indigenous South Africans - their rights, freedoms, movements and conditions are so controlled as to facilitate the maximum rate of exploitation of this labour. Collectively, foreign African workers are forced into a role which facilitates the greater exploitation of all workers, themselves included, and which sustains and buttresses the apartheid system.

The organised use of foreign African labour originated when the mineral discoveries led to a dramatic rise in the demand for labour in South Africa. At that time, the indigenous population still retained some ownership of land and a degree of economic independence sufficient to enable them to refuse to work on the mines for the wages and conditions offered. Workers from outside South Africa were brought to meet the need for labour, and as the advantages of this supply became apparent to the employers, the use of foreign African labour became an element in developing the system of racial domination and exploitation.

1. The apartheid system is dependent upon and in turn creates a large reservoir of Black labour which is totally dependent upon employment in white owned mines, industry, commerce and agriculture; and whose employment or non-employment, movements, organisation and conditions of work are entirely controlled by institutions in which the Black people have no say. The reservoir is maintained as a source of cheap and easily exploitable labour, from which workers can be drawn at the employers will and into which workers can be discarded with equal facility. The inflow of foreign African labour adds to this reservoir, making its components more dependent upon employment by whites, and hence more easily controlled by them.
2. By allowing control of entry and residence, the system allowed for the total control of the labour supply - a control exercised in South Africa over indigenous workers

as well, but in this case without the need for any consideration to be given to problems of unemployment or the costs of reproduction of labour.

3. The use of foreign African labour reduced still further the bargaining power of South African workers, and hence helps employers establish and maintain lower wage structures and depress the wage levels of all South African workers.
4. Foreign African workers are channelled into the sectors of the economy shunned by indigenous workers. They are given the worst jobs at lower rates of pay and with the most unfavourable conditions of employment. They have suffered the most from the ravages of death, accident, disease, lack of education etc. arising from the racially structured hierarchy of South Africa. They have been expelled from the economy in times of recession and brought back in periods of boom.
5. Foreign workers have been used in the policy of deliberately dividing the workers in order to prevent working class action and resistance. At the same time foreign workers have played their part in the economic and political struggles waged by the masses of South Africa against racial and other forms of oppression and exploitation. Clements Kadali, Malawian founder and leader of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union in the 1920s, is only the best known of the bands of foreign African workers who have joined hands in solidarity with their comrades in South Africa.

The particular situation of foreign African Labour in South Africa is separately considered in this paper, but it is inter-related and inter-dependent upon the situation of all Black workers. Both are determined by, and flow from the apartheid system. Consequently, all questions of change, of amelioration of conditions, of improvement of status, are linked with changes in the apartheid system, and in the final analysis must be considered in the context of the liberation struggle of the South African people.

This elastic source of labour helps to increase the flexibility of the South African economic system. In periods of prosperity and boom conditions it serves as a medium to obviate relative scarcities of unskilled labour or to limit their intensity, while during depression, the labour supply shrinks automatically. For the industrialist and the businessman, the additional labour signifies that the elasticity of the labour supply is maintained, or at all events, is not greatly decreased, so that wages need not be raised at all, or not much, to attract labour. For the indigenous or settled Native, on the other hand, this means that he must compete with the immigrants, to whom rightly or wrongly, preference is frequently given. As a consequence of this, in all probability, his wage has risen less during the past few years than would have been the case in the absence of immigration.

...Tomlinson Commission (UG 61, 1955), p.41.

The Natives from Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland have been, and are admitted to the Union to work, the reasons for this being that the administration of the Protectorates is generally in conformity with the principles adopted by the Union Government and its Native administration. The policy adopted by other governments towards the Native races in other parts of Africa is widely different from that of the Union.

It follows that the basing of industry on the employment of low-paid non-European labour involves the provision of a large number of such labourers for every extension of industry, and everything which prevents that provision ... such as ... the development of local industries absorbing the native labourers in those areas of Africa from which natives have in the past, been imported into the Union - will put an end to any increase in industry in the Union.

Report of the Economic and Wage Commission.
(UG 14 1926) para. 129-30

Labour drawn from outside the political boundaries has always been a continually significant factor in the economic development of the states brought into being by European colonialism and imperialism in South Africa. The economy of the seventeenth, eighteenth and the early nineteenth century Cape Colony depended on slaves transported from Mozambique, other parts of Africa, and the East Indies. In the nineteenth century the sugar plantations of Natal depended upon the importation of indentured labour from India, while the Cape, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal all drew on migratory or tributary labour from the independent African societies that surrounded them. In all these cases labour was sought from distant areas because of local "labour shortages" arising out of resistance to conditions of labour and levels of wages in agricultural and other employment. The use of such labour helped to create the conditions for smashing such resistance and reducing the indigenous South African population towards the condition of a pauperised proletariat.

By the end of the nineteenth century conditions had been achieved, under the hegemony of British imperialism, for the political conquest of all the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. There was, however, still great diversity in the extent to which the people retained access to means of production which could provide a basis for resistance to unfavourable conditions of wage labour. Under the political hegemony of British imperialism, therefore, and under the auspices of the regime in Pretoria after 1910, employers still looked outside the borders of South Africa itself for an augmented labour supply less able to offer resistance. The curtailment of the short-lived use of indentured Chinese labour on the gold mines (1903-1908), and India's refusal to allow further recruitment of indentured labour after 1911, brought to an end the search for cheap labour from outside the African continent. In the twentieth century the main sources of the supply of foreign labour to the South African economy have been from the Southern, Central, and East African region: the former "High Commission Territories" of Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana; Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania.

Significant capital accumulation in South Africa began on the basis of the mining of diamonds from the 1870's, the mining of gold from the 1880's and the transformation of agricultural production into capitalist agriculture from about the same period. Mining, based almost exclusively on a system of black migrant labour, and agriculture, based very largely on the system of labour-tenancy, remained the dominant sectors in the South

African economy until the Second World War. It was in this period, from the 1890's to the Second World War, that the particular national forms of domination characteristic of South Africa were brought into being. The "Native Reserves" were demarcated, and were gradually transformed into impoverished reservoirs of a black migrant labour supply. The racial oligarchy of the South African political system was entrenched in this period, by which all classes of whites had democratic political representation, while blacks were ruled through an autocratic system. In the mining industry, and the other forms of industry which emerged between the wars, white workers struggled for their position in opposition to their black fellow-workers, and achieved positions of institutionalised protection and privilege.

The basis for a secondary industrial economy was laid in the period between the two world wars. Though this section suffered a set back from the depression, it was stimulated by the expansion of mining in the mid-thirties and by the second world war. Offering wages higher than either agriculture or mining, manufacturing industry attracted a disproportionate share of the black labour supply. Thus after 1946, the policy of apartheid had as a major aim, the preservation of the super-exploitative wage levels and working conditions of the earlier period in a changed situation, and this necessitated a vast expansion and transformation of the means by which the black workforce was controlled, regulated, and distributed within the economy.

In the 1950's, the South African economy was in a period of restructuring rather than massive growth. Mining, manufacturing, and agriculture all underwent substantial mechanization; but overall output did not rise substantially, and real wage levels actually declined. The foreign stake in the South African economy, up to then largely a British stake in the mining industry, expanded and diversified. State-established industries and private manufacturing capital drew on foreign investment because of its resources and its access to new technology. As output and profits began to rise from the late 1950's through the 1960's, the foreign stake expanded further, through new inputs and through reinvestment of existing profits. Significant new economic sectors emerged to supplement the existing base metals mining, electronics, pulp and paper, and so on. Increasingly, this new investment was of a kind requiring large capital inputs for each person employed, and tended therefore to reduce the level of labour demand in the economy and therefore to be unable to absorb the growing numbers of Africans in need of employment. In this context, the "Native Reserves" came to play the role of reservoirs to which the "redundant" should be expelled, and in which the unemployed should vegetate.

Increasingly, in fact, all black workers have been regarded by the Pretoria regime as "foreign" workers, with access to jobs in the South African economy only as a "privilege". The Bantustan policy with its now confessed aim of denying all Africans even the formality of South African citizenship creates the political conditions in which black South Africans can be classified as citizens of "independent" Bantustans and subject to the same regulations as "foreigners". However, in this Conference there must be an absolute distinction between workers who originate within the internationally recognised borders of

South Africa, and those who come from neighbouring countries to work in South Africa, for it is with these latter that we are concerned.

THE CONTROL OF FOREIGN AFRICAN LABOUR

The status of foreign Africans in South Africa was initially regulated by the Admission of Persons to the Union Regulation Act 1913. Under this Act, foreign Africans fell essentially into that class of prohibited immigrants who "on economic grounds or on account of standards or habits of life" were unsuited to the requirements of the Union of South Africa. However this legislation was never applied to Africans from the High Commission Territories, whose movements into and out of South Africa therefore remained largely unregulated. Until the 1930's, the main area affected by the Act was Mozambique. However its application was tempered by the various Mozambique Conventions between the South African regime and the Portuguese government, reached in the interests of procuring a supply of mining labour. The mine recruiting organizations WNLA and NRC (see below) received automatic exemptions in respect of Africans recruited from Mozambique, provided that such workers were repatriated at the conclusion of their contracts. After 1933 African labour from "tropical" areas; i.e. north of 22°S, was also recruited subject to repatriation on completion of contract or on desertion.

In this period there were many "loop-holes" permitting an unregulated increase in the foreign African workforce and population in South Africa. Even in the mining sector, which was the most stringently controlled, there was no requirement that Africans from the High Commission Territories should be repatriated at the termination of contracts. Many, in fact, remained in urban centres and moved from mining to other work. Mozambique and "tropical" Africans did the same illegally, compelling the South African and Portuguese authorities to negotiate a "regularisation" of this position. Mozambicans could then remain, provided they obtained temporary permits under the 1913 Act, documents from the Portuguese Curator, and entered into service contracts valid for six months with a particular employer. Immigration not directly organised by WNLA and the NRC was even less subject to control. Often non-recruits gained entry to South Africa by using the transport provided for mine recruits. Mines not affiliated to the Chamber of Mines engaged "illegal immigrants" on the basis of subsequently legalising their position, a procedure which the state was forced to ratify. Farmers, particularly in border areas, made extensive use of seasonal foreign labour, and the border districts became a stepping stone to other parts of South Africa, for both men and women from the neighbouring countries.

By and large, the state showed little concern to increase its control of foreign African migration until after the Second World War. The renegotiation of the Mozambique Convention in 1928 set an absolute ceiling on numbers and prohibited non-mining work for Mozambique (though this was subsequently modified to allow applications for exemption from its provisions). In 1934-5, as a result of the depression, there was an abortive attempt to institute a repatriation scheme for foreign Africans. In 1931 and 1937 there were Amendments made to the 1913 Immigration Act. In terms of other legislation in 1937, moreover, foreign Africans were forbidden to enter non-mining employment in urban areas, except with

a special permit. (Act 46 of 1937, Section 8). But all these measures, as Table I shows had little effect on stemming the flow of foreign migration. Indeed, while the increase in numbers of foreign Africans in South Africa was not particularly significant outside mining between 1911 and 1936, there was an escalation from 1936 to 1946 and to 1951. This escalation in numbers ran parallel to the general trends of urbanisation of black South Africans.

After the Second World War, the South African state began to express increasing concern about the situation of foreign Africans. However, this was not with the intention of excluding them from the economy. Both in the case of Black South Africans and foreign Africans the intentions were those of control: of regulation and distribution of labour in the interests of different sections of employers, and the preservation of a low-wage policy as a whole. One aspect of this was the need to establish, or enforce, a clear legislative and administrative distinction between "indigenous" and foreign Africans, so that appropriate channelling of labour could occur, and the historical role of foreign labour as the core of a reserve pool of labour be perpetuated.

The Tomlinson Commission analysed the situation as it appeared in the early 1950's:

The effective control of immigration on the extensive frontiers of the Union appears to be an impossible task ... only a minority of the extra-Union Natives in the Union at present arrived here as a result of recruiting. The others flocked here on their own initiative.

Other "problems" were identified. The historical "loop-holes" in the controls meant that a significant proportion of foreign Africans, some 35%, qualified as de facto or de jure permanent residents. Beyond this, because of ethnic and linguistic similarities, it was difficult to distinguish foreign Africans from the indigenous inhabitants. The Commission drew particular attention to migrants from the High Commission Territories, who accounted for a substantial proportion of the foreign increase, and who were not officially regarded as aliens. It claimed that, since 1936, the Union had absorbed "nearly the entire natural increase of the population of Basutoland, either temporarily or permanently", and continued that "the Union of South Africa is not only responsible for the livelihood of this number, but also provides part of the necessities of those families which remain behind". The Commission calculated that, "as a source of income, the Union is responsible for providing the means of existence of nearly one half the population of Basutoland and their descendants ... The corresponding proportion in the case of Bechuanaland and Swaziland amount to one fifth and one third respectively".

The corollary of this analysis was tighter legislation and administration of the law so as to allow foreign Africans into the country, to direct them into sectors where their labour was needed, but to prevent them establishing themselves in South Africa. In 1952 the provisions of 1937 (repeated in 1945) were amended so that any African not born in South Africa (as opposed to not legally domiciled) was prohibited from entry to or work in an urban area except by permit. Moreover the granting of exemptions to these requirements on the basis of long residence (10 years) were withdrawn for Africans from the Rhodesias and Malawi. During 1954-5

there was a further tightening up. The Minister of Native Affairs announced that:

Extra-Union Natives should under no circumstances be allowed to bring their wives and children to the Union. Wherever possible wives and children ... should be directed to return to their countries (or) repatriated.

No further administrative relaxation which enables such Natives after 10 years under certain circumstances to acquire Union nationality should be entertained. Such Natives must at all times be made to realise that they cannot, even if they marry a woman who is a Union national, acquire the right to remain in the Union either permanently or indefinitely...

At the same time an amendment to the Urban Areas Act was under consideration, which placed Africans from the High Commission Territories under identical restrictions to other foreign Africans for the first time. Even before this amendment was passed in 1955 the Minister had explained:

Natives who are now entrants from the High Commission Territories must, as soon as Section 12 of Act No. 25 of 1945 has been amended, be dealt with on similar lines, provided that where a farmer desires to utilise the services of a family from the High Commission Territories, such family may be permitted to take up residence on the farm for the period during which the services of the family are required.

In 1955 High Commission Africans already lawfully in South African urban areas were exempted from these provisions, but this exemption was removed by an amendment in 1957. The intention was clearly not to remove, but to "destablise" the foreign labour force: the Secretary of the Native Affairs Department announced that a six-month period of return to the home country over two years would in future be enforced for foreign Africans since "we do not want them to become too attached to the Union".

Economically, the intention was to concentrate foreign workers (apart from those recruited for the mines) into agriculture, and particularly into those regions suffering the severest "short-ages" of labour, like Bethal. "Now that the position on the farms has become even more serious" reported the Fagan Commission in 1948, "the Administration is very energetic in dealing with illegal Native immigrants from the north. The choice is put to them - those whom the authorities can lay hands on - either to accept work on the farm or to be deported from the country". This approach, and subsequent approaches through direct coercion, did not prove very successful as the Froneman Commission reported:

Because of the failure of deportation, an attempt was made at one stage to detain in depots those Africans who were illegal immigrants but who refused to leave when ordered to do so. The aim was to put them to work, particularly in agriculture, and to this end depots were established in 1953, among other places, in Mafeking and Nigel ... At Nigel about 20% of the detainees agreed to return. Train tickets were bought

for them out of their own money, but about 90% of them simply left the trains and returned to work illegally for their former employers, or found new jobs. About 80% accepted six-month contracts to work on farms, but of those only about 25% completed their terms of service; the rest absconded. The depot at Mafeking fell rapidly into disuse because the foreign Africans sent there left the trains before they reached Mafeking and caught trains going in the opposite direction, back towards Cape Town".

Although these measures in the 1950's may have extended real control in respect of Africans from Mozambique and "tropical" areas, they appear to have had little power to redistribute labour originating from the High Commission Territories. The figures on foreign Africans (see Table I) which record a decrease in those enumerated in the census from 1951 to 1960, show clearly that the main effect of the controls was to encourage foreign Africans to disguise their antecedents. It should be noted, however, that available subsequent figures continue to reflect this decline in numbers; for example the 1970 census enumeration of a foreign African total of 490,060 is less than the 1951 or 1960 figures. Partly, no doubt, this reflects continued disguising of origins. It is also due to the more effective implementation of more stringent controls on foreign labour in the 1960's. In general terms the Vorster regime, having engaged in massive repression of all resistance, and reaping the revenue of economic growth, intervened more effectively in the distribution of labour and dislocation of human lives in the 1960's. The measures regarding foreign Africans which were specifically debated by the Froneman Commission, were only one aspect of this general policy.

The Froneman Commission was established in 1961 and reported in 1963. It investigated numbers of foreign Africans, recruiting policies, forms of control of entry, treatment of foreign Africans within South Africa, methods of repatriation and the role of foreign labour in the economy. Its recommendations were stark: that since it had never been South African policy "to make it possible for foreign Africans to settle permanently in the country", the entry of foreign Africans should be totally prohibited except for (a) bona fide visitors (b) approved male labour and (c) approved seasonal labour for the border districts, provided they entered the country at specific check points and subject to the Immigration laws. These recommendations reflected an assessment that at that point, except in the mining industry and seasonal labour for agriculture, the level of labour demand could be adequately met by local black labour. The Commission was also concerned to bring policy towards foreign Africans into stringent line with domestic "homeland resettlement" policies. Further it expressed concern about the potentially anti-racialist attitudes that might be brought from independent African countries by black workers. "Hostile countries", it argued, "might smuggle subversive elements across the borders in the guise of workseekers".

The Commission's specific recommendations included:-

- : active steps to repatriate foreign African women and children
- : explicit agreements with neighbouring countries regarding internationally recognised travel

documents to be produced and approved at specific border posts

- : the active replacement of foreign Africans by indigenous Africans in employment, except in mining and farming: "A serious replacement problem may arise in the agricultural and mining industries where large numbers of foreign Africans are employed. Apart from the numbers involved wages are lower than in other sectors of the economy, and more hard physical labour is required. A considerable part of the remuneration in both sectors is in kind ... which the African worker is inclined to disregard, particularly as he becomes more sophisticated".
- : the pursuit of this replacement policy by immediate freezing of quotas, immediate repatriation of unemployed foreign African males, a tax on employers continuing to use foreign African labour, and a target date of five years for ending such employment of all foreign Africans.
- : the cessation of a retroactive legitimation of illegal immigrants, so that all prospective entrants have to apply in advance.
- : greater regulation by the state of recruiting organisations.
- : the summary arrest of any foreign African without valid documents and detention pending trial; with a minimum sentence of three months imprisonment without option on first offence and 12 months imprisonment without option thereafter. After serving sentence, such persons to be detained until deported.
- : the establishment of detention camps near the borders where illegal entrants can be held "for punishment and identification".

In 1963 a series of measures was promulgated in accordance with these recommendations, and which finally completely assimilated Africans from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland to the same subordinated status as other foreign Africans.

The effects of the implementation of these measures on the numbers and structure of the foreign African population in South Africa are not totally clear. Tables I and II give statistics for available years on the foreign African population broken down (a) by sector of economic activity (b) by countries of origin. However several areas of possible error in these statistics should be pointed out.

Among the issues which distort these statistics are (a) the fact that large numbers of foreign Africans particularly those who have married South African women, and their children, have been absorbed into the South African population. The South African regime might like to regard these as legally "foreign", but has no machinery for identifying them. They are also no

longer reported as "migrants" in statistical data in the countries of their origin. (b) There is still substantial "illegal" migration in the urban areas where large numbers of foreign Africans are being employed without their employment being registered. A Rhodesian official estimated in June (1976) that between 40,000 and 100,000 Rhodesian workers were employed illegally in South Africa. Thus the Froneman Commission, which had available to it a 1960 census estimate of 586,320 as the total foreign African population, argued that to regard the total foreign African population as exceeding 1 million was a conservative estimate. (c) Illegal immigration is probably considerably more prevalent in the agricultural areas adjoining foreign countries. The Froneman Commission found that "the Free State is full of Basutos, the Western Transvaal full of Bechuanas, the Eastern Transvaal full of Swazis, and Ingwavuma, in Northern Natal, full of Portuguese Africans. These Africans cannot always be distinguished from the indigenous Swazi, South Sotho or Tswana groups with whom they have close linguistic and ethnic ties. In the Western Cape many foreign Africans marry Coloured women and have children who usually attend Coloured schools". It is also reported that it "could obtain no reliable information about the origin, sector of employment, geographical distribution, economic activity, or even the total numbers of the African labour force in the rural areas" and was forced into an arbitrary estimate (420,000 total: 280,000-300,000 men) of the foreign Africans engaged in agriculture. In 1964 it was estimated that 144,000 foreign Africans were engaged in agriculture on the basis of "the sum total of informed guesses concerning the contingents from the individual territories". Figures showing the country of origin only for regular employees are, however, quite sufficient to confirm the common sense proposition that Africans from adjoining countries are most likely to remain in areas closest to their homes. Thus two-thirds of the Basotho were enumerated in the Orange Free State; about three-quarters of the Botswana were in the Transvaal, the large majority of them in the districts of Rustenburg, Brits, Waterberg, and Marico; people from Swaziland predominated in border, or at least nearby, districts like Barberton, Nelspruit and Piet Retief; agricultural workers from Mozambique were mainly in Natal and the north-eastern Transvaal. (d) Census figures, in particular, are subject to systematic under-numeration and particularly so when it comes to identifying the unemployed. This has a major effect in the classification of numbers in agriculture. Thus, in the 1970 census, it has recently been reported that "instructions to census enumerators included the following rather startling methodological obfuscations:

A male who described himself as unemployed, and living in a rural area, had to be classified as employed in agriculture.

A man who indicated the occupation and industry of his last job, but was unemployed, had to be classified as employed in that industry.

All the females (from 16 years old) in rural areas and unemployed, had to be classified as farm workers, unless the wife of the household head; and

A woman who gave her occupation as domestic servant and who was unemployed, had to be classified as employed as a domestic servant."

(Financial Mail 25/3/1977)

Comparisons between local African labour and foreign African labour in respect of wages, working conditions, and skill structures, are difficult to come by from available evidence. From 1963/4 the Department of Bantu Labour ceased to publish separate figures for the earnings of foreign labour; and thus one must turn to countries of origin figures, which do not appear to be adequate in their existing form. However from the 1970 census some indications of the type of employment open to foreign labour in terms of "skill" can be obtained. These figures must be treated with caution. "Skill", in any sense, is a largely subjective or formal definition. However the census reports that 97.3% of foreign Africans were employed in occupational categories characterised as predominantly low wage (and low skilled) employment; only 1.63% were in occupational categories characterised as higher wage (higher skilled) employment (see Table III). The low wage categories were production and transport workers, miners and labourers (79.7%); fishermen, farm and forestry workers (10.3%) and service workers (7.3%). The higher wage categories were clerical and related workers (0.9%); sales workers (0.4%); professional and technical worker (0.3%). Hence foreign African workers are heavily concentrated in the unskilled labour market as befits their position as part of the reserve pool of labour. Indeed they are more heavily concentrated in low skilled work than indigenous black South Africans. While foreign workers comprise 8.4% of the total low skilled African workforce, they are only 2.5% of the skilled African workforce (see Table III).

RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN AFRICAN LABOUR IN THE MINING INDUSTRY (1889 to 1960)

From the 1970 census figures (see Table II) it is clear that the largest concentration of foreign African workers, remained, as it has always been, in the mining industry, and particularly in those sectors (gold and coal) for which WNLA and the NRC recruit.

Foreign African labour for the South African mines is almost exclusively recruited by two organisations established in the early years of the emergence of the South African gold mining industry: the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (1901) and the Native Recruiting Corporation (1912). These organisations recruit labour for gold and coal mines affiliated to the Chamber of Mines. Since 1968 other types of mines have been able to affiliate to the Chamber, and may also be drawing labour through these sources.

Soon after the establishment of gold mining on the Witwatersrand, the Chamber of Mines was formed in 1889, and immediately addressed itself to the "problem" of the cost of black labour, and of its supply. In that early period, mines competed among themselves for labour; and much of the labour was procured by individual contractors ("touts", "labour agents") who charged large fees for the service. To reduce wages, while maintaining an adequate supply of labour in conditions where the black population had not been deprived of access to the means of independent production, was a complex and protracted process for the Chamber. Begun in the 1890's, it was not fully completed until after the First World War.

The first measure of the Chamber was to attempt to eliminate inter-mine competition by establishing a fixed scale of

wages, which soon became entrenched as the "maximum average wage agreement". Table IV shows the effect of this measure on wage levels for workers in the industry. This fixed scale was, however, impossible to implement without the simultaneous establishment of a centralised system of distribution of labour among the mines, to eliminate competitive bidding. Equally, the costs of developing and maintaining such a centralised system would have been prohibitive unless workers could be recruited on lengthy contracts, and unless these contracts could be enforced by law i.e. what was required was a "penal contract system". From the beginning, workers were tricked and deceived, bribed and coerced, into mining employment. Once they arrived at the mines, they resisted their conditions of employment and left in large numbers. The emergence of W.N.L.A. and, later, the N.R.C., depended crucially on the existence of onerous and strongly enforced Pass Laws, to control and direct the movement of black workers, and on the Masters and Servants Laws, which made breach of contract a criminal offence, punishable at times by flogging, and always by fines and jail sentences. Though such laws existed in nineteenth century South Africa, new laws adapted to their needs were drawn up by the Chamber of Mines for the Transvaal State in 1895 and 1896. The inability of the Transvaal State to enforce these laws adequately was one of the major factors which led to the conquest of the Transvaal by British imperialism in the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902.

Thus there developed the notorious "penal contract" system under which black mine workers suffered. Its earliest and most effective implementation was in respect of Mozambique labour, secured with the collaboration of the Portuguese colonial regime. By the end of the 1890's over 70% of the 97,000 work force on the mines was from Mozambique, mostly from the south. Only here was the population so repressed, and the alternative so appalling, that workers could be cajoled by recruiters or their chiefs into signing contracts for 12 month periods. After the Anglo-Boer war the situation was "formalised". The W.N.L.A. secured monopoly powers for recruitment in Mozambique, with the terms of contract, numbers recruitable, and compensatory benefits to the Portuguese colonialists established by the modus vivendi of 1903, and the Mozambique Convention of 1909, which was later periodically amended. The 313 shift (12 month) minimum contract length of 1903 was extended to an eighteen month minimum in 1914; though in 1928 a revision of the Convention established a maximum contract of 18 months, and a limitation on numbers recruited to 100,000 and then 80,000.

South African gold mines could not have arisen to their position of dominance in world gold production without the super-exploitation of labour from Mozambique. For a short period after the Anglo-Boer war, the shortfall of other supplies of labour necessitated bringing indentured labour from China as well. But, as a former recruiter wrote in the 1930's, "I think many mine and compound managers will agree with me that the East Coast 'boys' were, and still are, the back-bone of mine labour. They came up for longer periods and were signed on for a year at first, and some years ago used to recontract again and again until the mines had to send them back to their homes." Many never returned home: the death rate in the crucial formative years of the industry was around 80 per 1,000. This affected workers from Mozambique differentially, for they were compelled to work almost exclusively underground.

To extend the penal contract system into other areas was more difficult but equally necessary. Before Union, W.N.L.A. had

been extending its recruiting tentacles into tropical areas particularly in Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and northern Mozambique. Recruiting from these areas was banned by the Union Government in 1913, partly because of the incredibly high mortality rates of the workers; but it was permitted again after 1933. The numbers of "tropical" workers grew during the 1930's and 1940's, and came thereafter to form a major component of the foreign labour force on the mines.

In this early period, workers from the "High Commission Territories" and South Africa itself would only come on the basis of short-term contracts. Such workers were sometimes recruited on a monthly contract basis, and rarely for initial contracts which were longer than six months. This was partly because employers in the Southern and Central African colonies like the Cape, Natal, Rhodesia, and Nyasaland resented and resisted the diminution of their own supplies of labour, and imposed restrictions on recruiting. Further, it was also because chiefs, or other political spokesmen for the black people, resisted the imposition of longer contracts. Thus labour recruiters in Lesotho wrote to the Chamber in 1903 that "Lerothodi and chiefs discourage boys going for six months. For this reason and better labour offering nearer home we anticipate scant success. We suggest your altering terms to four months immediately. I learn from chiefs from Lerothodi downwards that they are all opposed to a six months contract, that Basutos have to plough and reap and have families."

But, even if their contract terms were shorter, black workers in South Africa were equally subjected to the penal indenture system. "The system which has grown up, as far as unskilled labour is concerned", wrote the head of the W.N.L.A. in 1906, "is obviously a branch of the indentured labour system. The natives on the mines are, in all essential respects, indentured labourers. They are brought from long distances and mostly from other countries. They engage in the first place for fixed periods. They do not have their homes at or near their place of employment. They are even subject to a special code of law. The Portuguese native who is brought from Gazaland on a year's contract, the Cape Colony or Basuto native who comes up on a six or three months' contract, even the Transvaal native who is brought in from the Zoutpansberg, is as much an indentured labourer as the Chinese who come for three years, or as the Indian coolie who goes to Natal or to Demarara." When various pressures forced the ending of the Chinese indentured labour system, the mine-owners were compelled to intensify the terms of penal contract within the "High Commission Territories" and South Africa itself.

This intensification became possible with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. One of the first laws passed by the all-white Parliament was the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911. This Act provided the basis for the establishment, in 1911, of the Native Recruiting Corporation, which rapidly acquired a monopoly in recruiting within "British South Africa". As it developed its monopoly, the NRC extended the period of minimum contract. Between 1910 and 1941, 392 of the mineworkers from "British South Africa" were mining on a short-term voluntary basis. At the start this was 90 shifts (3 - 4 months); in 1919 it was lengthened to 180 shifts (7 months), and in 1924 it was extended again to 270 shifts (c. 10½ months) for the Union and Basutoland. Slowly this began to affect the actual length of time spent at mining work by Union and "High Commission" Africans: this increased from an average of 6 months in 1922 to 10 - 11 months in 1931; and to over 12 months in 1934.

In a situation where total employment was increasing the effect of these measures was to increase the absolute numbers of Union and "High Commission" workers on the mines. Consequently, the proportion of foreign labour dropped from its peak of 85% in 1905 to 60% in 1908, remaining fairly stable at around that level until 1929 (see Table V). This stable proportion disguises the extent to which the foreign labour component comprised a near-static contribution from Mozambique, and an increasing proportion from other areas, particularly Lesotho. The percentage figure also disguises the fact that increasing numbers of black South Africans were working on the mines, under conditions determined by the employers regimentation of the foreign proportion of the workforce. As a standard text on the subject claimed of the 1930's period: "the supply from Portuguese East Africa can be adjusted to counter-act both seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in the numbers of Natives from the Union and British Protectorates. The Natives from Portuguese territory are, moreover, to a marked degree miners of experience, and they can be drafted by the central authority to one mine or another with greater freedom than those from other South African sources."

The trends in the recruitment of labour to the gold mines were substantially altered by the effects of the international depression on South Africa after 1929, in a manner which strikingly foreshadows the situation of the present. The effect of the depression on the South African mining situation was twofold. Firstly, it dramatically intensified the levels of black impoverishment and sub-subsistence in the rural economy, an economy whose capacity to reproduce itself through the access of its members to means of production was already being steadily undermined. Secondly, it increased the demand for gold and, subsequently, the price of gold, producing a large increase in the labour demands of mine-owners and providing the means for further prospecting and opening of new mines.

This affected the foreign African labour force in three ways. Firstly, the potential supply of labour from inside South Africa and the High Commission Territories increased substantially. Secondly, the opportunity was taken by the South African regime to apply limits to recruitment from Mozambique: until 1940, only 80,000 rather than 100,000 were allowed for the mines and other Mozambique immigration was prohibited (in the leanest year, 1932, only 58,483 Mozambiquans worked on the mines). This was at a time of economic depression, when Mozambiquan workers had most severe need for this employment. Thirdly, new sources of foreign labour began once more to be tapped: from 1933 recruiting was again permitted from North of latitude 22°S and, though numbers remained small until the Second World War, this labour was competitive with Mozambique labour and helped offset the depression in British-ruled colonial territories. As Table V shows, the overall effects were that from 1929 the foreign labour component on the mines fell from 61% to an average 50% through the 1930's (the proportion in the lowest year, 1932, being only 44%). Within this percentage, the Mozambique component was static, the High Commission and tropical labour represented a growing volume. Equally, the South African recruitment figures rose substantially, in absolute terms and proportionately.

Prior to Union, as we have seen, many black South Africans were employed on the basis of short-term contracts. Such terms of employment persisted until the 1930's, but to a decreasing and limited extent. In 1928 a new scheme, the Assisted Voluntary

scheme, operated through the NRC, was introduced for South African and High Commission labour. Instead of offering himself for labour at the mine, the worker signed on in the recruitment area, contracting:

... to present himself within thirty days from the date of agreement to be registered for service underground ... it being understood that he is free to select in order of his own preference any ... company agreeing to accept his services. The NRC agent ... undertakes to provide underground employment for the recruit on conditions of service as specified, subject to his physical fitness for such work ... The recruit is given an advance of so much money as is necessary to meet his railfare to Johannesburg and to provide him with food for the journey. This amount is ... recoverable from the AVS recruit by deduction from the moneys in excess of 10/- earned by him on each completed ticket of 30 shifts until the whole amount is recovered. In practice, however, the AVS native who has worked 270 shifts underground on the same mine obtains a refund of this sum on the conclusion of his contract.

(Landsdown Commission p.4)

From the depression onwards, an increasing number of Union and High Commission workers came to the mines on this scheme: in 1931 32% of the British South African mine labour force were on AVS; between 1935 and 1939, 44% of those from "British South Africa" used it; in 1942 49.2%.

The possibility of relaxing recruiting in this way without affecting the supply of labour to the mines (in conditions, indeed, where this supply increased), was a product of the increasing "economic compulsion" exacerbated by the impoverishment of the rural areas, which was exacerbated though not caused by the depression. "The gold mining industry of the Witwatersrand", wrote the Lansdown Commission in 1943,

... has indeed been fortunate in having secured, for its unskilled labour, native peasants who have been prepared to come to the Witwatersrand for periods of labour at comparatively low wages. But for this fortunate circumstance the industry could never have reached its present stage of development - some mines would never have opened up; many low grade mines would have been unable to work with any prospect of profit; and, in the case of the richer mines, large bodies of ore, the milling of which has been brought within the limits of payability, could never have been worked, with the result that the lives of the mines would have been considerably curtailed ... That the results accruing from this cheap native labour supply have had a profoundly beneficial influence upon the general economic development of the Union is a matter which needs no demonstration.

(Landsdown, pp.5-6)

The Commission neglected, for the most part, to point out the role that the penal contract system had played in creating and organising this labour supply. However it did indirectly draw attention to

the increasing "economic compulsion" being exerted on Africans within the Union and the High Commission Territories. It reported that in 1931, when the average period spent in a term at the mines was 10.88 months, the average period spent at home between terms at the mines was 8.1 months. By 1943, the term spent at the mines had increased on average (despite fewer long-term contract workers) to 13.6 months, and the period spent at home between terms had declined to 7.6 months. This was clearly the result of rural proletarianisation of the peasantry which, the Commission showed, was operating differentially:

Even at the present time 36% of the British South African natives on the mines indulge in a Reserve residence of twelve months and over between periods of work. This percentage no doubt represents the more well-to-do class who only work when there are special money needs to be satisfied, as the vast majority of natives did previously ... however ... 81.3% of these natives arriving in the compound of the WNLA have been on the mines before; of this reduced number 7.96% had only been away for a stay in the Reserves of one month; 6.17% for two months, and 6.53% for three months. Thus, in all, 16.8% (20.6% of 81.3%) of the total British South African labour force have returned to work after what may be regarded as no more than a holiday visit to the Reserves.

(ibid, pp.15-16; Native Economic Commission para 816...)

The effect of these processes was to reduce mining costs, specifically the costs of recruitment which at this time amounted to an equivalent of half the cost of food per shift. Moreover, because of the relative stagnation of other sectors of the economy, and because the 50% foreign labour component which persisted on penal contract was a protection against wage increases, the increased use of South African and High Commission Labour did not increase wage costs.

As South Africa recovered from the depression, the rate of rural proletarianisation did not match the labour demands of an expanding economy. Agriculture, mining apart from the gold mines, strategic industries during the Second World War, manufacturing industry, were all demanding their quotient of the labour supply, and were not all in a position to bid for it on the competitive labour market. The recruiting organisations of the Chamber therefore turned to "tropical" labour. After a conference in 1938 with the Governors of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland WNLA had been given recruiting facilities in these territories. In that year only 15,405 "tropicals" were recruited; but subsequently WNLA was able to establish its own recruiting stations. And by 1953 it had reduced the acclimatisation period for new recruits from 26 days to 8.

In the decade immediately following the war (1946-1956) two major new gold fields were opened up - the Far West Rand and the Orange Free State.

As new mines were developed, the labour requirements of the industry rose. Since the Nationalist Party which had come to power in 1948 was concerned to redirect indigenous black labour to agriculture, the indigenous shortfall in the labour supply to mining was increasingly taken up by foreign labour:

59% in 1946 and 65% by 1956. The shortfall from South Africa and the High Commission Territories was compensated for by increases from Mozambique; while the increase in absolute numbers came almost entirely from the "tropical" areas. (Cf Table V). In this period foreign labour was clearly given preference: the Froneman Commission found that "although, in terms of an arrangement between the authorities of the Protectorates and the affiliated mines, the NRC is entitled to recruit an unlimited number of workers in these territories ... in practice a form of quota operates according to whether or not the supply of labour from 'tropical' Africa and from Mozambique is sufficient."

There was an additional factor leading to the preference being given to foreign labour in this period. The expansion of manufacturing in South Africa, occurring at a time when new gold fields were discovered led to renewed fears about labour shortages in South Africa. This resulted in the introduction of labour saving techniques in the new mines. Mechanical loaders and cactus grabs were used for the first time, while large scale refrigeration units and ventilation systems were also introduced. (Some of these devices were also a response to specifically new geological problems). This mechanisation, along with absorption of labour from older mines that were closing down helped to hold down the absolute demand for labour. But it also demanded less turnover in the labour force than existed in the 1940's under the predominantly AVS system. Though the wage system included greater differentials by 1954 the predominant form of extending the period of stay remained, as in the pre-war years, the coercion of a lengthy contract. In 1960 figures from the Anglo-American Corporation, the group controlling most of the new mines and the largest employer of labour, including foreign labour, show that Mozambique workers remained for 413 shifts at a stretch and "tropicals" for 383 shifts; while High Commission and South African workers stayed for only 245-8 shifts on average. In contrast to 1942, moreover, AVS recruits formed, in 1960, only some 31% of South African and High Commission workers recruited by the NRC.

This trend of policy, however, was abruptly challenged in the early 1960's. Independence for African states, and increasing repression in South Africa as symbolised by Sharpeville and the banning of the African National Congress created a new political framework within which the mining industry had to find its labour.

FOREIGN LABOUR AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GOLD MINING INDUSTRY

In December 1958 the first All-African Peoples Conference called on African states to withhold labour from the South African mines; in October 1960 the Government of the (then) Tanganyika announced it would end the 1959 agreement between the British government and the WNLA. In March 1961, when the Tanganyika labour quota was due to reach 12,000, supplies ceased. Zambia introduced a similar policy in 1966. These actions posed a serious threat to the post-war strategy of the Chamber of Mines and its recruiting organisations. Most groups argued

for an intensification of recruitment activity in the areas outside South Africa to which WNLA still had access. But Anglo-American, which was the largest employer in South Africa, and had significant investments in other African countries pressed for a policy regarding mine wages which would allow an increase in NRC recruitment within South Africa. As previously stated, South African workers, who had the choice of employment in manufacturing and other sectors of the economy, could only be recruited to the mines if better conditions and higher wages were offered. The differences within the Chamber could not be reconciled and, in 1962, as a direct result of the pressure exerted by independent African states, Anglo-American broke with the Chamber's labour policy.

The Anglo-American approach was not due to the self-proclaimed "progressive" policy of its Chairman, Harry Oppenheimer. The underlying reasons relate back to the question of mechanization on the post war mines. Most of these were owned by Anglo-American, and tended to be based on a higher level of technology, working a higher grade of ore than most of the other mines. In general productivity was higher on these mines, a fact clearly reflected in the profit levels at the time, which permitted Anglo-American's vast expansion of investment in other mining and manufacturing industry. Anglo-American therefore had the greatest interests in a reorientation of labour supply; but this was resisted by the other mining groups, whose mines tended to have lower grades of ore, and lower productivity owing to lower levels of mechanization. However, though Anglo-American broke with the Chamber, it continued to rely on foreign labour paid at the low rates laid down by the Chamber on its lower grade low productivity mines. On its high productivity mines it instituted a different wage structure.

Real wages on the South African mines rose marginally more during the 1960's than the 1950's. (Table IV). Frances Wilson remarks that "By the mid 1960's it was claimed by some that the maximum permissible average had been entirely abolished while others within the industry said that it remained as a sword of Damocles over the heads of any mine which bid up wages too high ... However with the subsequent reduction in the risk factor (regarding foreign labour) due it would seem to the successful development of South Africa's new 'outward' policy, the pressure on increasing the supplies of South African workers ... were considerably eased, and the gains of the early 1960's were not consolidated by further wage increases for black workers in the years that followed." What seems to have happened is an increase in the South African component in the early 1960's, and then a return to a situation of an increasing foreign component (principally Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi) in the second half of the 1960's. (See Table V). It is not clear to what extent Anglo-American began to employ a larger component of black South African labour: indeed by 1974 it had a higher component of South African labour (26%) than any other group, but by this time all groups were increasing their South African labour supply. For the Free State mines it would seem natural that Anglo-American should have drawn considerably on Lesotho.

A comparison of wage differentials at the time of the Lansdown Commission in 1943 and in 1965 following the Chamber agreement of 1963, show that differentials within the total black labour force in 1943 stood at 250% but by 1965 they had more than doubled to 550%. If the labour force is divided among the most

highly "skilled" (top 15% of the labour force) and the remainder, the following trends emerge. In 1943 there was a 140% differential between the lowest (2/6 per shift) and the highest (6/- per shift) rungs within this fifteen per cent. By 1965 there was a differential of 110% between the lowest (81c per shift) and highest (167c per shift) rungs within the top twenty-two per cent. In 1943 the differential in the lowest eighty five per cent of the workforce is 35% between the bottom (1/9 per shift) and the top (2/4 per shift). In 1965 the differential in the lowest paid 78% of the black labour force is 200% between the bottom (25c per shift) and the top (75c per shift). Thus between 1943 and 1965 there was not only a growth in overall wage differentials and a growth in differentials at the top of the "skill" rungs; but also the largest increase in differentials occurred among the mass of the black work force. It can be presumed that a major effect of these latter differentials was to widen the gap between black South African workers and the foreign workers at the bottom of the scale. (Though this might need to be qualified in terms of higher wage levels paid to non-first-time recruits).

These changes in the wage structure did not necessarily mean a higher total wage bill nor a lower rate of exploitation in wages/working profits. Indeed Anglo American had made careful calculations in 1963 prior to the Chamber agreement that, through rationalisation of the existing labour process, the total number of black workers in service could be reduced by 11% and, with only a small increase in capital expenditure, a further 8% reduction could be achieved. In Anglo-American at least, the new wage policy bowed to the pressure of African states and their workforces in South Africa, while seeking to prevent the cost structure of the industry from rising. As a result of such policies the rough index for the rate of exploitation of the total labour force on the mines (white and black workers) which had risen by 0.45 between 1956 and 1961, increased by 0.56 between 1961 and 1966. (See Table VII). Since, in terms of an agreement reached at about this time (1967) between the Chamber and the white Mine Workers Union the white wage bill actually increased by 11%, it is likely that the rate of exploitation of black workers was considerably higher than the above figures would suggest. In general, the rationalisations that were introduced into the labour process at this time resulted in black labour doing more of the work previously restricted to whites (e.g. driving locomotives, handling explosives, and commencing work in an area where no blasting had occurred recently prior to examination of the work area by a white miner). This last named "reform" in fact increased the working day of the black mineworker - and resulted in a substantial increase in the rate of exploitation.

By 1969 the number of AVS workers had fallen to an all-time low of 5%; between 1964 and 1973 the foreign component in the mine labour force rose dramatically from 64% to an all-time high of 80%. The low-wage and high exploitation policy of the mining industry was preserved in a period of economic boom in South Africa through continued dependence on foreign labour, even though pressure from outside had modified the wage-structure, (partly to the advantage of some black South Africans). But the low-wage, high-exploitation policy could not fail to meet resistance by both foreign and black South African workers.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF FOREIGN LABOUR
IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINES

In recent years rising inflation in South Africa has cut into black miner's living standards considerably. From 1964 to 1969 the consumer price index rose by 13.3 points while the minimum black wage rose by 6c from 34c. From 1969 to 1971 the consumer price index rose by 11.1 points, and the minimum black wage by only 2 cents. In 1971-2 the c.p.i. rose by 6.9 points, and the minimum black wage by 8 cents a shift to 50 cents. These falling living standards stimulated workers resistance. The first admission of such resistance by the mine owners occurred in October 1972 as a result of a strike at the Soyer mine in the Cape, at which 140 miners (including 20 Mozambiquans) participated. This resistance precipitated a series of increases of mine wages (see Table IV) between 1972 and 1974; by 1974 minimum black wages per shift had more than trebled to R1.60 per shift (which still left them below the poverty line). But neither wage rises nor police repression stemmed the tide. Between 1973 and 1975 there were 33 cases of worker resistance reported, which left at least 130 black miners dead and resulted in about 50,000 breaking their contracts and returning home. Minimum wages were increased again in 1976 to R2.50 a shift. Yet in 1976 a further 4 cases of worker resistance were reported, involving about 5,000 workers.

Other factors were involved in worker resistance. In March 1973 Anglo-American introduced a new differentials scheme, which led in September to the shootings at Carletonville as black machine operators resisted the narrowing of their differentials. In 1975 the Chamber introduced a unified method of job evaluation which could be applied to all mines in the hope that this would "avoid workers playing off one employer against another".

Wage increases won by the workers need to be examined within the overall context of the mining industry as a whole; that is, they need to be related to questions of profitability and productivity. The gold price has undergone important changes following the establishment of a market price. Between 1969 and 1972 - the year the first major wage increase was paid - the gold price rose from R26.13 per fine oz. (official) to R39.6 per fine oz. (market). Despite the wage increase, profits rose from R257m to R513m over that period. By 1973 the gold price had reached R60.07, while mining profits rose to R966m; in 1974 the gold price had risen to R107.4 per fine oz. and profits to R1,578m; and in 1975 the price rose to R118.1 and profits to R1,171 million. (See graph on gold price fluctuations). Only in 1975 did wage increases for black workers begin to bite into profits.

As in the 1930's, this rise in the gold price, and the new lease of life for the mining industry, is occurring in a situation when the South African economy is in severe recession, and when African unemployment within the country is increasing and is estimated at about 2 million. Moreover, as in the early 1960's, there are renewed external pressures for the withdrawal of foreign labour. The strategy of the mining companies has been taking account of the current recession and rapidly rising internal black unemployment; as well as the renewed external pressures on the foreign labour force by African states.

Since 1974 a number of measures have been taken by the recruiting organisations, the mining industry, and the Pretoria regime, to secure a larger South African labour force in particular from the Transkei, which is the area of highest rural unemployment. In November 1974 the regime scrapped the restriction according to which miners had to return home on completion of their contracts, and according to which internal recruitment had to occur only in the Bantustans. This clearly facilitated urban recruiting. By 1974 64 recruiting stations were opened in South Africa, including in the urban areas of Soweto, Germiston and Benoni. A public relations exercise was undertaken by the recruiting organisations, with the co-operation of Bantustan leaders. Though various inducements to take up longer contracts were offered by March 1977 the MLO general manager reported that the South African recruits were in general opting only for a six-month contract "which calls for long and costly retraining of those that have been away from the mines for some time. However the tendency is towards the South Africans to stay longer and returning after shorter lay-offs, thus maintaining the supply of trained workers. On some mines, the average stay has improved to between 13 and 14 months." Again the situation of the 1930's is repeated: a shorter de jure contract which acts as a "sweetener" exerts a compulsion because of the level of proletarianization and unemployment in South Africa. From 1973, when foreign labour reached its peak of 80% of the labour force, it fell to 75% in 1974, to 67% in 1975, to an average 57% in 1976, and to 52% by March 1977. Foreign labour is once again bearing the brunt of the depression, and being used chiefly to "smooth" the seasonal labour supply from local sources.

However, the threat to the supply of foreign labour and the increases in wages have prompted a more long-term appraisal by the Chamber of Mines. In 1974 R150m was set aside for a ten-year research programme into developing new techniques of production. "But that will be chicken feed" according to the Chamber's director of mining research, Dr Neville Cook, "compared with what the mines themselves will probably spend during the next decade on machinery we plan to develop." Dr Cook estimates this will be in the region of R500m. This programme to revolutionise the mining labour process has been launched amid a good deal of propaganda put out by the Chamber about the enormity of the potential labour-saving technical breakthroughs that are likely to emerge from the research. Such propaganda is designed no doubt to intimidate the workers. However the problems facing the Chamber in this respect are large and need to be carefully examined.

(1) The vast majority of the producing gold mines in South Africa at present are mining a relatively low grade ore which is buried in extremely hard rock and which lies in narrow broken seams very deep underground (SA gold mines are in fact the deepest in the world). Under these conditions it is extremely difficult to introduce new capital-intensive techniques of production underground. This is because mine passages and haulage systems are constructed on the basis of particular technologies and any major reorganisation of the technological systems employed must involve major disruptions to and re-development of existing operational areas. Thus fundamental changes of technology are very rarely introduced on older mines. (This refers to mechanization, rather than to the rationalization of existing techniques, as in the 1960's and 1970's).

To what purpose then is the present research of the Chamber directed? In fact at fairly low-level modificatory technical changes. For example, the much publicized rock cutter which is being developed in South Africa can only have a major impact on changing the total labour process if it is accompanied by mechanized roof supports, new methods of roof bolting and of cleaning and removal of ore. But for these to be introduced an almost total reconstruction of existing tunnels, clearing spaces etc. is necessary; thus the rock-cutter would largely be employed at a reduced capacity.

Other areas of research are: in the development of new methods of tunnelling, new methods of stoping (e.g. Panzer conveyor), other methods of rock-breaking (e.g. slot cutting, the swing-hammer, the hydraulic hammer). Some are in the testing stage, but at least another year or two will pass before they become generally available. These may increase productivity, and hence wage differentials and the rate of exploitation, but they will not seriously diminish the mining companies' reliance on a large supply of black labour.

As regards new mines, or new shafts sunk on old mines, the situation is of course very different. One can expect such mines to be designed according to the requirements of a more highly developed labour process, the machinery and equipment for which, will come largely from American sources.

(2) There is, however, considerable room for modifications to the existing labour process based on some of the new techniques being introduced. These can open the way to (a) variable (but relatively small-scale) reductions in the absolute size of the labour force, which would increase black unemployment in the region (b) increasing wage differentials among black workers (c) increasing productivity and an increase in the rate of exploitation of black workers.

Any reduction in the absolute size of the black work force gives the recruiting organisations more room to manoeuvre regarding the sources of the labour supply; and also acts as a deterrent to those workers in employment to resist the exploitative system.

Regarding wage differentials, it may be noted that whereas in 1965 only 29% of the black labour force on Anglo-American mines were categorised as semi-skilled, by 1974 (after the introduction of a new method of job evaluation) 50% of Anglo American's black underground workers were in this category, suggesting that modifications to the labour process combined with new methods of job evaluation have increased the scope for changes in job grading and wage differentials. The new method of job evaluation chosen by Anglo has subsequently been adopted by the remainder of the mining industry. It has been pointed out that evaluation of pay scales along the lines of the Chamber methods is based on responsibility, skill, effort, and conditions, with the two former categories assigned as weighting more than double the latter two. Such an approach, degrading the "skilled" worker and the "responsible" supervisor, can act as a powerful divisory force among workers.

Much has been said on productivity by mine management. JCI, Union Corporation, and General Mining claimed productivity increases of 35-40% per man in 1974. Some of this no doubt

came about through rationalisation of existing techniques of production (e.g. scientific work measurement, and complement setting) and some elementary small-scale mechanisation (e.g. modifications to mechanical scraping techniques), but much of it was in fact a result of transferring black workers from previously unproductive to productive employment. Following the rise in gold prices, for example, development (i.e. unproductive work) was reduced and some black workers were switched to collecting and sweeping up leftovers and dust (i.e. productive work) which had been uneconomical to mill until that point.

Other illustrations of increasing black productivity underground arose out of the agreement reached between the Chamber and the white Mine Workers Union in June 1973. In general the agreement allowed white miners to delegate more work to Black supervisors which meant that time underground could be more productively spent. In particular, black supervisors were allowed to inspect working areas themselves even after blasting had taken place. This change meant that the waiting period, often as long as two hours, before the white miner arrived to carry out the inspection was removed and an extra two hours production time gained. Also trained black miners were now allowed to point out the position and direction of holes to be drilled without waiting for a white miner, as well as being able to prepare primers and press home charges. These and other arrangements were accompanied by an R80 per month increase for white miners but did not involve a wage increase for black miners; thus increasing the rate of exploitation of black mine-workers. The ratio of white to black wages, which has fallen from 17:1 in 1972 to 13:1 in early 1973, rose in consequence to 16:1.

From the above analysis it is possible to piece together some ideas of the future strategy of the mining companies and the Chamber of Mines.

New mines and new shafts are wherever possible using the very latest technological methods to reduce the absolute size of the black labour force. Techniques of production on existing mines are being rationalised and modified to reduce, wherever possible, the absolute size of the black labour force and to increase the productivity of the existing workers. These changes are being introduced by the mine-owners in an effort, firstly, to reduce the heavy dependence on foreign African labour and, secondly, to divide the existing workforce.

Higher productivity through mechanisation or rationalisation means that higher wages can be paid (without reducing the rate of exploitation) which is of assistance in recruiting South African as opposed to foreign workers. The rising proportion of South African workers on the mines follows the increases of the last few years, but has led to increasing unemployment/deportation/repatriation of foreign workers.

The intensification of wage differentials among the black labour force as a whole means that it is possible to train **workers from South Africa**, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland at higher wages for more skilled positions, while continuing to employ workers from further north for lower-skilled and lower-paid jobs. The advantages of this for the Chamber are not only that the former group of workers are likely to return to the mines sooner and therefore their training is not so "wasteful",

but it also perpetuates a clear and potentially explosive division between "southern" and "northern" workers on the same mine where, with a little encouragement from white workers, the "southerners" can be seen to "command" and "exercise authority" over the "northerners", while the "northerners" may be perceived as "stupid" by the "southerners". (These divisions have already played a part in the so-called faction fights on the mines; though equally foreign and South African workers have combined collectively to resist their employers).

In 1974 the mining houses with the highest complements of "northern" workers were Rand Mines, General Mining, Anglovaal, Goldfields, and JCI (see table 8). The mines which these mining houses control are in general low grade ore producers (Table 8). The significance of this is that a situation exists where "northern" workers are increasingly concentrated in low grade mines which are labour intensive and therefore have a low average wage structure; while workers from South Africa and Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are absorbed by the more capital-intensive high-grade ore mines which have a higher wage structure. In this way high grade ore mines which have a long life and are major long-term profit earners, are able to reduce their dependency on "high political risk" workers from the "north" and can afford to devote more time to training South African and other labour which is more likely to return; while low grade ore mines can benefit from the longer contracts of "northern" workers. When the short-life low grade ore mines are exhausted the unemployment problem is exported to the neighbouring countries; reducing overall dependence on "northern" workers and on "foreign" workers in general.

At present the clear emphasis is on the reduction in the overall numbers of Mozambiquan workers. It would appear that this is being achieved not only by increased domestic recruiting, but attempts to increase the number of workers from countries regarded as friendly to the apartheid system such as Rhodesians.

WORKING CONDITIONS

All African workers on South African mines are regarded as production units. The totality of conditions under which they are recruited, "trained", work, live and are finally returned to their area of origin, is scientifically calculated by employers to maximise the amount of profit, and to minimise the ability of miners to struggle against their exploitation and so drive up the cost of labour. The careful, scientific managerial calculations to optimise profits, rest on a system of migrant labour, coercion in the compounds, and the propagation by management of a "tribal" ideology based on a distorted version of the Southern African reality.

The rates of exploitation of African labour have been roughly indicated in the section on wages (Table 7). Here we wish to sketch the total set of conditions under which African labour is exploited on the mines and to outline the structures of coercion and control which operate.

In 1969, foreign African labour was $1\frac{1}{2}$ times more expensive to recruit than South African labour. This added

cost is recovered in a longer contract. The minimum contract available to foreign African workers is 12 months (compared with 4 months for South Africans under the Assisted Voluntary Scheme) and the maximum, 18 months. Foreign workers on the South African mines generally spend longer periods on contract than do South African miners, and are thus exposed to the conditions of exploitation and oppression over more protracted periods.

From the moment of recruitment, the conditions experienced by African workers reproduce the apparent total power of the employer to regulate every aspect of their daily existence, and the corresponding appearance of powerlessness amongst workers. Humiliation is an important aspect of the employers' strategy of minimising the ability of African workers to struggle collectively against their exploitation. It begins on recruitment when batches of workers are stripped naked for examination by stethoscope. Two similar examinations follow on arrival at the mine.

Most contract miners have no choice of a preferred mine. They are allocated a particular mine according to the needs of the employers. On arrival, workers are graded by 'aptitude tests' into potential "boss boys", semi-skilled workers and those "fit" only for unskilled jobs. A "training period" from 4 - 8 days introduces basic procedures and safety measures and the bastardised "Fanakalo" spoken in the mines. To avoid loss of production through heatstroke, recruits were formerly "acclimatised" by working at shallower levels underground. With mechanisation, there is little productive work to be done here and recruits now spend 4 hours a day for 8 days, stepping on and off a bench 24 times a minute, in a steam room of 32°C (90°F).

There are two aspects to the coercion and control of African miners - above and below ground. Ninety-nine per cent of African workers are housed in fenced off compounds (now called "hostels") of between 2,400 and 7,000 men. In compounds built before 1939, beds are not provided and workers sleep on concrete bunks. The number of men per room ranges from 12 (in compounds built after 1945) to 90 (in compounds built before 1914). In 1969, 71% of Africans were housed in the newer compounds and 15% in the pre-1914 type.

The "tribal" ideology enforced by management is most pervasive in the compounds. Workers are segregated along "tribal" lines. Strict discipline is enforced through a "tribal" hierarchy. An isibondo maintains discipline and allocates cooking and cleaning duties in each room. Every 20-30 rooms fall under the control of a "tribal representative" known as a "police boy". They walk a beat, carry sticks and enforce discipline. These men are extremely unpopular. On some mines, their rooms are set alight during periods of workers resistance. Topping the pyramid of each "tribal" group, is an induna who reports directly to the compound manager. These employees live in separate flats, and dispense much patronage. There are further aspects of control beyond these strict "tribal" hierarchies. Mine management acknowledges that an extensive network of informers exists, reporting to both the compound manager and the South African police. The Anglo-American Corporation admits that it maintains its own private army, equipped with a helicopter, tear gas vehicles and police dogs.

The policy of feeding workers reveals very clearly their status as productive machines. Food has caused much conflict on the mines. In 1969 employers spent only R0.15 on food per man. It has long been a demand of African miners that they be paid this sum and feed themselves. However, employers argue, that their diet has been carefully calculated by the Chamber of Mines to keep workers fit and productive for the hard manual work underground.

The system of direct coercion operates underground. Physical violence is the most common form of enforcing labour discipline to maintain high productive levels. The manacling of "disorderly" men to fixtures is common practice. Most African gangs on the gold mines are supervised by white contract workers whose own wage depends on the total output of the gang. This encourages the use of direct compulsion by the supervisor to force his gang to work harder, and to raise his wage. These rates of pay for white contract workers are used to establish pay scales for other white miners, and so set the pace of work throughout the entire mine.

African miners work 6 days a week for 26 shifts each month. The daily shift is the 8½ hours spent at the rock face. With travelling time to and from the surface, the average time spent underground is 10 hours a day, and very often much longer. African workers often have to wait underground for 4 or 5 hours beyond the end of their shift, before being raised to the surface. It is not uncommon for African workers to miss the last cage to the surface and have to sleep underground until the next shift.

Mining is hard, dangerous work. African miners work as deep as 4,000 metres (13,000 feet) underground, in temperatures reaching 50°C (120°F). The average height of the stopes in which they must work is just over 1 meter (3½ feet). Workers have often to lie on their backs and hold the drills against the rockface with the pressure on their feet. The echoing noise of the drills is deafening. Drilling and blasting keep a constant film of dust in the air and there is the ever present danger of rockfalls, pressure bursts, flooding, gas explosions, and other accidents.

To get some idea of the working conditions with which those actually mining the gold have to cope, it is perhaps easiest to start thinking of a road labourer digging up a pavement with a jackhammer drill. Now imagine him doing that work thousands of feet underground, in intense heat, where he cannot even begin to stand upright, and where the drill is not going with the aid of gravity into the ground underneath. Add to this picture the noise of the road drill magnified several times by the confined space; dust ... which invades the lungs and the possibility that the roof of the mine may cave in under sudden pressure, or that a spark from a drill or a careless cigarette may ignite a pocket of methane gas, and one has some idea of the work of a 'Machine boy'

(Francis Wilson, Labour in the South African Gold Mines, p.73).

Accident rates are very high, particularly on the newer, deeper gold mines of the Orange Free State. Despite the

technical progress claimed by the mining companies accident rates are double those in most industrialised countries, and compare unfavourably with the rates in African countries such as Zambia and Kenya.

Comparison in Mine Safety - 1973

	<u>Fatal Accidents per 1,000 Employed</u>
United Kingdom	0.43
United States	0.49
France	0.69
Federal Republic of Germany	0.69
Zambia	0.71
Kenya	0.80
South Africa	1.07
Gold Mines - African	1.57
Gold Mines - White	1.05

Source: Ellis & Friedman, The Depressed State of the African Population under apartheid in the republic of South Africa.

The four years 1972-1975 saw an average of 27,539 accidents each year. In gold mining alone over the past 10 years, there have been an average of 3 deaths per shift. Between 1936 and 1975, approximately 22,306 African miners were killed on the gold mines alone. The total number of African deaths on all types of mines over this period is not available, but a rough calculation based on the figures for 1972-1975 (when the accident rates were comparatively low) produces a very conservative estimate of 28,500 Africans killed, compared with 1,900 whites (see Table 9). Similarly, there are no figures for the total number disabled by accidents, but the same calculation on the 1972-1975 figure gives a conservative estimate of 1,022,000 Africans and 80,000 whites disabled between 1936 and 1975. These figures cannot be broken down to indicate the area of origin of African workers killed or disabled on the mines. Compensation for disablement stood at a lump sum payment of R1,228 for Africans in 1969, whilst whites received an annual disablement pension of R1,800.

There are other physical dangers associated with mining. Heatstroke is common. Nobody has ever bothered to measure the damage to hearing caused by the shattering noise of rock drills - ear plugs are not generally issued. But the combination of heat, draughty damp tunnels, and dust, is the biggest killer. Dust in the lungs induces silicosis and pneumoconiosis, which render the sufferer vulnerable to tuberculosis. Given the migrant labour system, nobody knows how many Africans throughout Southern and Tropical Africa have died from these diseases, but, in 1936, the life expectancy of white miners with confirmed pneumoconiosis, was five years. Between 1964 and 1967, an average of 5,930 Africans on all mines were certified as suffering from "compensatory lung disease". South African Members of Parliament were told in 1973, that in the Transkei region of South Africa, "tuberculosis has reached epidemic proportions, affecting almost one quarter of those surveyed". African miners suffering from pneumoconiosis combined with tuberculosis were paid a lump sum compensation of R576 in 1967, whilst white miners received an annual average pension of R1,230. There is little provision for aftercare. African miners sufferings from tuberculosis are kept in mine hospitals for three or four weeks, and then sent home with antibiotics and the address of an often

distant clinic where they can obtain more. The journeys to these clinics are difficult, and most cases relapse. Again, it is impossible to obtain any reliable figures, but if South Africa's Transkei is any indication, the rural areas of Southern and Tropical Africa are full of tuberculosis cases caused by the dust on South African mines.

In this context of a total work environment designed to render workers as powerless and exploitable as possible, and reduce to the minimum their capacity for collective action against this exploitation, no right of collective organisation or bargaining exists. Historically, a form of African worker organisation has been met with violent repression by management, backed by the full repressive apparatus of the South African state. The strike of African mine workers in 1946 met with savage police terror and left 1,248 workers wounded and a large number killed. In the wake of the police shooting and killing 11 African workers at their Western Deep mine in September 1973, the Anglo American Corporation has sought to defuse workers demands through the establishment of "works committees" on some of its mines. These are designed to "improve communication" between management and workers. They do not give African workers the right to organise collectively. In the wave of unrest on the Anglo mines, they were abandoned by both sides.

One response of African miners has always been to risk prosecution for the breaking of an employment contract and simply leave their employment. Over the past four years however, the South African mines, but particularly those in the Orange Free State, have been shaken by violent unrest. Neither the mining industry nor the Pretoria regime have released any official figures about the number of workers involved, or the casualties. The Report of a commission of enquiry into these events was suppressed by the regime. However, from press reports, some conservative estimates can be made. Between September 1973 and June 1976, one hundred and twenty-two African workers were killed and over 700 injured in 48 separate incidents ("riots") on 41 gold mines alone, employing over 220,000 African workers. There were an additional 17 incidents on 16 coal, platinum, copper, diamond, manganese and asbestos mines, in which at least 56 African workers were killed and almost 300 injured (see Table 10). Again, reliable statistics on the number of African workers involved in these incidents are impossible to obtain. Of the total of 66 incidents, one report lists 55,320 workers involved in just 28 of these incidents. A total of 520 workers were arrested and/or charged with inter alia illegal striking; intimidation of persons in relation to their employment; failing to obey an employer's lawful command; assaults on police; murder; public violence; and incitement to violence. Of the 186 workers reported by the South African press to have appeared in Court, there have been reports of 20 acquittals and 44 convictions - 20 for staging an illegal strike (sentenced to 80 days imprisonment) and 24 of public violence (sentences range from 18 months to 3 years).

As a direct result of these events, at least 26,500 workers were repatriated at their own demand to Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Rhodesia before their contracts expired. This represents a new form of withdrawal of labour by foreign workers on the gold mines. At least 20 of these 66 incidents were reported in the South African press to have been the direct result of wage disputes - the most notorious being the police

shooting to death of 11 workers at the Western Deep Mine in September 1973. Most others have been dismissed by mine management as "faction fights".

This hoary claim about "faction fights" between workers of different "tribal" background, deliberately obscures the real nature of the conflict, and the issues involved. A number of points are significant here. Firstly, on many of the mines shaken by so-called "faction fights" there is much evidence of "cross tribal solidarity" in earlier wage disputes, despite the system designed to divide African workers; secondly given the nature of the migrant labour system in Southern Africa, the issues involved in these disputes often affected African workers in different ways, and so caused conflict between them. The divisions could be further aggravated by the differential experience of the restrictions of compound life. The sexual frustration engendered by the compound system was a crucial factor in the "faction fights" at the Welkom mine. Lesotho workers were more easily able to develop relationships with Sotho women in the nearby Thabong township. Sexually deprived Xhosa workers made sporadic attacks on Lesotho workers and their women. The failure of the compound manager to protect these Lesotho workers coupled with the antagonisms roused in earlier disputes led to the mass reprisals of the "faction fights" and the large scale repatriation of Sotho workers.

That the so called "riots" were a form of struggle against conditions of exploitation, is shown most clearly in the targets attacked by the workers. In all situations, these were the persons and symbols of their exploitation and oppression. Apart from acts of industrial sabotage, informers and indunas have been attacked and their rooms and flats burned. "Recreation centres", administration blocks and store rooms have also been systematically destroyed in these incidents.

Given the dangers of their work, and the coercive conditions of their total existence on the mines, African workers are subject to physical violence for their entire period of employment. Mining management is only just beginning to attempt to develop sophisticated techniques of labour control through "personnel management". At the moment, direct violence and coercion are the predominant forms of control, while mining management desparately employs all the 'scientific' methods of the Chamber of Mines' "Human Resources Laboratory" in an attempt to discover why "tribal" and "unsophisticated" African workers should have reacted so violently in the past few years. This system of scientific calculation coupled with an enforced "tribal" ideology and organisation, treats African workers as "the enemy", to be humiliated, cowed, coerced and above all, exploited.

FOREIGN LABOUR IN OTHER SECTORS

As has been described in earlier sections, foreign labour has been introduced to South Africa to take up the worst paid and most oppressive work in the country. Though concentrated in the mining sector, workers recruited from outside the borders have been eager to move into better paid employment in the manufacturing industry, or less arduous work in domestic service. This struggle for better wages and conditions by transferring out

of the mining sector has been met by the resolve of the state to channel migrant labour, and in particular, foreign labour into the sectors where indigenous black labour has been reluctant to work, particularly in the agricultural sector. In some cases foreign workers have been able to turn their employment in undesirable sectors to their own advantage, by accepting employment in agriculture, for instance, and then using this employment as a stepping stone to better employment opportunities.

A recent study of migrant labour, both indigenous and foreign, in South Africa demonstrates the extent to which foreign Africans have been channelled increasingly into the low wage sectors of industry:

Estimated Distribution of migrants by industry outside
"Homeland" Areas - 1970

	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	<u>SA Africans</u>
Agriculture	8	13
Mining	80	9
Manufacturing	3	20
Construction	2	10
Trade and Finance	1	8
Transport	-	1
Services	3	26
Public	3	13
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

(Sources: Natrass SAJE 44(1): 76)

Natrass further demonstrates how foreign black labour is compressed into the low wage sectors.

	<u>Foreign Africans</u>	<u>All SA Africans</u>
Low Wage Sector	91	48
High Wage sector	9	52
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

The pressure on foreign workers in non-controlled sectors (i.e. in employment in which there is not a close supervision in a compound system) has undoubtedly increased as the pressure of labour shortages on the farms has eased during the 1960's. The rapid mechanisation of South African agriculture brought changes in rural employment patterns and reduced tenants and many farm workers to complete destitution and impoverishment. With a growing pool of unemployed in the reserves, the state has been able to apply control over foreign labour with greater severity. According to the 1946 census, 60% of foreign African men were employed outside the gold and coal mines, but by 1970 only 28% were employed outside the mining industry.

Foreign workers are not confined to the gold and coal mines of the Chamber of Mines group. From the inception of the platinum, copper, chrome, and iron ore mines after the First World War foreign workers have formed the major component of their labour force. Because of the low wages offered in the platinum, chrome, and iron ore mines very few indigenous workers work in the mines in Rustenburg and Pilansburg districts and the local workers prefer to work in the towns and industries. The local mines (iron, chrome, platinum) were all begun after the

first world war, and have affected the local population but little, as their labour is drawn from other parts of the Union and outside'. (Department of Native Affairs, 1953 Ethnological Publication No. 28, p26g). By 1949-50 there were a considerable number of foreign workers on these mines although the total number of mine workers fluctuated constantly between 9,100 and 11,600

Platinum, chrome, and iron ore
mines 1949-50

Botswana	590 - 980
Lesotho	937 - 1,460
Rhodesia	337 - 558
Zambia	671 - 1,095
Malawi	3,422 - 4,447
Mozambique	290 - 435
Tanzania	45 - 70

There is a paucity of information on foreign labour in base mineral and metal mines in subsequent years but in 1961 the Froneman Commission reported that on 30th June 1961 there were 48,646 (41.6% of total labour force) foreign workers in non-affiliated mines i.e. those gold, coal, base mineral and metal mines not affiliated to the Chamber of Mines. Of these 30,467 were employed on the gold and coal mines and 18,179 on the base mineral and metal mines. The Commission noted that in most areas foreign Africans formed a smaller proportion of the total labour force than in the case of affiliated mines, a reasonable deduction since the Chamber of Mines was formed to organise the recruiting of foreign labour for South African mines. The exception to the observation was The Witwatersrand (71.1 per cent foreign workers) and Western Areas (54.8 per cent). Of the foreign workers employed on these non-affiliated mines 16.3 per cent came from Mozambique, 12.6% from Lesotho, 4.5% from Malawi, and 1.4% from Swaziland. The others came from Zambia, Tanzania, Angola and other African countries. What evidence there is of wages in non-affiliated mines suggest that their wages are below those of the Chamber mines. For instance in Natal the wages on the coal mines varied from R9.00 to R10.30 per month in 1961 while the average wage on the gold mines was just over R12 per month.

The tighter application of labour control made possible by the Bantu Labour Act of 1964 and regulations issued in terms of this legislation enabled the state to take action against foreign workers employed in the non-mining sectors. Furthermore, the number of foreign African women fell sharply over this period, thus suggesting that during these years foreign Africans were channelled into predominantly mine labour, while foreign African women were increasingly denied access to South Africa.

By 1970, 77.9% (352,520 workers) of the total foreign black labour force was employed in mining and quarrying, thus leaving a relatively small proportion, 22.1% (100,380 workers) employed in other sectors. Of these, the largest number were concentrated in agriculture, fishing, hunting and forestry, 9.8% (44,720 workers). Community, social and personal services (basically domestic service) was the third largest employer of foreign African labour: 4.7% (21,280 workers) followed by manufacturing: 2.6% (11,680 workers), construction: 1.3% (6,100 workers), commerce, catering and accommodation: 1.2% (5,460 workers), electricity gas and water: 0.2% (900 workers),

and financing insurance and real estate: 0.15% (700 workers); 0.3 per cent were in unspecified jobs, and 0.55% (2,520 workers) unemployed. (Statistics from Statistical News Release 11 December 1972).

The degree to which the intention to channel foreign workers into the mining sector has succeeded is evidenced by the overall changes in the pattern of employment.

Between 1960 and 1970 the total number of workers from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland fell by 32% from 431,000 to 294,000. During this period non-mining foreign workers fell by 156,800 while mining employment increased by 19,800.

MANUFACTURING AND SERVICES

For foreign workers the manufacturing sector which has offered significantly higher wages than mining in the post-war period and certain sectors of services (excluding domestic service) have been considerably more attractive than mining or agriculture. These sectors are also those over which the state has exerted increasing controls in the post-war period and the major advances of foreign workers took place during the massive expansion of these sectors during the war years. In subsequent years there has been a tendency for the number of foreign workers in these sectors to remain fairly constant or to decline.

Economically active foreign Africans

	1961 (30 June)	1964 (30 June)	1970	1973	1976
Building Industry	3,000	3,677	6,100	8,378	8,818
Manufacturing	16,000	11,101	11,680	11,652	12,575
Government Services	16,000	11,840	--	9,856	11,265
Commerce and Finance	20,000	13,136	--	8,727	4,241

(Sources: Froneman, Leistner 1970 census, House of Assembly Debates 1st November 1974).

The workers who have been able to secure employment in these sectors have a greater chance of becoming urbanized workers in South Africa as they have been able to find accommodation outside the compound system in many cases although these possibilities are now considerably more limited. Those who did not manage to get rights to accommodation in the 1940's and 1950's are now very unlikely to find any other accommodation than the hostels. In 1961 the Froneman Commission found that the children of foreign workers had the same legal rights as those of indigenous workers and could thus qualify for residential rights. By 1961 a number of foreign Africans had qualified for accommodation: 11,700 in the Transvaal, 1,235 in the Cape Province, 2,216 in the Free State, and 173 in Natal. The Froneman Commission found that the foreign black workers who were most successful in gaining urban rights were those from the former High Commission countries, who constituted 80.6 per cent of all foreign Africans housed by local authorities.

AGRICULTURE

The problems of assessing the position of foreign workers in agriculture is also that of the indigenous black workers in South Africa. Agricultural employment statistics in South Africa tend to confuse casual labour with regular labour and often fail to separate domestic service from statistics on women workers in agricultural employment. The statistics on foreign workers employed in agriculture are likely to be even more imprecise than those of indigenous black workers for a number of reasons. During the 1960's when the state was tightening up controls over African workers in general and foreign workers in particular, it was likely that farmers were not likely to provide full and comprehensive information on the employment of foreign workers, and the workers themselves would not be likely to want to expose themselves to summary controls.

Despite these strictures important generalizations can be made about the employment, wages, and working conditions of foreign workers in agriculture.

Employment of foreign labour in agriculture

1961 (30 June)	270,000
1970	44,720
1973	22,770
1976	16,648

(Sources: Froneman 1970 Census, House of Assembly Debates 1st November 1974)

The tendency for employment in agriculture to fall is undoubtedly substantiated by the figures, although it is doubtful that these figures include categories such as casual workers. The massive decline in agricultural employment from 1961 to 1970 has to be tempered by doubts over whether casual labour was included in the 1961 figure; but the trend is substantiated by the subsequent decline in the following years.

Foreign black labour has been associated with the inception of the plantation agriculture in South Africa. At the same time as recruiters were pleading for the importation of indentured labour from India they were also making calculations on the number of workers which could be recruited from Mozambique. During the 19th Century there was an organised flow of black workers from Mozambique into the sugar plantation economy of Natal, a flow which was strategic to the future of the low-wage industry during the gradual phasing out of Indian labour on the sugar plantations. The flow of labour to the immediate south of Mozambique has not been without its complications, and in 1928 the recruitment of Mozambique labour for sectors other than the mining industry was specifically prohibited. Despite this, labour from Mozambique continued to be employed on the sugar plantations particularly during an outbreak of malaria in the early 1930's as these workers were regarded as immune to malaria. By 1935 there were estimated to be between 5,000 - 7,000 workers from Mozambique (between 40 - 50 percent of the total labour supply) employed in the sugar industry and employers were arguing how they could best be distributed to ease regional labour shortages caused by a wage cut and competition from the gold mines. The workers from Mozambique were preferred to local labour because they worked for longer periods and did not take off weekends and Mondays.

The Native Farm Labour Commission reported in 1939 that despite the Immigration Laws, large numbers of Mozambique workers were coming via Zululand to the Natal cane fields. By the 1940's their position had been regularised with the Portuguese authorities. With the spread of malaria control and a change of policy in the early 1960's which permitted non-mining organisations to recruit labour the controls over labour were tightened considerably. Workers from Mozambique are still being employed in the sugar industry despite fears expressed by the large companies which dominate the production of sugar, of Frelimo activities and influence finding their way south.

The other country which has provided South African agriculture with labour during periods of labour shortages is Lesotho. From the 1970's and earlier Basotho workers have been sought after by South African farmers and the bulk of the foreign workers registered as being in agricultural employment are probably from Lesotho which is situated close to important agricultural regions in the Orange Free State.

During the 1950's when the agricultural sector experienced severe labour shortages and a prison labour system was devised to meet the needs of wine and potato farmers, the state attempted to channel increasing numbers of foreign black workers onto the farms. Potato farmers particularly in the Bethal organised themselves into a recruiting organisation which drew heavily on foreign labour and in the 1950's on convict labour. In the Bethal potato growing area workers were housed in compounds in semi-slave conditions and overseen by brutal foremen. During the 1950's the workers for these farms were also drawn from the urban areas in the form of convict labour and vigorous protests were made by the African National Congress against this use of forced labour and a boycott of potatoes was organised.

Despite the rapid growth of the reserve pool of labour in the late 1960's and the removal of the last remnants of the farm tenant system, according to a survey of the South African Agricultural Union there was a shortage of 141,000 regular male farm workers in 1969 in capitalist agriculture. To a large extent this labour shortage at the level of wages paid on the farms is an explanation for the persistence of foreign labour in the agricultural field and explains the state's reluctance to terminate the flow of foreign labour to rural areas.

CONCLUSION

We have tried to show the evolution of this abhorrent institution; an institution that lies at the very heart of the South African socio-economic system.

The African National Congress has never been ambiguous in its attitude towards migratory labour. We see migratory labour as one of the major methods that successive racist regimes in our country have developed for the purpose of exploiting the African peoples not only of South Africa, but of the Southern African region while simultaneously immobilising them socially and politically.

We have always fought against migratory labour and continue to do so.

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