

# Coal, Control and Class Experience in South Africa's Rand Revolt of 1922<sup>1</sup>

Peter Alexander

The Rand Revolt, the culmination of major strikes by white workers, was a pivotal event in South African history. More than 200 lives were lost, the workers and their unions were crushed, and an era of working-class militancy was brought, abruptly, to a close. Defeat led, in March 1924, to the passage of an Industrial Conciliation Act that further bureaucratized the mainly white unions and institutionalized a deep divide between these organizations and African workers. It also, however, produced a reaction against the prime minister, General Smuts, who was removed from office in the general election of June 1924. For historians, the revolt, and the strikes preceding it, present an enigma. Why was it that whites, a relatively well-paid elite, were so militant, whilst the majority of the workforce, poorly-paid Africans, did not strike at all? This question raises broader, theoretical issues, particularly those concerning the relationship between class and race in South Africa.

Much has already been written about the main body of strikers, those who worked on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand (or Rand),<sup>2</sup> and this article approaches the puzzle from a different perspective. It is concerned primarily, though not purely, with a smaller group, the strikers who were normally employed on the collieries of the Highveld (i.e. the Transvaal and Orange Free State).<sup>3</sup> Although the stoppage by these colliers triggered the related action on the (gold) mines, it has attracted little more than an occasional, passing reference. Given the centrality of gold to the South African economy and the magnitude of events on the Rand, this overshadowing of the coal strike is understandable. It is, however, regrettable, and reflects a much larger lacuna. South Africa is the world's third largest exporter of coal, and its gold and other industries are dependent, as they were in the 1920s, on the provision of cheap, coal-derived power. Yet, almost nothing has been written about the history of coal mining on the Highveld, the country's principal coal-producing region.<sup>4</sup> This article addresses this omission, an ongoing concern of the author's, where it intersects sharply with another long-term interest, that of attempting to understand the meaning and character of *class*.<sup>5</sup> It begins with a brief theoretical consideration of white wage-earners in South Africa, then proceeds via an account of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Highveld coal mining, to the strike itself. The conclusion emphasizes the employers' drive for unfettered

control over production, and considers the salience of "class experience" in an analysis of the strike.

## The White Wage-earner

During the 1970s there was considerable debate about the class nature of white labor in South Africa. Three approaches emerged. The first regarded all white wage-earners as part of a working class. There were variations on this theme, but many, including that presented by F. A. Johnstone (1976), distinguished between free white labor and forced black labor. Johnstone specifically included gold miners as part of a white working class (along with, and less controversially, the artisans and semi-skilled whites who were also employed on the mines). A second line of argument — one proposed by writers influenced by Nicos Poulantzas (particularly 1973) — treated white wage-earners as members of a middle class. Howard Simson claimed that white miners were analogous to foremen, regarding them, especially in his earlier work (1973, but see also 1980), as a stereotype for all white wage-earners. Similarly, Rob Davies (1979:25) included "the white working class proper," together with "the 'more manual' fractions of the new petty bourgeoisie" (including white miners), as part of his principal analytical category, the "white wage-earners." This umbrella grouping — which the middle-class elements appear to have dominated — is justified on the grounds that its two constituents shared a "common definition in terms of ideological class practices."

A third stance was that adopted by Harold Wolpe (1976), who drew, in particular, on the work of G. Carchedi (1975). Wolpe criticized other writers for exaggerating political and ideological determinants of class — notably "race" — at the expense of relations of production. He argues against the blurring of class differences between, on the one hand, productive workers, and on the other, that part of the new middle class responsible for the "control and surveillance" functions of capital. Wolpe declined to "spell out the South African class structure" (1976:224), but the implication seemed to be that miners — who, by the 1920s, were chiefly labor supervisors — should be regarded as part of the new middle class (albeit at the bottom end), while

skilled white workers were part of the working class. This position seems far more satisfactory. First, in my view, it accords with Marx's own understanding of class (see also de Ste. Croix, 1981:42-63; Callinicos, 1987). Secondly, and crucially, whilst either of the first two approaches might, with some license, explain the events of 1922, they cannot account for black and white workers uniting as members of a single working class, as in the 1940s (Alexander, 2000). Nevertheless, one can sympathize with Wolpe's vagueness, for a problem remains. How does one assess a situation where one section of the middle class fought a bloody battle against another, while a part of the working class allied itself with elements of the middle class, apparently against the majority of workers?

To the best of my knowledge, the empirical justification for Wolpe's analysis was not provided, and from about 1980 there was a marked shift in the concerns of South African labor history. The new approach, social history, was guided, in particular, by E. P. Thompson's antipathy to seeing class as "structure," viewing it instead as, "something which in fact happens" (1968:8). Although some writers continued to regard "structure" as significant (e.g. Marks and Rathbone, 1982:8), this was generally as a backdrop for understanding conflict and culture, and others considered that "class," in any form, lacked analytical merit (e.g. Harries, 1994). Perhaps "structure" had become sterile and dull; certainly "consciousness" has provided a fascinating source of historical enquiry. I am left, however, with my questions, and left wondering whether social history has the ability to provide answers. Perhaps it can, for Thompson's rejection of "structure" was not complete, and, at least in principle, he recognized the importance of "class experience" (which "is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born — or enter involuntarily") (1968:9). Arguably, insufficient attention has been paid to "class experience," which has, I feel, the potential to provide a valuable, if necessarily shaky, bridge between "structure" and "consciousness." With these thoughts in mind, we turn to consider our case study.

### Coal, Gold and Capital

The Highveld was blessed with a huge reserve of coal, much of it in thick layers close to the surface. In the Witbank district, the main seam had an average height of about 20 ft. 6 in. (though only the lower 6 ft. to 12 ft. was worked), and that seam was nowhere more than 300 ft. below ground level (Graham and Lategan, 1931:13; Coulter, 1930:244). Initially — perhaps because of the part played by British mining engineers — shaft mines were constructed. However, given the depth of the coal, slope mines were more practical, and by 1931 only two out of 14 Witbank collieries had vertical shafts (Grout and Lechmere-Oertel, 1958:493; Graham and Lategan, 1931:26). Moreover, the roofs of the working areas were normally firm and reliable, making it unnecessary to worry about timbering (which could be a substantial expense) (Heslop, 1924:171). Whilst Highveld coal was not as high in quality as some of that produced in Natal, seams in the latter region were thinner, further from the surface, more broken, more disturbed by igneous intrusions, and more prone to dangerous fires

and explosions (Edgecombe and Guest, 1987:50-51). However, despite enormous natural advantages, commercial exploitation of Highveld coal only really took off after the growth of gold mining on the Rand.

With the added advantage of close proximity to the new market, the Transvaal was soon producing more coal than Natal. By 1893, when coal output from the various South African territories was 0.8 million tons, 72.8 percent was already coming from the Highveld, and in 1921, when the country was producing 11.4 million tons, 69.0 percent came from the region (Census and Statistics, 1920:592; 1936:545). At first, the main area of output was on the East Rand, where coal was sometimes situated directly above a gold-bearing reef. In 1892 the Brakpan Colliery produced more coal than the whole of Natal, but it ceased production in 1908, and by 1921 the East Rand mines were employing less than 7.9 percent of the region's colliers (Grout and Lechmere-Oertel, 1958:487,491; Mines and Industries, 1922:12). From 1904 the well-endowed field around Witbank, 90 miles east of Johannesburg, became the major area of coal production. Witbank was connected to Johannesburg by rail in 1895, but a much shorter link was completed in 1906, and this further boosted production. In 1921 the Witbank district was producing 45.5 percent of all South African coal, and it was employing 62.4 percent of all Highveld colliers (Transvaal Mines, 1904:10; Mines and Industries, 1922:12).<sup>6</sup> There was also a third field adjacent to Vereeniging, 35 miles south of Johannesburg, and a fourth one in the Eastern Transvaal.<sup>7</sup>

In 1920 23.8 percent of all marketed Highveld coal went directly to the gold mines (Coal Commission, 1921:65-66). In addition, the mines were the major purchaser of electricity produced by the Victoria Falls Power Company (VFPC), which, in turn, took 15.5 percent of marketed output. A further 19.1 percent went to sundry other industries and domestic customers, and, one assumes, most of these patrons were also linked to mining in some way. The state — mainly through South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H) — was a second powerful influence on the coal industry. SAR&H not only provided Highveld collieries with their single largest buyer, taking 25.4 percent of coal in 1920, it also provided them with their main means of transportation. The state-owned monopoly was in a strong position, and in 1921, even though the rate for transporting coal from Witbank to Delagoa Bay was reduced from 17s 3d to 6s 6d per ton, this still doubled its price (which was only 6s 1d per ton at the pitheads) (Mining Industry Board, 1922:35-36). The observation of a leading coal owner, made some years earlier, that, "the railways have reaped a greater benefit from [carrying] coal ... than the owners of the pits from the sale of their output," was, doubtless, still valid (W. Dalrymple, 1907, in Christie, 1984:40).<sup>8</sup>

Notwithstanding the high cost of railage, the remaining 16.1 percent of Highveld coal went to export and bunkers (Coal Commission, 1921:65-66). This trade had been developed by the Transvaal Coal Owners' Association (TCOA), which had standardized supplies of Highveld coal. The TCOA had been established in 1907 by the region's major companies to, as they put it, "stop the severe and

ruinous competition between [them]" (quoted in Mendelsohn, 1989:1; see also, Graham and Lategan, 1931:80-83). Although run as a limited company it was, in fact, a cartel; coal was sold at a fixed price, and each colliery, if it was a member of the association, received a quota of total sales. In 1920 it was responsible for 88.1 percent of the region's marketed output (Coal Commission, 1921:65-66).

The absence of competitive marketing reflected a broader phenomenon, for, as Richard Mendelsohn has shown (1989:10), the industry was conspicuous for its "high degree of monopoly and collusion." A comparison with the coal industry of Alabama — chosen because it has many similarities with that of the Highveld (Alexander, 1998) — is instructive. Whereas, it took about 246 collieries and 136 companies to produce Alabama's 1918 output, the respective figures for the Highveld's output, very roughly half as much, were about 34 and 20 (Unsigned, 1920; Coal Commission, 1921:65-66; Alexander, 1997:Appendix 2).<sup>9</sup> The relatively large size of the Highveld's collieries — which, in 1921, employed an average of 492 workers (more than five times as many as in Alabama) — was probably linked to advantageous geological conditions (Alexander, 1998:2-3; Census and Statistics, 1936:545; Alabama, 1921:40). The region's comparatively small number of producers was, in all likelihood, also related to patterns of investment and organization that predominated in South Africa. Diamond extraction had long been controlled by one company, and the powerful Transvaal Chamber of Mines (TCM) co-ordinated the six or seven mining houses that dominated the gold industry. Ownership, moreover, provided a further link to gold mining. In 1920 the coal group with the largest output was owned by Lewis and Marks, which also had gold interests (though not on the Rand), and three of the Rand's major mining houses — Corner House, Anglo-American and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments — owned Transvaal collieries (Alexander, 1997:Appendix 2).

The gold industry's hold over the collieries also existed in yet another mode, labor supply. In 1900 the Chamber of Mines had formed the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, usually called Wenela, to improve recruitment of cheap African workers. The following year, as a consequence of the *modus vivendi* between the new British rulers of the Transvaal and the Portuguese, Wenela secured a recruiting monopoly in Mozambique (Katznellenbogen, 1982:57), and it was soon supplying "Portuguese natives" to the collieries as well the mines. As S. C. Black, a colliery representative to Wenela, explained, support for the collieries was because of, "the importance of the coal output to the Gold Mines and the desire of the latter to avoid competitive recruiting." Significantly, access to Wenela recruits was extended to Orange Free State collieries, which also supplied the mines, but not to Natal's collieries, too distant to provide cheap coal. In 1908 Wenela agreed to supply 60 percent of the collieries' requirement for "native" labor, and by 1918 this had been extended to 90 percent; though the quota was officially reduced to 80 percent in 1920, for most of the 1920s more than 82 percent of the collieries' African workers came from Mozambique (Wenela, 1945). Later,

William Gemmill (1939), by then Wenela's General Manager, distinguished between South African workers, who, he said, were "induced" to work for the collieries, and the Mozambicans who were "compelled" to do so.<sup>10</sup>

In 1913, at the Mozambican border town of Ressano Garcia, there was nearly "an absolute mutiny" when recruits were informed that they were destined for the collieries, rather than the mines (Wenela District Manager, 1913). Wenela, concerned that poor conditions on the collieries might jeopardize all supplies of Mozambican labor, drew up an agreement on minimum conditions of employment. This concordat, along with the general history of African colliery labor, will be the subject of another paper, and its details need not delay us here. Suffice to say, Wenela enforced its conditions by means of twice-yearly inspections and the threat, sometimes enforced, of restrictions on allotments of labor (Working Conditions, 1919:5; Wenela, 1914; Alexander, 1998:note 36). In the course of discussions over the agreement, which was only accepted in July 1914, the colliery owners pressed their concerns by forming a committee, which came to be known as the Collieries Committee (CC) (Wenela, 1913). In 1918, by which date the CC was also dealing with organized, white labor, it was reconstituted as a sub-committee of the TCM (Gemmill, 1918a). The membership of the CC — which considered matters of common interest, except marketing — appears to have been very similar to that of the TCOA (though not exactly the same), and in 1922 one individual, John Roy, chaired both organizations (Lang, 1995:72-73; Alexander, 1997: Appendix 2; K161, 1922: 2233).

So, then, far from being a product of "free market forces," the colliery capitalists of 1922 were a small, tightly-knit group that fixed prices and collaborated closely with their allies in the gold industry to maintain minimal costs of labor.

### Staff, Men and Natives

Mechanization began at a relatively late date in the Transvaal; compressed-air cutters were first introduced in 1904, and electric cutters were probably not used on a regular basis until 1913 (14 years later than in Natal) (Grout and Lechmere-Oertel, 1958:499-500; Graham and Lategan, 1931:35). However, change was swift. In the UK, only nine percent of coal was machine cut in 1913, and by 1920 the total was still only 13 percent (Rowe, 1923:9); and in the US, at the same dates, the figures were 51 percent and 60 percent (*Monthly Labor Review* 36:2, 1931:270). By contrast, in 1911 55 percent of all South African coal was already machine cut, and by 1920 the figure had reached 72 percent; while for the Transvaal the totals were even higher, 60 percent in 1911 and 82 percent in 1920 (Mines, 1912:64; Mines and Industries, 1921:69). Since wages were generally lower in South Africa, it is clear that cheap labor did not necessarily prevent mechanization. Indeed, as the South African Government Mining Engineer noted, "a coal-cutter probably saves forty natives" (1920, quoted in Christie, 1984:21).<sup>11</sup> One might speculate that the extensive and even nature of its seams, late development, availability of capital, and weakness of trade union organization, all contributed to the Highveld's rapid mechanization. Also, in the Transvaal,

work was already fragmented into a range of tasks, and this may have assisted the process.

Most South African collieries used the stall-and-pillar method of extraction, which was also common in the UK and US. In removing the coal, hewers would create a "room" or "stall," about 20 feet wide, leaving behind pillars of coal to support the roof (though these could later be removed, or "robbed," when the face was abandoned). In the UK and US, prior to mechanization, it was general for two hewers, or a miner and his son, or a miner and a laborer, to work together in a room, carrying out all the basic operations — that is, cutting, drilling, blasting, and loading. In the Transvaal, at least by 1910, and probably from the earliest days of the industry, these different tasks were mostly carried out by African colliers, who were specifically designated as "square boys" (engaged in cutting), "drilling boys" or "cutting boys" (Kindersley, 1910). As in the gold mines (but not the Natal collieries), it was a legal requirement that blasting be carried by a miner, who, by definition had to be white. In practice — either through laziness or through overwork — the miner often delegated part or all of his responsibility for blasting to a "blasting boy" (Census and Statistics, 1924:609; *Witbank News*, March 7, 1919). When cutting machines were introduced, it was a relatively simple matter to replace "square boys" with "machine boys" and helpers (usually working under the supervision of a white "machine man").<sup>12</sup>

According to the general discourse — at least that of the whites — the Highveld collieries, like the mines, contained a status hierarchy consisting of three main tiers.<sup>13</sup> At the top there was the staff. This category included the Colliery Manager,<sup>14</sup> as well as departmental heads, such as the Chief Engineer and the Overseer, and junior staff, such as shift bosses, foremen and clerks. Below the staff came the "men" (though this term sometimes encompassed the staff as well),<sup>15</sup> and at the bottom there were the various categories of "natives." The "men" consisted of two main groups, the mechanics (i.e. skilled workers) and the miners; though, as may be seen from the table, there were also some semi-skilled workers, apprentices, etc. Whilst the mechanics (fitters, engine drivers, carpenters, etc.) usually carried out their work with the help of one, or perhaps two, black assistants, the miners' main job consisted of supervising 40 to 100 Africans (far more men than were supervised by gold miners). According to Graham and Lategan (1931:70) a typical coal miner's section might include: one "boss boy," five coal cutters, eight drillers, 20 loaders, and 16 men employed on haulage and other duties. In 1921, of the 21,661 people employed by the Highveld coal industry, 1.5 percent

was classified as staff, 4.5 percent as "men," and 94.0 percent as "boys" (Mines and Industries, 1922:12, Table 7).<sup>16</sup>

These status distinctions related, primarily, to conditions of employment. The staff received a salary (i.e. they were monthly paid), whilst the "men" were paid a wage, calculated on the basis of an hourly rate, and unlike staff, could receive overtime payments (SAIF, 1921a). Salaried employees had greater security of employment than "men" (e.g. Witbank Colliery, 23 Feb. 1900),<sup>17</sup> and they may also have enjoyed better facilities, because Thomas Coulter — who was an assistant manager at Oogies colliery from 1916-24 — refers to a "staff mess" and "staff quarters" (Coulter, n.d.:34).<sup>18</sup> Unlike gold miners — who, if they were contract miners, were paid according to the amount of work their gang completed — coal miners, like mechanics, were paid according to a fixed rate. Unlike most staff and "men," "natives" were generally employed on a temporary basis. Also, their movement to other workplaces was restricted, and, if they were Wenela recruits, they were legally bound to return to Mozambique at the end of their first, or subsequent, contract (which usually lasted for 313 shifts, i.e. a "year"). About 60 percent of "natives" — those engaged on cutting, drilling and loading — were on piece rates, while others received a flat, daily rate (Working Conditions, 1919).

All "natives" were paid less than all "men," but clerks usually received less than miners and mechanics. Minimum pay for an adult "native" was 1s 6d per shift, though those on piece rates might earn up to 2s 8d per shift. In 1921, if one makes an allowance of 1s 2d per shift for the food and quarters that the collieries were expected to provide, the average "native" received about £4 3s per month (Working Conditions, 1919; Welgedacht, 1919?; Mines and Industries, 1922: Tables 7 and 8). This compared with the £39 0s, which was the approximate monthly pay of both coal miners and mechanics, and the £57 10s received by the average Highveld overseer (see Table). The income of colliery managers is not recorded in official statistics, but the average assistant manager received £86 0s per month in 1921, and, about three years later, the highest paid general manager was reputed to be earning about £625 per month (Table; Coulter, n.d.:67). Thus, miners were paid approximately nine times as much as the average "native," whilst receiving only about one-sixteenth the pay of the top manager. In addition, a manager might receive a share of company profits, and he (and possibly other senior staff) had sufficient income to buy stocks and land (Witbank Colliery, July 24, 1902; Coulter, n.d.:41-45, 60-64).

**Major Categories of White Employees on Transvaal Collieries and Rand Mines, June 1921**

	Employed by collieries	Pay (£.s.d)	Employed by mines	Pay (£.s.d)
<b>Staff</b> (pay for June 1921)				
Managers	29	n/a	48	n/a
Sectional or Assistant Managers	6	86.00.00	56	125.13.03
Mine Overseers (Captains)	30	57.10.00	175	80.19.02
Chief Mechanical Engineers	28	53.01.05	47	96.09.19
Mine Secretaries or Business Managers	26	51.03.10	48	89.08.04
Compound Managers	23	45.16.06	62	67.03.07
Shift Bosses	18	51.03.04	663	52.15.04
Foremen	24	45.02.06	554	53.00.06
Clerks	35	32.17.09	763	35.02.10
<b>Paid per shift</b> (pay for one day in June)				
Apprentices	23	7.03	625	10.10
Banksmen	18	19.02	278	24.08
Blacksmiths	59	29.08	231	28.06
Boiler attendants, cleaners and firemen	40	23.10	239	24.08
Carpenters	68	30.01	370	28.04
Electricians	14	30.05	364	?
Engine drivers	73	28.02	1086	29.02
Fitters	77	30.01	813	29.03
Handymen	28	20.00	244	23.03
Learners	16	8.11	81	13.06
Masons and bricklayers	47	30.03	181	28.09
Miners (day's pay)	-	-	1279	29.05
Miners (contract)	-	-	2159	50.07
Miners (coal)	218	30.06	-	-
Screeners	23	23.11	-	-

Source: Mines and Industries, 1922: Table 7. Other large groups of employees on the mines were: Reduction Works Managers (62), Surveyors (187), Samplers (244), Assayers (135), Chief Timekeepers (62), Office Boys (169), Hospital Attendants (110), Police and Watchmen (51), Storemen (58), all regarded as staff, and Boilermakers (276), Drill Sharpeners (363), Mill Shiftsmen and Assist ants (476), Onsetters and Skipmen (551), Pipemen and Platelayers (688), Pumpmen (235), Timbermen (1328), Trammers (1001), and Waste Packers (315), all regarded as workers.

The notion of “native” was usually synonymous with “boy,” though “native clerks” were not necessarily regarded as “boys.”<sup>19</sup> Also, both “boy” and “native” were generally interchangeable with “laborer,” a category that certainly included some machine operators, who, if they were white, were regarded as semi-skilled. It is possible, however, that “boss boys,” “police boys” and “native clerks” — three groups that often lived permanently on the collieries — were not always regarded as “laborers.” On the other hand, “men” — in the sense in which the term has been used so far — implied — “workmen” or “workers,” and these were all “white” or “European.” So, for instance, a mass meeting of strikers, all of whom were white, passed a resolution referring to its participants as both “the workers” and “the men,” and a poster which the CC addressed to these strikers was headed, “Terms upon which Men will be engaged” (*Middelburg Observer*, Feb. 17, 1922; see also, MWU 1922a: Annexure 1). Exceptions can be found, but they tend to prove the rule. Thus, just as the use of “black worker” shows that the concept of “worker” had been racialized, so the use of “monthly paid men” shows that “men” had — for want of a better word — been “classified” (SAIF, 1921a:11, 7; author’s emphases). Also, “men,” might be distinguished from “man.” Hence, a union leader defined an “official” — a concept to which we shall return — as “a man who has

the power to discharge and take on men, and a colliery owner commented: “the man who really deals with the native is the boss boy” (SAIF, 1921a:7; K161, 1922:2268).

There is much that could be said about the gender and generational implications of this dominant discourse, and most of it could be generalized. Here, however, my main concern is to underline the importance of race in shaping the language and thought of colliery strikers. Race meant more than status and much more than color prejudice for it was deeply rooted in huge social and cultural differences. Most African workers were oscillating migrants, who came to the collieries as single men, stayed in compounds, left as soon as their contacts expired, and aimed to settle in a rural home that was located, in most cases, in another country (Alexander, 1998:6; *Working Conditions*, 1919). By contrast, the “vast majority” of white colliers were, according to the local Inspector of Mines, “married men, permanently settled on the properties.”<sup>20</sup> He might have added that most retained, as was expected of them, a black servant, and that, until the practice was banned during the strike, some would have this servant bring them their food underground (Alexander, 1998: note 59). However, he did note, in somewhat whimsical fashion, that, “these men have acquired cows and poultry and live much as they do in an English village” (Trevor, 1915). It seems likely, especially from anecdotal

evidence, that most white employees — whether staff or men — came originally from Britain (though some came via the Rand, which they then left because of the high incidence of silicosis on the mines).<sup>21</sup> Certainly, the culture of Witbank — where most of these men shopped and some of them lived — was very British, and union meetings were, with rare exceptions, conducted in English.<sup>22</sup>

Black and white colliers ate different food, they engaged in different pastimes, they attended different churches, and they had different legal rights (Alexander, 1998:6-7). Also, few white colliers learnt an African language (Shangaan was probably the most widely spoken at this stage), and Sidney Bunting, a leading communist, noted that the inability of blacks and whites to “really exchange ideas as fellow-workers” was one of the major obstacles to the development of a common identity (Bunting, 1922:10). Although he had a point, it would be wrong to regard language as determinant, since common identities did emerge amongst whites (some of whom spoke Welsh or Afrikaans, rather than English), and among Africans (who spoke a variety of languages).<sup>23</sup> For white colliers, contact with African workers was very largely limited to their dealings with subordinate “laborers” and domestic servants. For most “laborers,” their perception of white colliers must have been conditioned by their experience of the miner who supervised their work. Too little is known about this relationship, but there was certainly some ill-treatment. During the strike the Witbank Inspector of Native Affairs recorded a comment by one African worker, who told him that it was “nice and cool” in his colliery, which he interpreted as meaning that there was less “swearing and kicking” than normal (Unsigned, 1922).<sup>24</sup> It is hardly surprising, then, that the skilled workers and supervisors did not deign to include “laborers” in their unions (even in Britain they had not done that!), and that, as far as we know, Africans made no attempt to join.

Although the boundary between “natives” and “men” was never seriously threatened, at least not in this period, that between “men” and “staff” was the subject of two challenges that are central to understanding the 1922 strike. One mainly concerned the mechanics, and the other the miners, and both provide valuable insights into the differing “class experience” of these two groups of employees. The first is revealed in a fascinating set of minutes, those of a meeting between the Mining Department of the South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) and the TCM that occurred on December 20, 1921 (SAIF, 1921a). This appears to have been the last meeting between these two representative bodies before the big strike, but it did not consider the substantive issues, rather it debated “the demarcation of officials.” On both sides of the argument evidence related mainly to the gold mines, though for mechanics — more so than miners — the experience of the collieries was generally very similar, so the dispute is pertinent.

H.O. Buckle, the TCM President, opened proceedings by proposing that, “an official is... paid at monthly instead of daily rates, subject to certain exceptions.” For the unions this was unsatisfactory, mainly, I think, because they assumed the owners would not let them negotiate on behalf of individuals deemed to be officials (who were, therefore,

unlikely to side with them in a conflict). They also scoffed at the idea that a junior clerk or a draughtsman, each paid monthly, might be regarded as officials, and they felt the TCM definition would enable managers to co-opt certain workers by the expedient of paying them monthly. As an alternative, Joe Thompson, for the SAIF, proposed that, “an official is an officer...responsible directly and only to the Manager [i.e. heads of department].” Unlike the shift boss and the foremen, these men had the power to hire and fire and they engaged in negotiations with union representatives. Leaders of the Amalgamated Engineering Union explained that their union had many foremen as members, and although they were not regarded as officials, neither did they participate in the running of their union; in disputes they were represented by head office rather than shop stewards, and in strikes they acted as a kind of “buffer.” In effect, the mechanics’ unions’ leaders, speaking on behalf of “the men,” were trying to make a claim on the loyalty of an intermediary stratum. They were not suggesting that foremen were “workmen” — indeed, at one point, they are referred to as “gentlemen” — and they were certainly not arguing that their members should be regarded as officials.

Significantly, to the extent that the Mine Workers’ Union (MWU) contributed to the meeting it was, very largely, to agree with the TCM’s definition. As the representative of gold and coal miners, it organized people whose main work consisted of supervision. Before the strike, Tom Matthews, one of the foremost union leaders, told Witbank miners: “In other countries a miner was such, but in this country we should have the right of recognition as officials being in charge of working natives” (*Witbank Advertiser*, Dec. 16, 1921).<sup>25</sup> Afterwards, at the hearings of the Mining Industry Commission, Joe Hobson, an English miner who was Secretary of the MWU’s Colliery Section and Chairman of the Witbank Strike Committee argued along similar lines. “We claim,” he said, “the white miner...is only to be compared with a deputy [an official] or foreman in the Old Country” (K161, 1922: 2401). Sir Carruthers Beattie, one of the commissioners, clearly agreed, for he told the colliery owners: “you have no white miners here...[only] what corresponds to the official on the other side [i.e. Britain] and not workmen...they are not really miners but officials” (K161, 1922:2267,2269).

Alex Aiken, representing the owners, told the commission that he accepted that miners were supervisors, but he was clearly contemptuous of them. He said that they owed their existence to the Mines and Works Act (i.e. the color bar), that the companies did not provide them with training in supervision or language skills, and that their status and pay were those of a worker rather than an official (K161, 2267-2269, 2332).<sup>26</sup> It seems likely that this denial of official status — and along with it a denial of respect, job security and higher pay — fueled the miners’ sense of injustice, thereby contributing to the vehemence of the stoppage.<sup>27</sup> That “status” was not raised as a specific demand is unsurprising, for, as we shall see, the strike was a defense of existing conditions. Important, here, is the contrast between the mechanics and the miners. Their different attitudes towards officials surely reflected a different “experience,”

which, in turn, revealed — following Wolpe — a difference between, respectively, members of the working class and a part of the new middle class. Still, though, we must explain their unity.

### Interference

At first, the Rand-based unions that organized the Highveld colliers found that progress was slow. As late as 1910 only one union, the Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association, had formed a branch in Witbank. Four years later the Amalgamated Society of Engineers started another, though within a year this had collapsed, and the union's presence in the district was not firmly established until 1919 (Mines, 1911; *Monthly Journal*, Sept. 1914, Jan. 1915, June 1919).<sup>28</sup> In 1915, when a meeting was held for all white colliers in Witbank, only 44 men attended, and the gathering lacked the confidence to make direct demands upon employers (Crawford, 1915).<sup>29</sup> During the war, however, South Africa's unions grew rapidly; their registered membership increasing from 10,538 in 1915 to 77,819 in 1919 (peaking at 135,797 in 1920) (Simons, 1949:159-160).<sup>30</sup> This was part of an international trend, and even Witbank, in a modest way, was affected. By 1917 there was an MWU branch in the area, though it had not yet been granted autonomy, and during 1918 the SAIF founded a Witbank District (Census and Statistics, 1920:315; SAIF, 1918). From 1918 to 1920 the unions made considerable gains. The CC held annual negotiations with the SAIF, strikes were narrowly averted, and the wages and conditions of white colliers were improved significantly. In particular, the unions managed to secure a substantial reduction in the working week, from 57 hours in 1918 to 48 in 1920 — a major achievement, that was of benefit to black workers, as well as white (Mines, 1918-20; Gemmill, 1918b, 1921).

The 1922 strikes were undoubtedly weakened by their failure to involve black workers, and, in part, this was probably a consequence of white colliers abstaining from the struggles of black colliers.<sup>31</sup> It is possible that the first industrial stoppages on the collieries were a series of walk-outs by African workers that occurred between August and November 1918 (Wenela, 1918; Alexander, 1997:14-15). The following May, Africans at Tweefontein colliery struck again, making "a definite and determined demand" for 10s per day. Ominously for the white colliers, Tweefontein's colliery manager reported: "natives pointed out that [when whites had struck on May Day] the mine was worked by the native alone ... [and they now] wanted to see if the Miners could get the coal without the natives" (O'Brien, 1919). The attitude of white colliers toward these strikes is unknown, though, perhaps, it was similar to that of white gold miners in relation to the 1920 strike by African gold miners.<sup>32</sup> On that occasion, an Inspector of Labour had noted that, "the majority feeling is more one of resentment than of sympathy ... although the bulk of the white workers appear to be of the opinion that the native should receive some consideration in the way of increased salary" (Miller, 1920).

To some extent, the 1922 colliery strike was related to events elsewhere in the world. In 1920, the TCOA had taken advantage of increased international prices to expand export and bunker sales by over 40 percent. The following

year, prices fell, but, as a consequence of an eleven week lock-out of British colliers, the export and bunker trade was only slightly reduced (Coal Commission, 1921:6; Mines and Industries, 1922:22). However, when the British dispute ended in June 1921, it highlighted and intensified a crisis for the Highveld industry that was already looming. Wages on most British coal fields had been slashed; indeed, in the course of 1921, minimum pay fell from 20s 10d to 8s 9d per day (Board of Trade, quoted in Mining Industry Board, 1922:35). Meanwhile, coal prices declined further. To quote a letter that the Secretary of Mines sent to the SAIF on December 10, 1921, "Welsh export coal, which cost about £4 per ton, is now selling at 24s per ton" (TCM, 1922:28; see also, Mining Industry Board, 1922:35) This matter-of-fact approach echoed a broader discourse, conveyed at about the same time by South Africa's Unemployment Commission, which explained that joblessness had its roots in "world conditions" (1922, quoted in Davies, 1979:153). To the modern ear this sounds much like the contention that workers must adapt to the reality of "globalization," and, as with that claim, it masked a more complex reality, one that provided a basis for alternative arguments.

On September 26, 1921 the CC warned the SAIF that the employers intended to implement an "adjustment" in wages (TCM, 1922:18). Initially, it proposed a cut in the general rate for miners and mechanics of 3s, from 30s per shift, justifying this by reference to reductions in consumer prices (CC to SAIF, Oct. 8, 1921, in TCM, 1922:18-19). A year before, the CC had said that the 30s rate was 50 percent above the pre-war level, and thus broadly reflected the increased cost of living, which had risen by about 56 percent since 1914 (CC, 1920; K161, 1922:2309). The employers claimed, prices were only 35 percent above the 1914 figure, so a wage reduction was reasonable. But, objected the SAIF, the employers' figures only covered "food, fuel, light and rent," and if "sundries" were included, as they had been in a recent arbitration award for bank employees, the result would be totally different. Working from the full index — and, after all, workers had to buy clothes as well as food, etc. — the cost of living was now 60 percent higher than in 1914. So then, on the basis of the cost of living argument, pay should be increased rather than reduced (SAIF to TCM Oct. 22, 1921, in TCM, 1922:21-23). The CC was deaf to this line of reasoning, and, early in December, it changed its proposal to a 5s per shift cut in pay (Christie, 1984:65).

Moreover, according to the unions, a cut of 3s per shift would have enabled the coal price to be trimmed by a mere 1d per ton! Surely, they said, there was some other way to finance such a reduction, perhaps the cost of railage — still hefty — could be further amended. The CC, however, showed no interest in the union's proposal of a joint approach to the government on this matter (SAIF to TCM, Oct. 22, 1921, in TCM, 1922:23; K161, 1922:2392; Mining Industry Board, 1922:36).<sup>33</sup> The SAIF also told the owners that if it could be proved that economic conditions really necessitated a decrease in income, this "should begin at the top and not at the bottom" SAIF to TCM, Oct. 22, 1921, in TCM, 1922:23). In 1921 Witbank Colliery had declared a

32.5 percent dividend, and the Transvaal & Delagoa Bay company had announced one worth, in effect, 37.5 percent (Witbank Colliery, 1935; K161, 1922:2322-2323, 2245).<sup>34</sup> The white colliers had not received any benefit from this profit-taking, and they were reluctant to foot the bill when yields declined (K161, 1922:2404). Tom Strachan, a sympathetic Labour Party MP, echoed such sentiment, commenting that Witbank Colliery, "wished to rob the worker[s] of £10,000 in order that they might add 2½ percent to the dividends" (*Daily Dispatch*, Jan. 17, 1922).

Hobson later recalled that at a pre-strike meeting he had even argued that, "if the Chamber proved that the whole 5s was absolutely necessary, to save the industry, I would advise them [the workers] to accept it" (K161, 1922:2400). The unions were not, however, persuaded by the owners' arguments. When asked about the principal cause of the coal strike, Matthews candidly explained that, "the men were opposed to an arbitrary reduction which was not based on any evidence whatsoever" (K161, 1922:2981). The owners' actions appeared to be irrational because of their failure to reveal, at least in public, the primary motivation for the pay cut (which was, in truth, the same concern that underpinned a parallel offensive in the gold industry).

Among the coal and gold owners the real driving force was Sir Lionel Phillips. He was the most powerful of all the magnates, and his group, Corner House, owned Witbank Colliery, the largest Highveld coal mine. In a famous letter of November 23, 1921, in which he revealed that Smuts had accused him of wanting a strike (and in which he responded with a charge of "moral cowardice"), Phillips maintained: "the outlook for getting back to control, discipline and efficiency is better than it has been for years" (letter to R. S. Holland, in Fraser and Jeeves, 1987).<sup>35</sup> The "efficiency" theme was also prominent in the post-strike *Report of the Mining Industry Board*, which claimed: "Interference was carried to such an extent that the men frequently looked to the stewards rather than to managers for directions regarding their work" (1922:19,21). Coulter, who became head of Anglo-American's coal interests in 1945, wrote of the colliery strike (n.d.:63):

Actually it was a lock-out as the Chamber of Mines were [sic] weary and tired of the Mine Workers Union... During [1920 and 1921] shaft stewards and shop stewards were appointed by the Unions and our lives were plagued by constant interference from these stewards which made it quite impossible to carry on operations smoothly. It was a great relief on the 1st January 1922 to get rid of these stewards who were all locked out together with other members of their union.<sup>36</sup>

Phillips, the Mining Industry Board and Coulter were doubtless exaggerating the extent of trade union influence, but their comments disclose the purpose of the CC's provocative stance: to humiliate the unions and reassert untrammelled managerial control over the mining industry.<sup>37</sup>

### Strikes

On November 24, 1921, the SAIF gave notice that it would conduct a strike ballot on the collieries (SAIF to TCM, in TCM, 1922:27). The following day, the CC announced that colliery wages would be cut from January 1st (CC, 1921). By December 9th, a stoppage on the collieries seemed "inevitable," and there was a strong possibility of

action on the gold mines and at VFPC. To make contingency plans, the Minister of Mines and Industries met with representatives of the coal and gold mining companies, VFPC, SAR&H, and the police and army (Christie, 1984:65, citing "Notes of Conference on Threatened Strike"). On December 23 the SAIF and CC met once more. Armed with an 18:1 majority in favor of a strike, the unions asked if a smaller cut might be considered. This was rejected, with one employer asserting that he would not even contemplate a reduction of 4s 11d (K161, 1922:2434, 2295, 2298; SAIF to TCM, Dec. 20, 1921, in TCM, 1922:28). Three days after Christmas the unions proposed to Patrick Duncan, the Minister of the Interior, that the dispute be resolved by means of arbitration. The following day Duncan put this offer to the employers, but they spurned it, arguing that, "the tendency of arbitration was to split the difference in some way," and that this would be unacceptable (TCM, 1922:29; K161, 1922:2232). At this point the government sided openly with the employers, calling upon the unions to accept the full 5s cut (Duncan, Dec. 29, 1921, in TCM, 1922:30). On Monday, January 2, the strike began.

Among the Highveld collieries' non-salaried white employees support for the strike was overwhelming, with nearly 800 men joining the action (Jourdan, 1922; *Middelburg Observer*, Feb. 3, March 31, 1922). Moreover, there was considerable public sympathy. In Witbank the town's mayor chaired a large public meeting, and "Rex" of the *Middelburg Observer* described the mood as follows (Jan. 6, 1922): "there wasn't the faintest doubt but that Witbank to a man, aye, and to a woman too — for there were crowds of women at the meeting — had made up its mind most loyally to support their men on strike." But the strike was confronted with two immediate problems. First, the salaried staff helped to maintain production, not only by continuing their own work, but also, in many cases, by undertaking tasks normally performed by strikers (Christie, 1984:66).<sup>38</sup> Secondly, African employees — who were said to be "simply indifferent to the strike issue" (Bunting, 1922:12) — worked as usual.<sup>39</sup> According to Bunting (1922:12), "the coal mine strikers at Witbank actually advised their native colliers to continue working."<sup>40</sup> Although some strikers had misgivings about this position (Bunting, 1922: 12; Herd, 1966:32), there was not a single instance of violence against Africans during the whole of the dispute. The reasons for the white colliers' position remain obscure, but if they thought they could win without African support, they miscalculated badly. Taking the striking areas as a whole, coal production was lower in January than in December, but only by about 30 percent (*Middelburg Observer*, Feb. 3, March 31, 1922). Given that gold mining was soon halted, and that it was summer, this was probably insufficient to disturb the government or the employers unduly.

From the outset, the fortunes of the coal strike were enmeshed with those of the broader struggle, located mainly on the Rand. The gold dispute, like that in the coal industry, involved the TCM on one side and the SAIF on the other. Hobson, the principal leader of the coal strikers, had been present at the meeting which agreed to ballot for strike action on the Rand. This meeting, held on December 30th,

had also agreed to “augment” the SAIF’s executive by adding one representative from each affiliated union, and it was this Augmented Executive that accepted the wording of the ballot paper (and provided the official leadership of the strike) (SAIF, 1921b, 1921c). The first issue mentioned on the ballot paper was: “Refusal of the Coal Owners to arbitrate on the proposed reduction of wages” (TCM, 1922:9).<sup>41</sup> The timing of the Rand strikes was probably determined, at least in part, by the fact of the coal stoppage. The termination of the Status Quo Agreement — the main issue at stake in the gold industry — was not due to occur until February 1, and without the coal dispute this would have been the obvious moment to start a strike (TCM, 1922:9). In the event, however, more than 20,000 employees of the gold mines downed tools from January 10 (and they were joined, soon after, by white workers in the power and engineering industries, bringing the total number of strikers to over 22,000) (Johns, 1995:130; Walker and Weinbren, 1961:125).

During January attention focused on a government-initiated conference chaired by Justice Curlew, which spent most of its time considering the coal dispute. At one point the Chamber proposed a cut of only 2s 6d, pending the outcome of a conciliation board. However, it was unwilling either to be bound by the board’s findings, or to find work for all returning strikers, and consequently its proposal was rejected when put to a mass meeting of Witbank strikers (*Daily Dispatch*, Jan. 23, 1922). On January 26, discussions at the Curlew Conference reached deadlock, and the colliery owners announced the immediate sacking of all striking colliers (*Daily Dispatch*, Jan. 27, 1922). On January 31, the Witbank strikers were given a boost when General Hertzog, the leader of the National Party opposition, who was passing through the town, stopped off to express his sympathy (Insp. Kennedy, in K4, 1922:577). But there were also a number of blows. On February 13, it was reported that employees on the Natal coalfields had agreed to a wage cut of 3s 6d, and two days later the Highveld collieries posted notices stating that only “suitable applicants” would be re-employed (*Daily Dispatch*, Feb. 14, 16, 1922).

Following the reopening of the gold mines in mid-February, there was an increasing level of violence on the Rand, and from February 17 there were instances of intimidation in the Witbank district. These seem to have been directed against individuals whose scabbing was regarded as particularly distasteful. On February 22, in imitation of their comrades on the gold fields, the Witbank strikers formed a commando, which involved up to 110 men in anti-scabbing activities, drilling, and probably some acts of sabotage (Insp. Kennedy, in K4, 1922:578-580; Coulter, 1963:41-42; *Daily Dispatch*, Feb. 27, 1922; Unsigned, 1922). On February 23, following the capture of a train driver by the Witbank commando, Hobson and other leaders were arrested. Then, in order to prevent their fellow strikers from rescuing them, these leaders were transferred to Middelburg jail (Insp. Kennedy, in K4, 1922:578-579; *Daily Dispatch*, February 25). Although some men returned to work, the majority held firm (Jourdan, 1922; *Daily Dispatch*, Feb. 4, 21, March 5, 1922). The *Middelburg Ob-*

*server* contains a number of reports of large strike meetings, most of them held at the Witbank Carlton Hotel (which must have been a lively place, because it also provided a headquarters for both the strike committee and the police). At some of their meetings, the strikers sang the “Red Flag” — surely an unusual sound in Witbank — and, as late as March 4, a 400-strong meeting voted to continue the strike until the very end (*Middelburg Observer*, Feb. 24, March 10, 1922).

On the Rand, events were moving speedily to a climax. On March 4, the Chamber declared that it would no longer recognize the Federation “for any purpose” (TCM, 1922:15-16). Two days later the Joint Executives of the Federation’s unions were confronted with two proposals. One, from the Augmented Executive, recommending a ballot on whether to return to work, and another, from a meeting of the Central Strike Committee, calling for a general strike. The latter motion had been initiated by a Committee of Action — half of whom were members of the Communist Party — which, together with the commandos, mobilized a 5,000-strong demonstration outside the Joint Executives’ meeting (Johns, 1995:137-138).<sup>42</sup> The general strike proposal was carried, but there was little time to make the action effective before a major “race riot” broke out in areas to the west of Johannesburg.<sup>43</sup> There is a possibility that the riot — which was particularly severe on March 8, when eight Africans and one white man were killed — was initiated by *agents provocateurs* (Bunting, 1922:26-27).<sup>44</sup> The next day, Smuts declared Martial Law, deploying armed forces, regular and irregular, which were already well prepared. The so-called “revolt” was really a defense of the Rand’s working-class districts against superior forces (which included aerial bombardment). In Witbank, Coulter led a squadron that immediately rounded up the workers who had intimidated him during the strike, then re-arrested Hobson and the strike committee (Coulter, 1963:42).

The result of the armed conflict was a foregone conclusion. By March 15 the military operation was over, and the following day the Augmented Executive called for an immediate termination of the strikes. Official word of the fight’s end reached Witbank the following day, and “Rex” told his readers: “St. Patrick’s Day 1922 will long be remembered on the Rand and at Witbank too as the day upon which peace was declared after the most fearful industrial struggle which South Africa has ever known” (*Middelburg Observer*, March 24, 1922). The outbreak of “peace” was on terms which, for the unions, were worse than those demanded back in December. Derecognition was extended to individual members of the Augmented Executive, and even to those, like Hobson, who were deemed to be “associated” with the executive (Gemmill in K161, 1922:2501-2504). Moreover, a high proportion of union members was victimized. The unions claimed that, whereas, in October 1921, the collieries “belonging to the Chamber” employed 781 whites (excluding staff), in May 1922 the figure was roughly 400, and the MWU produced detailed figures showing that, in April 1922, 210 of their 397 colliery members were without jobs (MWU, 1922a:12; MWU, 1922b). As on the Rand, the strikers had been humbled. Wages of

gold, as well as coal, employees tumbled, the SAIF collapsed, and the mine owners “got back to control.”

### Conclusions

In the wake of the strikes, the government appointed a board of enquiry consisting of a judge, the Government Mining Engineer, a university vice-chancellor, and a rather conservative trade union official from Britain.<sup>45</sup> Although verbatim minutes show that the board (or commission) was sometimes irritated by the coal owners,<sup>46</sup> predictably, perhaps, its final report largely exonerated these men. Specifically, it accepted the contention that falling world coal prices justified a 5s pay cut (Mining Industry Board, 1922:35). As the Transvaal Legal Defense Committee observed (c. 1922:37): “they [the commissioners] speak on the plain assumption that the prosperity of the Mine Owners was the same thing as the welfare of the community.” The board made only one rather mild criticism of the coal bosses. Implying that some of the union leaders were “none too bright,” it argued that greater effort should have been taken to explain the need for reduced wages (Mining Industry Board, 1922:36). Reading the large pile of documents generated by the enquiry, one is actually struck by the ability of the union leaders, especially by their dissection of the CC’s statistics. It was, perhaps, convenient to blame events on, as a modern politician might put it, a “failure of communication,” but the causes of the conflict were more fundamental.

Trapped by the narrowness of their own intellectual frameworks, the commissioners could not bring themselves to consider whether the government should have set a more favorable rate for railage, or whether the coal owners should have been willing to tolerate reduced profits, or even whether it was reasonable to expect the coal employees to meekly accept a frontal attack on their organizations and livelihoods. Yet these were all important features of the dispute. More broadly, in attempting to understand the stoppage in relation to the history of coal mining, two themes emerge. First, the industry developed mainly in relation to gold mining on the Rand, and in 1922 the owners of both industries — sometimes the same people — acted with a common purpose. That is, their aim — and the chief cause of the strike — was to prevent any “interference” in what they perceived as their right to absolute control over production. The declining world price of coal provided the colliery owners with a justification for their action, and it probably acted as a catalyst, but it was not the principal cause of the strike. Secondly, the trade unions were defeated by their own failure to reach out and involve the overwhelming majority of the workforce; a weakness which had its roots in the enormous and manifold gulf between their members and African workers. Seen in this light, the white collier appears not as villain, nor as hero, but as a tragedy of history.

What, though, of our initial concerns with “class”? Following Wolpe, it is proper to regard coal miners as part of a new middle class, with mechanics and semi-skilled whites as part of the working class. However, in order to comprehend the behavior and consciousness revealed in this case study, an analysis of class structure will not take us very far.

We also need an account of class experience. Alex Callinicos (1987) argues: “The effect of heightened class struggle will be to split the [new middle class]. Those more directly involved in exercising the function of capital ... are likely to move towards the bourgeoisie. But those below them would in all probability go the other way.” This is precisely what occurred in this instance, though specific factors were significant. Whilst coal miners were treated as if they were workers, they were, in reality, supervisors, a middle-class occupation. In Britain, from where many of the miners originated, they would have been accorded, as they thought they should have been in South Africa, “official” status (i.e. recognized for what they were, part of the middle class).<sup>47</sup> In this instance, status connoted, in particular, respect, job security and higher pay, and it is hardly surprising that, especially for the coal miners, tension between class and status should have been a source of militancy. When coal miners described themselves as workers they were not defining their class location, they were recognizing their existing status, and communicating their interest in uniting with *actual* workers (thus improving the odds of aligning status with class). Moreover, their income and living conditions were the same as those of the mechanics, the trade union traditions of the two groups were similar, and their working practices were not entirely different.<sup>48</sup>

There was also the chasm between black and white colliers. In part this is explained by old-fashioned “sectionalism,” of the kind that discouraged white colliers from Natal acting in solidarity with those of the Highveld (and, in many respects, these two groups had more in common than black and white colliers on the Highveld). Even so, the experience of class was profoundly shaped by that collection of realities — social backgrounds, conditions of employment, jobs, political rights, accommodation, culture, and so on — defined here as “race.” These cemented the relationship between mechanics and miners, and divided both from “laborers.” In addition, the fact that for African workers the principal experience of white “workers” was the coercion of the coal miner, must have militated very strongly against the development of a common working-class identity.

If the crux of this strike was, as has been argued, an assault by the owners of the collieries on the collective organization of those it regarded as workers, there can be little doubt that this was, first and foremost, a case of class warfare. This may be obvious, but sometimes one must state the obvious (lest it be lost in a mist of peculiarities, complexities and cleverness). However, if we are to appreciate the timing of the stoppage, who joined which side in the battle, the ideology of the combatants, and the outcome of the conflict, then we need to understand how class was practiced; how it was shaped by race and status, organization and politics, economic process, international influences, past battles, and much more. There is much to be said, it seems to me, for a revival and an exploration of the Thompsonian notion of class experience.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This article is a revised version of a paper (Alexander, 1997), presented to an American Historical Association Conference and to the Comparative Economic History Seminar held at the London School of Economics. It

has benefited from comments made by participants at both these events, from observations by an anonymous referee, and from subsequent discussion with Caroline O'Reilly and Andrew Strouthous. Research was conducted while the author was a Research Fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford, and made possible by a grant from the Oppenheimer Fund. The author is grateful for all assistance received.

<sup>2</sup> For recent contributions to the literature, see Krikler (1996 and 1997), Johns (1995), Hirson (1993). This paper has also drawn on accounts contained in Cope (1948), Hessien (1957), Walker and Weinbren (1961), Herd (1966), and Johnstone (1976). The author also consulted Judicial Commission (1922), Mining Industry Board (1922) and the fine collection of contemporary pamphlets, press clippings and ephemera held by the Johannesburg Public Library.

<sup>3</sup> The principal exception is a paper by Mendelsohn (1989), most of which was subsumed within Mendelsohn (1991). Lang (1995) contains interesting data but is dependent upon, and largely uncritical of, a limited range of sources. I am following Mendelsohn on my use of the term "Highveld."

<sup>4</sup> In 1994, Mpumalanga, one of the new provinces carved out of the old Transvaal, was responsible for 84.6 percent of South Africa's saleable coal output (Perold 1994/5:45). With regard to coal mining in the smaller Natal field, see particularly Edgecombe and Guest (1985) and Guest (1994). See also Beall and North-Coombes (1983) and Stoner (1994).

<sup>5</sup> This interest in coal is partly because it provides a good opportunity for a comparative consideration of South Africa's economic and labor history. See, for instance, Alexander (1998). On class see Alexander and Halpern (2000).

<sup>6</sup> In 1889 there were four small collieries in the Witbank district, but they could not compete with the East Rand colliers. By 1910, however, the district was already producing 41.4 percent of the country's coal, which was rather more than the whole of Natal (Graham and Lategan, 1931: viii, 85; Census and Statistics, 1920:593). Because Witbank fell within the Middelburg magisterial district, the coal field was sometimes known by this latter name.

<sup>7</sup> The Vereeniging field straddled the Vaal River, the boundary between the Transvaal and the Free State, thereby contributing to the integration of the two provinces' coal industries. During 1882 Sammy Mark's colliery in the area supplied coal to Kimberley, but the project ran into difficulties, and it only recovered with the development of gold mining and the coming of the railway (Mendelsohn, 1991:26-29, 45-48). By 1921 the Vereeniging district was probably the second most productive on the Highveld, though this is not clear from official statistics, which give figures for the East Rand, Witbank, other areas of the Transvaal, and the Free State. In 1921 "other areas" employed 17.8 percent of the Highveld's colliers, and the Free State employed 11.9 percent (Mines and Industries, 1922:12).

<sup>8</sup> Indeed, a little later, it was calculated that the profit on carrying coal from Witbank to the Rand was 300 percent (Frankel, 1928:180).

<sup>9</sup> In 1921 Alabama and the Transvaal both had 11 collieries producing more than 250,000 tons, but Alabama's 11 were responsible for only 28.4 percent of total output, whilst the Transvaal's contributed 73.7 percent (Alabama, 1921:33-40; Transvaal Chamber of Mines, 1921:207).

<sup>10</sup> Part of that compulsion was a concern to avoid *xibalo*, that is unpaid, forced labor for Portuguese settlers (Harries, 1994:142). The South Africans, some of whom came from the neighboring British protectorates, were either "volunteers" or they were recruited by labor agents. Unlike the Mozambican workers, they usually stayed for short periods, enabling them to assist with peak-period farming (Working Conditions, 1919:2-3, 11-17).

<sup>11</sup> Using labor more efficiently, as distinct from reducing costs, may have been a particular concern in the period from about 1916 to 1920, when there were new opportunities for expanded sales.

<sup>12</sup> According to Working Conditions (1919:17-18), the usual practice was, "to have two Natives on a machine, the one works the machine and...the helper... The machines are, however, invariably in charge of a white man." However, before the strike it is likely that some "machine men" were machine operators (MWU, 1922a: Annexure III). See also, Graham and Lategan (1931:47), who noted that it was general for cutting machines to be operated by "one Native driver and four assistants, with a European supervising 2-3 machines."

<sup>13</sup> For use of the term "status" see, for examples, SAIF, 1921a.

<sup>14</sup> For a Board of Directors view, see Witbank Colliery, Feb. 23, 1900, and for a trade union view, which distinguished between a mine manager and other staff, see SAIF, 1921a:3.

<sup>15</sup> For the general usage, see particularly SAIF, 1921a. However, one union

document contains an annexure that includes the heading "number of men," under which there are two sub-headings, "official" and "daily paid" (MWU, 1922a: Annexure 1).

<sup>16</sup> Of the total number of Highveld colliery employees, 19,085 worked in the Transvaal and 2,576 worked in the Orange Free State.

<sup>17</sup> Though, as on the gold mines, and at variance with practice elsewhere in the world, including Natal, miners were paid even if there was no work (K161, 1922:2275).

<sup>18</sup> These were references to a gold mine.

<sup>19</sup> Also an "office boy" was white (e.g. SAIF, 1921a:4).

<sup>20</sup> "Rex," a regular and knowledgeable columnist, distinguished between the old and the new collieries around Witbank, concluding: "Give me the old mines for longevity of employment, and stability of employment too. The men die on the old mines. They're not on the new ones long enough to know they're alive!" (*Middelburg Observer*, Dec. 30, 1921). The average miner had three to four children, and probably lived in a five-roomed house (Alexander, 1998: 6). See also, K161, 1922: 2259, 2292, 2398, 2406.

<sup>21</sup> For instance, according to John Addie, Manager of Witbank Colliery, "in the majority of cases [white colliers] were originally miners from home," and according to Alex Aiken, Chairman of Coronation and Tavistock Collieries, "the labor that available...has really been only the collier from Cornwall or Wales" (K161, 1922: 2279, 2267). However, excluding men employed by the Rand gold mines, the Transvaal's mines and collieries employed 2254 whites — half of whom worked on the collieries — and, of this total, 42.0 percent were born in South Africa, 52.1 percent in the UK, 2.4 percent in "other British possessions," and 3.6 percent elsewhere (Mines and Industries, 1922: 12, 14). It is possible that, as on the gold mines, Afrikaners — and, at this stage, it is likely that nearly all "men" born in South Africa were Afrikaners — were rendered largely "invisible" by their employment in subordinate positions and by the dominance of British culture (see Katz, 1995: 486-487). On the transfer from the gold mines, see Addie in K161, 1922: 2293, and Katz, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> The town, founded by the Witbank Colliery in 1903, boasted two English-language newspapers, branches of the Sons of England and the Caledonian Society, Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Methodist Churches (as well as a synagogue), soccer, cricket and hockey teams, a co-operative store run by the unions, a billiard room, a theater, an academy of music, and a tea room (Lang, 1995: 51; *Witbank Advertiser*, Nov. 11, Dec. 2 and 23, 1921; *Middelburg Observer*, Oct. 7, 1921, January 6, 10, 13, Feb. 10 and 24, and June 23, 1922; K161, 1922: 2257).

<sup>23</sup> Welsh was the usual means of communication among miners at Oogies Colliery (Coulter, n.d: 36).

<sup>24</sup> For violence on gold mines, see Moodie, 1994: 55.

<sup>25</sup> Matthews was Chairman of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, but here he was addressing the miners. It should not be assumed that he was arguing for white supremacy, and he probably spoke for many union activists when he told the Mining Industry Board: "You can remove all your artificial barriers [such as the colour bar], if you will agree to that one condition [equal pay for equal work done]" (K161, 1922:2955).

<sup>26</sup> Addie described the training of miners as follows (K161, 1922:2279): "Unless they already have had some actual coal experience in this country as a rule they are given a job on the haulage roads, where they learn the handling of the native, and gradually they get to the working faces as assistants to miners, and finally if they are good men they get a section in charge of a gang of miners."

<sup>27</sup> Hobson was particularly aggrieved that because miners were given too many laborers to supervise they could not fully carry out their statutory responsibilities for blasting (K161, 1922:2395, 2454). See, also, Trevor, 1921, and related correspondence.

<sup>28</sup> The Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association was a mining, not a railway, union. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which had its headquarters in the UK, became the Amalgamated Engineering Union in 1920.

<sup>29</sup> According to the Inspector of Mines (Trevor, 1915): "the permanent workmen ... are staunch Trade Unionists and when new and younger men come from the Rand and find the hours long, not having settled down to the compensations, and, therefore, complain, the older men join in the complaints, though in a half-hearted manner."

<sup>30</sup> As a consequence of a "check-off" agreement with the TCM, the MWU's membership increased from 2,000 to 6,000 during the year 1916 to 1917. Since the coal miners did not demand "a check-off" during the

1919 negotiations, it seems likely that the agreement applied to them, as well as gold miners (Alexander, 1998:8). See also a discussion of wartime unionization in K4, 1922:1368-1369.

<sup>31</sup> Another consideration may have been that, during the 1913 strike by white gold miners, a concerted attempt to win solidarity from black miners had secured only limited support. New evidence shows that Africans stopped work on at least five mines in the course of the white strike, which was probably a higher level of action than previously realized (Taberer, 1913). Whilst this gave inspiration to would-be communists, the majority of white workers — including, presumably, the Witbank colliers — were unimpressed (Simons, 1983:159).

<sup>32</sup> Colliers were not involved in the massive strike by African gold miners in February 1920. However, in December 1920, there was a strike by Africans at the Witbank Colliery, who were protesting against payment in bank notes (rather than, one assumes, gold coin) (*Middelburg Observer*, Jan. 7, 1921). Also, following a similar development on the Rand, a Witbank Native Clerks' Association was formed sometime prior to May 1921 (Cloyse, 1921).

<sup>33</sup> This was despite Roy claiming that, "the body which controls the price of coal... is the Railway Administration." The employers argued that the 5s wage cut would fund a 2d per ton reduction, but this did not alter the substance of the argument. With Highveld coal being sold at 16s per ton at Delagoa Bay — or, for comparison with British prices, 18s per long ton — it should still have been competitive with Welsh coal, at least in some markets (but this was not pursued) (K161, 1922:2236, 2223, 2839-2841).

<sup>34</sup> Transvaal and Delagoa Bay had increased its capital from £185,000 to £300,000, giving its shareholders a bonus of one share for every two they already held, and it had then declared a 25 percent dividend on the enhanced holdings.

<sup>35</sup> Phillips later argued (Letter to E. A. Wallers, in Fraser and Jeeves, 1987): "enormous losses are attributable to concessions in money and relaxation of control during the war. We could not resist demands then. We are now paying the consequences."

<sup>36</sup> In fact, the mechanics unions were demanding the recognition of their shop stewards as early as 1918 (Gemmill, 1918b).

<sup>37</sup> There are similarities, here, with the style and strategy of mining capitalists in the US and Britain in the same period. Moreover, in a 1920 paper, Gemmill, then the TCM's Labour Adviser, drew on first-hand experience of concerted action against a US miner's strike to argue against a "defensive attitude" to organized labor in South Africa (1920; Letter to Wallers, Nov. 17, 1919, in Yudelman, 1983:154). The paper was circulated to 150 prominent individuals and organizations (including leaders of the coal industry), and his concern, and probably his effect, was to prepare industrialists for a major confrontation (Alexander, 1998:9).

<sup>38</sup> Coulter recalled that, initially, the Witbank Mine Managers' Association had decided to halt production, but that he and the Underground Manager at Tweefontein Colliery had organized a meeting of officials to protest this decision (1963:41).

<sup>39</sup> It is likely that the "boss boys" played a key role in maintaining production. They taught the laborers their jobs, and acted as translators for the miners (K161, 1922:2268).

<sup>40</sup> Krikler (1997:4) noted that, in the gold mine strike, only whites were stigmatized as "scabs," and the same could be said for the coal dispute.

<sup>41</sup> The other were: "2. Chamber of Mines threat to substitute cheap black labour for white; 3. Alteration of underground working conditions (Contract System); 4. The refusal of the [VFPC] to continue to negotiate with workers on a basic rate of wages; 5. The threatened breaking of agreement and reduction of wages by the Engineers' and Founders' Association." Issue 2 concerned the TCM's decision to unilaterally abandon the Status Quo Agreement of September 1, 1918, which prohibited the employment of black workers in positions held by whites. According to the Chamber, ending the agreement would lead to, "a reduction, not necessarily all by retrenchments, of, at most, 2,000 in the number of unskilled and semi-skilled Europeans at present employed." Issue 3 related to the TCM's view that it was necessary to drastically reduce the income of the majority of miners, those whose pay was determined by a contract rather than an hourly rate (TCM, 1922:1-2).

<sup>42</sup> Whereas the Augmented Executive consisted of only 22 to 27 people, the Joint Executives was a body of from 136 to 150, representing MWU branch executives and the national executives of the other unions. The Central Strike Committee and the local strike committees, which consisted of delegates from the different unions, were supposedly subordinate to the

Augmented Executive, but they were also subject to rank-and-file pressure (see, particularly, K4, 1922:678, 721-26). The Committee of Action had been constituted by a looser grouping of leading militants, the Council of Action that had been formed in 1921 (after some of its members had been barred from holding office in the MWU following their involvement in an unofficial strike). The commandos were generally influenced by Afrikaner nationalism, and remained independent of the English-speaking and Communist-influenced Committee of Action (Johns, 1995:129-141).

<sup>43</sup> Although the general strike was largely unsuccessful, there was strong support in Durban (where three commandos were formed) and among building workers, and earlier Johannesburg's municipal and tram workers had become involved in the strike movement (*Census and Statistics*, 1924; *Daily Dispatch*, 11, March 16, 1922).

<sup>44</sup> For an alternative interpretation see Krikler (1997).

<sup>45</sup> These were, respectively, Sir William Solomon, Sir Robert Kotze, Beattie (from the University of Cape Town), and William Brace (a South Wales miners' leader and former "Lib-Lab" member of the British parliament). Although Solomon was the board's chair, its findings are sometimes referred to as the Brace Report.

<sup>46</sup> This is revealed in the observation on coal miners by Beattie, and also, for instance, in Brace's comment to the owners that, "if I were a member of the consuming public I tell you frankly I should be afraid of you" (K161, 1922:2237).

<sup>47</sup> As Albert Szymanski notes (1983:189), "status" is of particular concern to the new petty bourgeoisie, serving both "as motive for performance... and to ensure compliance and deference from subordinates."

<sup>48</sup> Without contradicting anything that has been said so far, one may acknowledge a certain ambivalence even in the miners' class position. Supervision not only entailed "control and surveillance" (part of the "global function of capital"), it also involved "co-ordination and unity" (a "function of the collective worker") (Carchedi, 1975). Moreover, as Graham shows (Graham and Lategan, 1931:69), the coal miner was also involved in various practical activities, such as marking places for drilling and cutting, blasting, and conducting various checks to maintain safety. He also had to ensure a regular supply of trucks and materials.

## References

- Alabama, State of *Annual Report of Coal Mines* 1921, (Birmingham: Birmingham Advertising Co.).
- Alexander, P. 1997. "'Not Miners, but Officials': South Africa's Highveld Coal Industry and the Rand Revolt of 1922." Paper presented to American Historical Association Conference, New York (Reference No. 10485).
- Alexander, P. 1998. "Race, Class Loyalty and the Structure of Capitalism: Coal Miners in Alabama and the Transvaal 1918-1922." Paper presented to the Socialist Historians' Seminar, Institute of Historical Research, London.
- Alexander, P. 2000. *Workers, War and the Origins of Apartheid: Labour and Politics in South Africa, 1939-1948* (Oxford: James Currey).
- Alexander, P. and Halpern, R. (eds.). 2000. *Racializing Class, Classifying Race: Labour and Difference in Britain, the USA and Africa* (Basingstoke: Macmillan).
- Beall, J.D. and North-Coombes, M.D. 1983. "The 1913 Disturbances in Natal: the Social and Economic Background to 'Passive Resistance'," *Journal of Natal and Zulu History* 6.
- Bunting, S.P. 1922. "Red Revolt": *the Rand Strike, January-March, 1922 — the Workers' Story* (Johannesburg: Communist Party).
- Callinicos, A. 1987. "The 'New Middle Class' and Socialist Politics," in A. Callinicos and C. Harman, *The Changing Working Class: Essays on Class Structure Today* (London: Bookmarks).
- Carchedi, G. 1975. "On the Economic Identification of the New Middle Class," *Economy and Society*, 4,1.
- Census and Statistics, Office of (1920) *Official Year Book of the Union* 3 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Census and Statistics, Office of (1924) *Official Year Book of the*

- Union 6* (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Census and Statistics, Office of (1936) *Official Year Book of the Union 17* (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Coal Commission (1921) *Report*, UG 33 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Collieries Committee (CC) (1920) Letter to A. Crawford, SAIF, dated Sept. 21, in MNW box 532 file MM 2550/20, State Archives.
- Collieries Committee (CC) (1921) Letter to SAIF, dated Nov. 25, in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Christie, R. 1984. *Electricity, Industry and Class in South Africa* (London: Macmillan)
- Cloyise, J. 1921. Letter to Witbank Inspector of Native Affairs, dated May 17, in GNLB box 324 file 107/20/110, State Archives.
- Cope, R. K. 1948. *Comrade Bill: The Life and Times of W.H. Andrews, Workers' Leader* (Cape Town: Stewart).
- Coulter, T. 1930. "Coal and Other Fuels," in P. A. Wagner and L. Reinecke, *Mineral Deposits of the Union of South Africa* (n.p.: Third Triennial Empire Mining and Metallurgical Conference, South Africa).
- Coulter, T. 1963. "The Coulter Family 1801 to 1935 (Including Some Personal Recollections by T. Coulter, Grandson of Thomas and Catherine Coulter)." Manuscript, in Anglo-American Corporation Library.
- Coulter, T. (n.d.). "Recollections of Some Incidents, Experiences and Characters Encountered During My Lifetime and Particularly During My Career in the Mining Industry." Manuscript, in Anglo-American Corporation Library.
- Crawford, A. 1915. Letter to Secretary for Mines, dated c. Sept. 30, in MNW box 302 file MM 3022/15, State Archives.
- Daily Dispatch*, published in East London.
- Davies, R. H. 1979. *Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa 1900-1960: An Historical Materialist Analysis of Class Formation and Class Relations* (Brighton: Harvester Press).
- Edgcombe, R. and Guest, B. 1987. "The Natal Coal Industry in the South African Economy 1910-1985," *South African Journal of Economic History*, 2,2.
- Edgcombe, R. and Guest, B. 1985. "An Introduction to the Pre-Union Natal Coal Industry," in B. Guest and J. M. Sellers (eds.), *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony: Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press).
- Frankel, S. H. 1928. *The Railway Policy of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Hortors).
- Fraser, M. and Jeeves, A. (eds.). 1987. *All That Glittered: Selected Correspondence of Lionel Phillips, 1890-1924* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press).
- Gemmill, W. 1918a. Letter to Collieries Committee from TCM Manager and Secretary, dated June 15, in TCM reel 2341 frame 8, Chamber of Mines Archives.
- Gemmill, W. 1918b. Letter to A. Crawford, SAIF, dated Nov. 27, in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Gemmill, W. 1920. "Address by Mr. W. Gemmill," dated c. June 15, in TCM reel 2327 frame 994, Chamber of Mines Archives.
- Gemmill, W. 1921. Letter to A. Crawford, SAIF, Jan. 15, in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Gemmill, W. 1939. "Employment of Portuguese Natives on the Collieries," dated Nov. 24, in Wenela fila 2C Pad 1, TEBA Archives.
- Graham, A. C. and Lategan, P. N. 1931. *The Coals of the Witbank District* (Johannesburg: Transvaal Chamber of Mines Collieries Committee).
- Grout, R.W. and Lechmere-Oertel, R. L. 1958. "A Brief History of the Progress of Efficiency in South African Collieries in the Last Seventy Years," *Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy*, May.
- Guest, B. 1994. "An Introduction to the Post-Union Natal Coal Industry," in B. Guest, *Receded Tides of Empire: Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Natal and Zululand Since 1910*, (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press).
- Harries, P. 1994. *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann).
- Herd, N. 1966. *1922: The Revolt on the Rand* (Johannesburg: Blue Crane).
- Heslop, W. T. 1924. "Coal in South Africa," *Journal of the Chemical, Metallurgical and Mining Society*, 25:6.
- Hessian, B. 1957. "An Investigation Into the Causes of the Labour Agitation on the Witwatersrand, January to March, 1922." M.A. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand.
- Hirson, B. 1993. "The General Strike of 1922," *Searchlight South Africa* 3:3.
- Johns, S. 1995. *Raising the Red Flag: the International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa, 1914-1932* (Bellville: Mayibuye Books).
- Johnstone, F.A. 1976. *Race, Class and Gold: a Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).
- Jourdan, C. J. N. 1922. "Monthly Report for the Pretoria Inspectorate, March 1922," in MNW box 613 file MM 811/22, State Archives.
- Judicial Commission (1922). *Report*, UG 35 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- K4 (Martial Law Commission). 1922 Minutes of Evidence, State Archives.
- K161 (Mining Industry Commission). 1922. Minutes of Evidence, State Archives.
- Katz, E. 1994. *The White Death: Silicosis on the Witwatersrand 1886-1910* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press).
- Katz, E. 1995. "The Underground Route to Mining: Afrikaners and the Witwatersrand Gold Mining Industry From 1902 to the 1907 Miners' Strike," *Journal of African History* 36, pp. 467-89.
- Katznellenbogen, S. 1982. *South Africa and Southern Mozambique: Labour, Railways and Trade in the Making of a Relationship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
- Kindersley, A.O.C. 1910. Letter to Native Affairs Director, dated March 17, in SNA box 461 file 792/10, State Archives.
- Krikler, J. 1996. "Women, Violence and the Rand Revolt of 1922," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22,3.
- Krikler, J. 1997. "The Inner Mechanisms of a South African Racial Massacre." Paper presented to Racializing Class Conference, St Antony's College, Oxford.
- Lang, J. 1995. *Power Base: Coal Mining in the Life of South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball).
- Marks, S. and Rathbone, R. (eds.). 1982. *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870-1930* (Harlow: Longman).
- Mendelsohn, R. 1989. "'The Country is Rotten With Coal': Sammy Marks and the Highveld Coal Industry, 1880-1910."

- Paper presented to South African Historical Society Twelfth National Conference, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
- Mendelsohn, R. 1991. *Sammy Marks, "The Uncrowned King of the Transvaal"* (Cape Town: David Philip).
- Middelburg Observer.
- Miller, R. H. 1920. Letter to Chief Inspector of Labor, dated March 3, MNW box 524 file 1633, State Archives.
- Mine Workers' Union (MWU). 1922a. "Statement by European Colliery Workers of the Transvaal & Orange Free State," in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Mine Workers' Union (MWU). 1922b. "Members of the [MWU] Working on the Various Collieries," in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Mines, Department of (1911) *Annual Reports* 1910, UG 34 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Mines, Department of (1912) *Annual Reports* 1911, UG 49 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Mines and Industries, Department of (1918-1920). Various documents relating to negotiations with colliers, in MNW box 461 file MM Conf. No. 1/69, MNW box 510 file 1351/20, MNW box 532 file MM 2550/20, all in State Archives.
- Mines and Industries, Department of (1921) *Annual Reports* 1920, UG 40 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Mines and Industries, Department of (1922) *Annual Reports* 1921, UG 31 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Mining Industry Board (1922) *Report* (UG 39). (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Monthly Journal and Report*, published by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, London.
- Monthly Labor Review*, published by the US Department of Labor.
- Moodie, T.D. 1994. *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press).
- O'Brien, H.H. 1919. Letter to W. Gemmill, dated May 10, Wenela file 20/17 Pad 4, TEBA Archives.
- Perold, J. W. 1994-1995. "Coal," in Minerals Bureau, *South Africa's Mineral Industry*. (Braamfontein: Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs).
- Poulantzas, N. 1973. "Marxism and Social Classes," *New Left Review* 78.
- Rowe, J. W. F. 1923. *Wages in the Coal Industry* (London: P. S. King & Son).
- SAIF. 1918. "Minutes of Ordinary Executive Meeting, Sept. 4," in Ba1.3, TUCSA Collection (AH646), University of the Witwatersrand.
- SAIF. 1921a. "Conference Between Representatives of the Executive Committee of the Mining Department of the South African Industrial Federation and the Chamber of Mines on the Subject of the Demarcation of Officials," in Bd3.30, TUCSA Collection (AH646), University of the Witwatersrand.
- SAIF. 1921b. "Minutes of Meeting of SAIF Executive With Joint Executives, Dec. 30," in Ba1.19, TUCSA Collection (AH646), University of the Witwatersrand.
- SAIF. 1921c. "Minutes of Meeting of the Augmented Executive, Dec. 31," in Ba1. 20, TUCSA Collection (AH646), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Ste. Croix, G. E. M. de 1981. *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (London: Duckworth).
- Simons, H. J. 1949. "Trade Unions," in E. Hellmann (ed.), *Handbook of Race Relations in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press).
- Simons, J. and R. 1983. *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (London: International Defense and Aid Fund).
- Simson, H. 1973. "Fascism in South Africa," *African Review*, 3,3.
- Simson, H. 1980. *The Social Origins of Afrikaner Fascism and its Apartheid Policy* (Uppsala: Uppsala University).
- Stoner, J. C. 1994. "How Can We Make Them Work?: the Dilemma of Maintaining a Labor Supply in West Virginia and Natal Coal Mining, 1885-1930." M.A. dissertation, Columbia University.
- Szymanski, A. 1983. *Class Structure: A Critical Perspective*, (New York: Praeger).
- Taberer, H. M. 1913. "Statement by the General Superintendent of the Native Recruiting Corporation Ltd.," dated July 29, in NRC 6.2[viii], TEBA Archive.
- Thompson, E. P. 1968. *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin). First published in 1963.
- Transvaal Chamber of Mines (TCM). 1921. *Report* 1921 (Johannesburg: Argus Printing and Publishing Co.).
- Transvaal Chamber of Mines (TCM). 1922. *Chronological Note of the Dispute on the Transvaal Gold and Coal Mines, With Copies of Correspondence* (Cape Town: Cape Times).
- Transvaal Mines Department. 1904. *Annual Report of the Government Mining Engineer* 1904 (Pretoria: Government Printer).
- Transvaal Legal Defense Committee. (c. 1922). *The Story of a Crime* (Johannesburg: Transvaal Legal Defense Committee).
- Trevor, T. 1915. Letter to Government Mining Engineer, dated Nov. 27, in MNW box 302 file 3022/15, State Archives.
- Trevor, T. 1921. Letter to MWU Colliery Section, dated June 24, in Federation of Mining Unions Archive (A1334mfm), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Unsigned document 1920. In Governor Kilby Papers, Alabama State Archives SG22121.
- Unsigned document 1922. "Witbank," in GNLB box 311 file 125/19/48, State Archives.
- Walker, I. L. and Weinbren, B. 1961. *2000 Casualties: A History of the South African Labour Movement* (Johannesburg: SATUC).
- Witbank Advertiser and Middelburg News*.
- Witbank News*.
- Welgedacht Exploration Co. Ltd. 1919. "Mine Rates," in GNLB box 304 file 427/18, State Archives.
- Witbank Colliery. 1898-1919. Minute Books, in Barlow Rand Archives, Johannesburg.
- Witbank Colliery. 1935. "Report of the Directors, for the Year Ended Aug. 31, 1935," in 2001, J. C. N. Humphreys Papers (A1138), University of the Witwatersrand.
- Wenela. 1913. "Unpopularity of Collieries," dated Sept. 29, in Wenela file 20/17 Pad 1, TEBA Archives.
- Wenela. 1914. "Extract from Minutes of Meeting of Board of Management held on Nov. 12," in Wenela file 20/17 Pad 1, TEBA Archive.
- Wenela. 1918. Various documents in Wenela file 20/17 Pad 3, TEBA Archives.
- Wenela. 1945. "Note on the Preference Allowed the Collieries," dated June 7, in Wenela file 2A/1 Pad 19, TEBA Archives.
- Wenela District Manager, Lourenco Marques (1913). Letter to Secretary, Wenela, dated Sept. 11, in Wenela file 20/17 Pad 1, TEBA Archives.
- Wolpe, H. 1976. "The 'White Working Class' in South Africa," *Economy and Society*, 5.
- Working Conditions, Enquiry on (1919). Untitled draft report on

working conditions on collieries, dated c. June 11, in GNLB box 304 file 427/18, State Archives.

Yudelman, D. 1983. *The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, Capital and the Incorporation of Organised Labour on the South African Gold Fields, 1902-1939* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood).

---