



University Free State



34300000100176

Universiteit Vrystaat

HIERDIE EKSEMPLAAR MAG ONDER
GEEN OMSTANDIGHEDE UIT DIE
BIBLIOTEK VERWYDER WORD NIE

***The transformation in the status of the black worker
in the Free State Gold Mines, 1946-1995.***

THESIS

by

WENDY BEZUIDENHOUT

MA

submitted to fulfil the requirements
for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

in the faculty of Humanities
(Department of History)

at the
University of the Orange Free State

BLOEMFONTEIN

Promoter: Prof. S.L. Barnard

Bloemfontein

November 1998

Universiteit van die
Oranje-Vrystaat
BLOEMFONTEIN

20 APR 2000

UOVS SASOL BIBLIOTEEK

FOREWORD

The hypothesis of this Ph.D is if the status of the black gold mine worker has changed over a period of ten decades. During the past century and different governments in the country, one fact has remained the same - the gold mines have to produce to give the state a substantial income and to satisfy their shareholders. The question that has to be answered, is if the black gold mine workers, especially at Harmony Gold Mine in the Free State, have succeeded in changing their status on the labour front and on a personal level. One must also determine who and what was responsible for the changes in the black gold mine worker and the role the government, the Chamber of Mines, the white miners, the National Union of Mineworkers and the black worker himself played in the transformation process.

The whole transformation process of the black gold mine worker in the Free State, and more specific at Harmony Gold Mine in Virginia, can be accepted as representative of the transformation of black gold miners on national level. All mines resort under the umbrella organization of the Chamber of Mines and wage negotiations and labour structures are dictated by the Chamber. Mines in South Africa belong to the group system where only a few major financial groups own the mines in the country. All South African mines make use of foreign and domestic black labour and have implemented the compound housing system. Despite minor differences in wage levels, training, living and working conditions, conditions for a mine worker on a mine in Carltonville and Evander is much the same as in Virginia. This thesis is not about how much each mine in the Free State pays its black workers and how they train their workers respectively or how large their compounds are, it is about the people's factor in the industry. Harmony Gold Mine is used as a reference to substantiate any conclusions.

The Free State Gold Field was discovered and developed during the years of the Second World War, 60 years after the first gold was mined in South Africa. The gold mining industry had the opportunity to develop the new mines from the drawing board and cater for the aspirations of their black labour force. Gold mining in South Africa arrived at a cross road and could have been instrumental in integrating the black man into the white man's economy. Politically and socially South Africa was not ready for it yet and previous labour practices were implemented again. There were however, significant improvements in the working and living conditions on the Free State mines.

A significant part of the thesis is devoted to the early history of the gold mines of South Africa and an early profile of the black worker. It is done to serve as a comparison to the black gold mine worker of the 1990's. The foundations of black labour recruitment, black trade union organization, the migrant labour pattern, black westernization and urbanization have its roots in the early history of the mining industry and it justified the careful investigation of these factors. Only then can the pain-stakingly slow transformation process of the black gold mine worker in South Africa, be fully grasped. Then one realizes that the transformation process has two phases - the pre-World War II era and the post-World War II era, when the black worker became a more permanent labourer and was no longer willing to accept his backward status in the South African economy and on the political front.

It is very clear from the research done that politics and economics in South Africa are difficult to separate. A factor contributing to the situation is the phenomenon that black trade unions were illegal so the black workers' labour aspirations were dealt with by their political organizations. When the National Union of Mineworkers(NUM) was legalized in 1982, the political organizations of the black people of the country were banned and their leaders were in exile. It was only natural then that the NUM would also incorporate the black workers' political aspirations.

The mining industry was part of the South African political and economical scenario and could not function in isolation. The South African government made the laws of the country and from 1948 to 1994 it was an apartheid government, designed to protect the white man from the advances of the blacks. There were times in the history of the gold mining industry that it wanted to transform its labour practices and make more economical use of their black labour force, but they were prevented from doing so by the Industrial Colour Bar which excluded black workers from skilled positions.

Much about the history of the South African gold mines has been chronicled, but the significant part the black worker has played and how he was transformed as a labourer and on a personal level, have been overlooked. He has been the one in the background of the early photographs of the industry, not important enough to have his name mentioned. How it has affected him on a personal level and how it changed his role in his family, has not been researched extensively. Without the large black labour force, who were paid very low wages and did the physically strenuous work, there would not have been a gold mining industry in the country.

A source that needs special mention is the work of Luli Callinicos of the University of the Witwatersrand, "A People's History of South Africa: Gold and Workers 1886-1924". She managed to capture the human element in the history of gold in the country and gives the black workers the credit they deserve. The hardship they endured in the process is also chronicled and this source was instrumental and inspirational in writing down how the black gold mine worker was transformed into a career miner. Another exceptional source was that of Francis Wilson, "Migrant Labour in South Africa" which focussed international attention on the extremely low wages the black workers were paid in the gold mining industry of South Africa and how there has been no progress for them as labourers. The Chamber of Mines has a statistics department which was very helpful and saved a lot of time. Probably the most important source for this thesis were the black gold mine workers at Harmony Gold Mine, themselves. Their first-hand experience and honest answers were decisive in drawing certain conclusions. They are the ones who sweat and toil three kilometres under the surface and in the evenings return to the single-sex compounds.

Since the 1980's the HIV virus has emerged in the country and because of the migrant labour system used on the gold mines of South Africa, it is a threat to the industry. When the research for the thesis was started there was a certain amount of secrecy surrounding AIDS in the mining industry and nobody wanted to speak up. The Chamber of Mines did not want to disclose figures or make information available. AIDS is not a notifiable disease in South Africa and does not have to be reported, which makes it more difficult to obtain information. Black workers on the mines are careful when answering questions about AIDS as they are afraid of losing their jobs if it becomes known that they have the virus. The mine management of Harmony Gold Mine eventually decided to reveal all the information they have available on the HIV virus and their black work force as it is such an essential part of the thesis. Dr Tony de Coita at Harmony Hospital was extremely helpful and his first-hand experience with the virus and the work force has contributed tremendously.

The mine is a production company and not very concerned about keeping data and records. Their records are only kept for a period of five years before they are disposed of and it was difficult to obtain certain information. The Chamber of Mines has a statistical service, but it was also difficult to obtain information specifically about Harmony Gold Mine. The annual reports of Harmony Gold Mine was however, excellent sources of information and very complete.

The transformation of the black gold mine worker was approached from the early years of the industry. This was done for purposes of comparison and to get a clear picture of how the black

worker evolved from a part-time miner into a career miner. His evolution is approached on the labour front, which included the development of trade unions. His basic wage and wages in kind like housing, food, and recreation were also researched. Medical and safety standards and training and job advancement were also discussed and developments in these fields have added to the transformation process of the black workers.

Initially in the thesis the British pound sterling system of pounds, shillings, pennies and feet is used when referring to amounts and distances, but after 1961 the decimal system of metres is used and the money unit is the South African Rand.

I would like to thank the management of Harmony Gold Mine who has been very helpful during the research phase and with the different interviews that were conducted. Mr Frank Sullivan who gave me the green light to visit the different departments of the mine and conduct interviews and mr Deon van Zyl and his manpower department who were very helpful. Here I would like to mention Veronica Hanekom who always referred me to another person if she herself could not help me, Josephine Lebitso and Sam Mahlpa who gave me valuable information and acted as interpreters. The co-ordinators of the various training facilities at the mine were very helpful, allowing me to attend their classes and copying the material of study. The interview with mr Bernard Swanepoel, managing director of Harmony Gold Mine, was most definitely a highlight. I caught a glimpse of the expertise and vision that has made him a legend on Harmony Gold Mine and in the mining industry. On a personal level I want to mention my husband, Anton, and my two daughters, Minka and Joani, who has supported and encouraged me continuously. Their confidence and faith in me and the sacrifices they had to make, did not pass unnoticed. My school principal, mr André Vorster, was very helpful in giving me some extra academic time during school examinations and always encouraged me. My promoter, prof Leo Barnard who made the subject of History come alive for me 15 years ago as a first year university student and with whom I have maintained academical relations ever since. His knowlegde on the history of South Africa has been a source of inspiration for me and his positive remarks on the work I have completed has always been encouraging. He is more than just a promoter, he is a role model for whom I have the deepest respect and admiration.

Wendy Bezuidenhout

Virginia

November 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS**PAGES****CHAPTER 1 - THE PIONEERING DAYS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE MINING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA****1-57**

- 1.1 An Early History of the Mining Industry 1-21
- 1.2 The Colour-Bar 21-33
- 1.3 Who Were the Mining Companies who held the lives of Thousands of
People in their hands? 33-41
- 1.4 The Chamber of Mines 41-45
- 1.5 The Mining Industry in the years between the two World Wars 45-57

**CHAPTER 2 - THE STATUS OF THE BLACK GOLD MINE-WORKER IN
THE EARLY YEARS OF THE MINING INDUSTRY****58-83**

- 2.1 A Profile of the gold mine-worker up to 1946 58-66
- 2.2 How did they get to the Mines? 67-69
- 2.3 Where did they stay? 69-76
- 2.4 Health and Safety 76-83

CHAPTER 3 - THE MIGRANT LABOUR PATTERN**84-130**

- 3.1 A Unique Migratory Pattern is established 84-90
- 3.2 Understanding the Psychology of the Migrant Worker 90-97
- 3.3 Foreign Migrants 98-105
 - 3.3.1 Lesotho 105-109
 - 3.3.2 Mozambique 109-111
 - 3.3.3 Malawi 111-113
 - 3.3.4 Botswana 113-116
 - 3.3.5 South African Reserves or Homelands 116-117
- 3.4 How Migrancy Undermined and Affected the Status of the Black
Gold Mine-Worker 117-130

**CHAPTER 4 - THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN THE FREE STATE AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE OF THE LARGEST GOLD MINES
IN THE WORLD - HARMONY GOLD MINE****131-170**

- 4.1 The Discovery of Gold in the Free State 131-143
- 4.2 Virginia - A Town in the Making 143-147
- 4.3 A New Era Dawns on the Mining Industry 147-157
- 4.4 The Composition of the Work force on the Free State mines, their
Recruitment and General Way of life 158-162
- 4.5 Harmony Gold Mine 162-170

<u>CHAPTER 5 - LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINE WORKERS AND A HISTORY OF LABOUR RELATIONS AT HARMONY GOLD MINE</u>	171-231
5.1 Black Trade Unions in South Africa	177-186
5.2 The Struggle for Black Miners' Rights	186-208
5.3 Industrial Relations, Unrest and Work Stoppages at Harmony Gold Mine	209-231
<u>CHAPTER 6 - WAGES, WAGES IN KIND AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE BLACK MINE-WORKER</u>	232-268
6.1 Wages at Harmony Gold Mine	245-251
6.2 Wages in Kind - (Food, Housing, Sports and Recreation)	251-268
<u>CHAPTER 7 - MEDICAL BENEFITS AND IMPROVED SAFETY STANDARDS</u>	269-303
7.1 Health Scenario of the Black Gold Mine-Worker	269-277
7.2 Safety and Prevention of Accidents	277-286
7.3 AIDS	286-303
<u>CHAPTER 8 - TRAINING AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES</u>	304-339
8.1 A Historical Background	304-328
8.2 The Different Training Programmes in Place at Harmony Gold Mine	328-329
8.2.1 Category 3-8 Workers	329-332
8.2.2 Adult Education and Training	333-337
8.2.3 The Bridging School	337-339
<u>CHAPTER 9 - FROM SUBSISTENCE FARMER TO CAREER MINER</u>	340-380
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCE LIST</i>	380-397
<i>APPENDIX</i>	398-404
<i>SUMMARY</i>	405-406

CHAPTER ONE - THE PIONEERING DAYS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA.

1.1 AN EARLY HISTORY OF THE MINING INDUSTRY

The discovery of gold in South Africa would change the economical, social and political history of the country and create a unique work force. In the process the black gold mine-worker would be transformed, from a worker who had to be pulled out of his subsistence economy, to a worker who arrived spontaneously of his own free will. From a worker who came alone and unwillingly into towns to a worker who brought his family and settled in the nearby towns. From a worker whose destiny was shaped by others, to a worker who determined his own destiny. Initially the black workers remained passive in this entire transformation process and their fate was determined by outside factors such as the white mine-owners, white supervisors and labour laws, but by the end of the twentieth century they would participate fully in the whole process of change.

To fully understand the transformation process of the black gold mine worker over a century, it is important to have a clear picture of the early years of the industry. Policies that originated in the first few decades of the industry were still in place many decades later. Labour recruiting and the labour laws of the early years were merely amended. The restrictions retarding the transformation process of the black gold mine worker originates from the early years. The compound system, wage structures and lack of training have their origins in the early era and any study would be incomplete unless a clear line could be drawn from then until the present. The political background must be understood as the governing political parties played a substantial role in the transformation process of the black mine-worker. Before we are able to consider the various factors that were to influence the transformation of the black gold mine worker, it is important to bear the following in mind: firstly the gold price, which would influence the decisions the mining houses

would make regarding salaries, housing and job reservation, was fixed until 1973. This has been a serious retarding factor to South Africa's economic growth that its main export product, gold, had a fixed price.¹ It proved likewise to be a serious retarding factor in the transformation process of the black worker, as black wages were continually sacrificed to balance increased production costs. The wealth brought about by discovery of gold in the country was not distributed equally.

The gold mining companies are like any other business, they have to make a profit to satisfy their shareholders and pay dividends. To accomplish this, they were forced to cut production costs to the bone. As salaries were the largest expense, it seemed quite logical to keep this expense low, particularly the wages of black mine-workers. D. van Zyl comments, "The enormous development brought about by the gold mining industry did however have its disadvantages, a major drawback being its effect on the black workers. In order to keep costs as low as possible, the industry strove relentlessly to force the wages of the black workers down. By the late 1890s this had been successfully achieved. The blacks themselves had little choice. If they were to pay the taxes imposed on them in their tribal areas they were virtually forced to seek employment on the mines."²

The black mine-worker was an infant in the labour market and had no experience in an industrial world. He did not have a voice, but was valued only for the strength of his hands which had to extract the gold from the soil on which his forefathers had fought tribal wars over land and let their cattle graze. Mine management was only interested in production and profits.

Secondly, the mining conditions in South Africa were unique, problematic and very labour-intensive. Although gold was first discovered at rather shallow levels, it soon increased to mining more than a kilometre underground. This brought on expenses such as ventilation shafts, water pumps and special equipment which were costly and required the skilled labour to operate it.

¹ Busschau, W.J., The Glamour of Gold, p. 48.

² Van Zyl, D., The Discovery of Wealth. The Advent of the Industrial Revolution in Southern Africa, 1870-1899, p. 92.

Despite the fact that the gold reef in South Africa is very rich and runs along an area of 300 miles, it yields low grade ore and tons of soil have to be extracted in order to produce a few ounces of gold. Its geological structure requires extensive land ownership and specialized workmanship. N. Worden emphasizes this when he says, "Contrary to twentieth-century belief, South African gold mining was not an inevitable source of great profit. Capital costs were high because of the difficulties of mining, the thin gold veins and the low quality of the ore deposits. Indeed ore of similar quality had been abandoned on the Californian and Australian goldfields as too unprofitable to extract."³

The South African mining industry is very labour-intensive, particularly in the unskilled category. Labour was the most complicated and costly aspect of the industry and while the mining magnates realized the importance of the black, unskilled worker, the latter unfortunately did not as yet realize his own value.

Jonathan Crush agrees, "But there is little doubt that if large numbers of low-wage, unskilled migrant miners had not been recruited from throughout the sub-continent, there would never have been a deep-level gold mining industry in South Africa."⁴

In fact, the South African gold mining industry was so costly that it relied heavily upon overseas investors who had to form large companies to supply the financial backing. South Africa's mining industry was not for the individual with his pan and shovel. It was the mining magnates who ruled over the small numbers of skilled whites and the large black work force. The privileged few would decide the course of things to come. G. D. Scholtz condemns this situation, "Dit is van die begin af duidelik dat hierdie rykdom van die Witwatersrand, wat ook die Transvaalse Regering so 'n groot geldelike inkomste besorg het, alleen behoortlik ontgin sou kon word, indien groot bedrae aan kapitaal daarin belê word. Net so duidelik was dit dat die ontginning alleen behartig kon word deur manne met groot kunde en ervaring van die mynbou. Oor die tragedie van die feit dat die Afrikaners nog oor die

³ Worden, N., The Making of Modern South Africa, p. 40.

⁴ Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labour Empire. A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold-mines, p. 1.

kapitaal, nog oor die kunde en ervaring beskik het om die vernaamste voordeel uit die rykdom van die vaderlandse bodem te haal."⁵

D. van Zyl shares this view, "The industry also required vast amounts of capital. The initial capital from Kimberley proved inadequate once deep shaft mining had begun. Confidence in the extent of consistency of the gold deposits on the Rand brought a flood of foreign capital which floated numerous companies and funded the development of many new mines. By 1899 the total capital investment in the gold mining industry stood at 74 million pounds, with some 60-80% British capital and the rest French and German."⁶

The mining industry needed skilled labour to sink shafts, fit pipes, install lifts and operate drilling machines, and thousands of unskilled workers were recruited. The skilled labourers were imported from America, Australia and Britain and they demanded high wages. The unskilled labourers who had to be recruited locally and they were paid very low wages.⁷ The gold mining industry in South Africa had a multi-cultural composition. The different cultures would not, however, become team players and together reap the benefits the industry had to offer. They came to regard one another as adversaries and laid down barriers that would later prove to be difficult to overcome. These barriers became major obstacles in the transformation process of the black gold mine worker, who had the status of a second class citizen and a second class worker, because he was black and possessed no skills.

There must be no illusions about the importance of the black, low wage, unskilled migrant workers recruited from the valleys and hills of southern Africa, without whom there never would have been a deep-level gold mining industry in South Africa. The black workers were available in large numbers and did not possess

⁵ Scholtz, G.D., Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner, Deel IV, p.35.

⁶ Van Zyl, D., p. 95.

⁷ Callinicos, L., A People's History of South Africa, Vol 1: Gold and Workers 1886-1924, p. 22.

even the most elementary skills. The situation would not remain unchanged forever. However, in the early years of mining, South Africa was not ready for an ambitious, semi-skilled and permanent black work force. It would take another eight decades for the black worker to take up his rightful place in industrial society.

Thirdly, the gold rush in South Africa brought together people from different races, religious backgrounds and social standing who were forced work together, in very harsh conditions, to produce the gold. This was a painstaking process in which people's lives were changed forever and South Africa's future took shape. It is another reason why it is important to investigate the early status of the black gold mine worker. The uprooting and manipulation of these blacks should not go unnoticed. G. Wheatcroft agrees when he says, "There came together three elements: the incomparable riches which nature had left beneath the soil of the Transvaal, European financial expertise and lust for wealth, and cheap black labour. Together they transformed the country utterly."⁸

Not only did they transform the country, but also the labour scene in South Africa and the profile of the black gold mine worker. Whether the black worker was ready for the transformation or not, did not matter. He simply had to come to the gold-mines and crush and extract the ore. While it takes hundreds of thousands of years for man to adapt to changed environment factors, the black worker had to adapt almost immediately.

His transformation did not occur spontaneously, but came about through the deliberate efforts of the mining houses and the government. Bozzoli comments, "The proletarianisation of Africans in South Africa came about through the deliberate, purposeful intervention of the dominant classes."⁹ At first they had to be encouraged to come to the gold-mines, through taxes, the lure of cash earnings and government regulations. It was not the spontaneous flow of willing and eager workers who wished to excel in their work and climb the ladder of success. They

⁸ Wheatcroft, G., The Randlords. The Men who made South Africa, p. 266.

⁹ Bozzoli, B., Labour, Townships and Protests, p. 301.

came to fulfil their own needs or that of their tribe and family. They came to earn cash to buy farming implements, blankets and guns. They left whenever they chose particularly during the ploughing and planting season. It would take many years before the flow of black gold mine-workers to the cities would be a spontaneous and irreversible phenomenon. Ironically, when they did come spontaneously, measures would be taken to keep them at bay.

For one of the major role-players, the South African government, the discovery of gold led to great wealth and development. During its first year of gold production, South Africa produced only 16% of the world's output of gold, but this percentage had risen to 27% by 1889.¹⁰ Within a year the Witwatersrand became the world's greatest single gold supplier. Almost overnight South Africa changed from an agricultural country to an industrial one. Farm labourers had to become mine-workers. C. Orpen writes, "Until the second half of the 19th century, there were few, if any, wage-paid workers in South Africa. The majority of the population, both black and white, were engaged in agricultural pursuits. In the tribal areas, the blacks continued their traditional and subsistence farming practices in small local units, usually consisting of a few connected families."¹¹

Capitalism also brought new developments such as railway lines, towns, shops and markets, which in themselves brought about further changes. In the years to come, these industries, which owed their existence to the gold-mines, would compete for the labour of the black worker. Because of the dangers involved in mining gold, workers would often desert and find other means of employment.

The social consequences of the mineral discoveries were momentous. These eventually led to a large-scale depopulation of the countryside and the exodus of blacks from the reserves to fill the increasing demand for cheap labour. For the black man, at first, this was a temporary arrangement and he used his earnings to buy land or agricultural implements as he decided to return to the land. This would

¹⁰ Allen, V.L., The History of Black Mine-workers in South Africa, Volume I, p. 59.

¹¹ Orpen, C., Productivity and Black Workers in South Africa, p. 71.

soon prove to be extremely difficult, and later on impossible. In the beginning his contact with Western society was too brief to leave an impression. It was only the male breadwinner who left for short periods and when he returned he would revert to the ways of the family. During his stay at the mines, he was also restricted to the compound area and did not spontaneously mix and mingle with the city folk. This situation would change by the time he came more regularly, for longer periods and had acquired a taste for Western life - the clothes, the liquor, the women.

Although the history of the discovery of gold seems like a very glamorous, prosperous part in the history of our country, it is also a history of struggle, poverty and hardship. On the one hand there were the mining magnates who became extremely rich and on the other hand there was the black worker, who worked long shifts, but earned barely enough to stay alive. "Black men became the core of its labour force at the heart of the economy thousands of feet underground. Their subterranean and compound existence was far removed from the leafy suburbs of South African towns or the British home counties where much of the financial wealth from the mines was deposited."¹² The history of gold mining in South Africa is filled with contrasts. Black and white, rich and poor, skilled and unskilled, permanent and temporary, city life and life in rural areas.

Men and eventually women, were forced to leave their land and earn wages in towns and cities. This was a tremendous economic shock for the black man as their tribal economy was leisurely, interrupted frequently by non-economic events and paced by the hours of daylight, the weather and the seasons. There was no drive to maximize production through timing the work day, controlling the rate of work by means of supervision and generally extracting the utmost from workers.¹³ The history of the South African economy is synonymous with the history of mining.

Fourthly, it must be borne in mind that this economic activity took place against the political background of 19th century South Africa: a political agenda which

¹² Beinart, W., Twentieth Century South Africa, p. 28.

¹³ Allen, V.L., p. 59.

consisted of white rule and black subordination, of whites being superior and blacks being inferior. This was a 200-year-old concept practised on a social, moral, religious, territorial, educational and economical level and would automatically be instituted in the gold mining industry as well. Employers thought of themselves as the patrons of the black workers, paying them low wages but at the same time teaching them the ways of civilization. They were considered as minors who had to be controlled and supervised.¹⁴ According to G. D. Scholtz it was beneath the dignity of the white South African to do the hard labour. "In the tweede plaas het die feit dat the meerderheid van die Afrikaner op die swaar vorme van arbeid neergesien het, veroorsaak dat hulle ekonomie van die nie-blanke afhanklik geraak het."¹⁵ Racial differentiation was more clearly defined in the mining industry in the late 19th century than ever before in the history of South Africa.

Overseas role-players, like the investors and the skilled workers, in the gold mining industry immediately accepted the racial barriers and applied it equally effectively. They became quite as racially prejudiced as their South African counterparts. W. Beinart agrees, "In the decades around the turn of the 20th century, South African society was deeply moulded by the British Imperial presence. Not only did Imperial armies, together with the commandos and cavalry of the settler states, finally complete the conquest of African chiefdoms, but a huge investment of European capital made the mining industry into the new economic motor of the country."¹⁶ In the process it would lay down and enforce racial barriers.

The discovery of minerals and precious metals in South Africa was a golden opportunity for black and white people to work shoulder to shoulder and enrich themselves, but racial prejudice prevailed, to no one's amazement. It was common practice. The gold mining industry could have benefited the black and white worker financially. It could have led to economic growth of the country and it was the one event that could bring black and white together. Instead it drove them further apart.

¹⁴ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 20.

¹⁵ Scholtz, G. D., p. 80.

¹⁶ Beinart, W., p. 2.

Prof. Herbert Frankel has estimated that half the population of South Africa obtained their livelihood directly or indirectly from the gold mining industry, and that more than half of the finances of the government were derived directly or indirectly from gold mining.¹⁷

Gold mining was the heartbeat of the South African economy. It was extremely important for the government and the mining companies to make a success of it. It was their first priority. For the black miner it was not a priority, but merely a means of earning cash wages to suit his own needs. He was not interested in production figures or profits or losses. Whether production increased or decreased, his low wages stayed the same. There was no incentive for the black worker yet to improve his productivity.

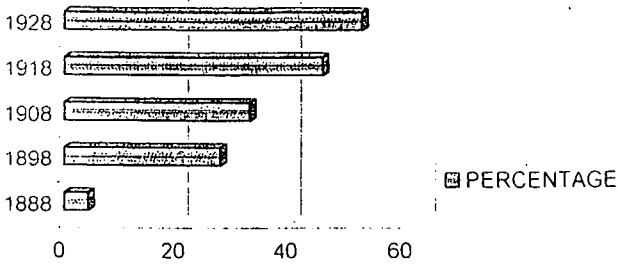
It is impossible to fully understand the gold mining industry in the late twentieth century unless its origins and amazing development are examined. To understand the crossroads at which the industry arrived in 1946 it is important to know how it arrived there. Policies were laid down, recruiting efforts were perfected and wage structures were stipulated, something which the industry was not willing to surrender when the new mines were discovered.

The growth of the mining industry in the late 19th century was amazing. Between 1890 and 1899 the number of Africans employed on the mine rose from about 14 000 to 97 000. By 1913 this figure had more than doubled to 155 000 and by 1936 had more than redoubled to 318 000.¹⁸

¹⁷ De Kiewiet, C.W., A History of South Africa, Social and Economic, p. 155.

¹⁸ Maylam, P., A History of the African People of South Africa, p. 145.

The following table indicates the South Africa's increased proportions of the world's total output of gold:



SOURCE: CHAMBER OF MINES, ANNUAL REPORT, 1975.

Mine management and the government tried to regulate and control the flow of black workers to and from the mines. As mine management and the government both favoured the migrant labour system, this was to be a continuous process that would last for more than a hundred years. Mine management favoured migrancy because of the financial implications of housing such a large work force and their families, feeding them and providing fringe benefits. The government favoured it because of its racial policies and the social implications.

The demand for cheap black labour was ever-increasing. Legassick argues that South Africa was ruled by an alliance formed by the Chamber of Mines and the capitalist farmers after 1886. The main aim of this alliance was to ensure that the government supported their quest for a steady flow of workers into these two sectors.¹⁹

¹⁹ Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., ed., South Africa in the 20th Century, p. 213.

The mine had to establish a sufficient recruiting system and for many years this came to be a highly competitive business. In 1893 the Chamber of Mines established a Native Labour Department which had the objective of assuring an adequate and regular supply of black labour from within South Africa and arranging recruitment of labourers from Mozambique. This was not very successful and towards the end of 1886, after a great deal of competition and expenditure, the Chamber of Mines formed the Rand Native Labour Organisation to recruit workers. This was more successful from the viewpoint of the mine-owners when by 1899 they had created a work force of 99 000 men at a wage considerably lower than ten years before.

In June 1896 it was felt that the time was right to reduce black wages from 2s 6 ¼ d per day to 2s a day. In 1897 it was reported by the Mine Managers Association that black wages should be reduced by a further 30%.²⁰

The pass laws came into effect from January 1, 1896, in an effort to control the black work force and prevent them from deserting. The enforcement of the law presented certain difficulties. The mines wanted special policemen appointed exclusively to deal with the enforcement of the laws and they suggested a special lock-up near the Pass Office in which blacks who were arrested could be kept until they were returned to the mines from which they had deserted.²¹ As early as in 1902 it was noted that out of 7 005 workers, 397 had deserted and that only 39 had been recaptured.²²

On March 14, 1902 the Chamber of Mines founded the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) to prevent mines from competing with each other for labour²³. This eliminated competition for black labour and unfortunately kept the

²⁰ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue 1892-1992, p. 14-15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²³ The recruited black workers were medically examined at the nearest recruiting station. Workers were again examined at the border of the Union of South Africa and for a third time at the main headquarters of WNLA in Johannesburg. In 1946 this organization had a staff of 200 white workers, 2 500 black workers operating from

wages of these workers low. Because of the low wages the black workers had to return repeatedly to the mines to earn cash wages, a situation which was welcomed by the mining companies, but dreaded by the black worker. The recruiting agency sent agents to black villages in Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana.²⁴ As early as 1903 WNLA recruited 47 197 black workers, of which 41 956 came from the south of Mozambique.²⁵

The beginning of the twentieth century was a difficult one for the mining industry. Not only had the Anglo-Boer War disrupted production, but immediately after the war the mines found themselves critically short of black labour. Some of the reasons for the shortage was a wage decrease from 2 ½ pounds a month before the war, to 1 ½ pounds a month after the war. "Except for work on farms, where there were generally better fringe benefits, this was probably the lowest cash wage for black labour in the whole of Southern Africa."²⁶

Another reason was the deplorable working conditions. The death rate for workers in 1903 was 80 per thousand and black workers were often assaulted by whites. In 1904 the mining industry was forced to import labour from China.²⁷ In the Annual Mine Managers' Report of 1909 the Chinese labourers are described, "As workers they were extremely good when on piece work, that is, when their pay depended entirely on their own exertions, and they exhibited a high standard of capacity. There is no doubt that the example of the Chinese is responsible, very largely, for the decided increase of efficiency shown by our Natives(sic) during the last three

121 offices, a fleet of 50 cars, 127 lorries, 20 barges on the Zambesi river and 3 coasting steamers. This organization also provides an Intelligence Service, through which relatives can be contacted and a compulsory deferred pay system which is stipulated by the governments from which these natives are recruited.

²⁴ Buell, R.L., *The Native Problem in Africa, Vol 1*, p. 29.

²⁵ Breytenbach, W.J., *Vreemde Bantoewerkers in Suid-Afrika en Rhodesië*, p. 12.

²⁶ Kidd, B., *Economic South Africa*, p. 77.

²⁷ Between 1904 and 1906 approximately 64 000 Chinese workers were sent to the South African gold-mines. Just like the black workers, they were only allowed to do certain jobs as white workers felt threatened by their presence.

years or so."²⁸ After pressure on the government by white workers, further recruitment of Chinese labourers was stopped in 1906 and by 1910 there were only a few Chinese left on the Rand.²⁴ The Chinese were replaced by more black workers. "The white miners had been profoundly disturbed by the importation of Chinese labour for the gold-mines, because it showed how vulnerable they were to displacement. They therefore extended their traditional demand for a closed shop, to prevent any advance into skilled jobs by African mineworkers at lower wages."³⁰ In the early years of the mining industry, white workers already made it clear that they would not tolerate giving up their skilled positions, neither to Chinese workers nor to black workers.

In 1912 the Chamber of Mines started the Native Recruiting Corporation to recruit black labourers from within South Africa and the High Commission Territories.³¹ Mine-owners realized that by unifying recruiting efforts they:

- could get more workers to the mines by making sure that they travelled safely
- would cut down costs as they would not have to pay the commissions of the recruiting agents
- would be able to control wages as all workers would be recruited by the same organization

²⁸ Annual Mine Mangers Report of 1909.

²⁹ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 77.

³⁰ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined. Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 126.

³¹ In 1946 this corporation had a staff of 153 white employees and 594 black employees. They were assisted by the 121 recruiting officers in the native territories. Black workers recruited by the NRC were medically examined at the nearest office of the corporation. They were then taken to the Rand under the care of conductors and their travelling expenses were paid for by the corporation. On their arrival in Johannesburg, they were again medically examined and sent to their respective mines. At the mines they were examined medically for the third time. The corporation also maintained an Intelligence Service, through which natives could keep in touch with their relatives and a Remittance Agency whereby natives could send money home. In addition a voluntary Deferred Pay System had been organised whereby natives might arrange for a portion of their pay to be kept back until they returned home.

- would be able to direct workers to the mines where they were most needed
- would be in a stronger position to stop migrants from getting offers of higher pay from other employers outside the mining industry.³²

The WNLA agent would move into a hut in the largest village and then send runners to nearby villages to recruit workers. The native chiefs assisted the WNLA agent to recruit workers in return for presents. The young men would then be ordered to join the mines. When the agent had enough men, they walked to the nearest station, which might be hundreds of miles away. They stayed overnight in rest camps and left for Germiston station. From there they were sent to the mines where the mine doctors often found that 1 out of every 8 was not fit to start working. The workers suffered from exhaustion and malnutrition. Recruiting from faraway countries had the advantage that workers stayed for longer periods.³³ It was more expensive to recruit from further away and the mines expected from these "foreign" workers to work longer contracts.

It is also interesting to note that between 1904 and 1929, Mozambique was the main single source of African labour and accounted for 40% of the work force on the Transvaal mines.³⁴ This factor proves that working in the gold mines did not appeal to the local black workers as mine management would have wished. It also proves that they were still able to make a living on the land they had left.³⁵

³² Callinicos, L., vol 1, p. 34.

³³ Because of the appalling death rates of pneumonia, recruiting from any area north of latitude 22 degree was prohibited in 1913.

³⁴ Maylam, P., p. 145.

³⁵ The 1936 census indicated that 37% of the African population were still working on farms, 45% were living in the reserves and only 17% were living in towns and cities.

The following table is an indication of the composition of the black work force on the mines in the early years:

REGION - %	1896-1898	1936
Transvaal	23.4	7
Natal	1	4.9
Swaziland	0	2.2
Cape Province	0	39.2
Lesotho	11.1	14.5
Free State	0	1.1
Botswana	3.9	2.3
Mozambique	60.2	27.8
North of Lat. 22 o	0.5	1.1

SOURCE: CHAMBER OF MINES

The recruiting system brought a stream of thousands of workers to the mines and eliminated competition between the various recruiting organizations. However, it limited the choices open to the black worker. The WNLA did provide a safer means of reaching the mines, but the system prevented the worker from choosing where he wanted to work, or on which mine he wished to work. The Chamber of Mines made sure that the workers were sent to the mines which needed the labour the most. The black worker was like a pawn on a chessboard. He was placed where he was needed, for as long as he was needed and removed when he ceased to be of any use to the white man's economy. Workers were often placed at the less popular mines where they were badly treated. When a worker reached the mine he was forced to sign a contract for the period he would work. The contract system, which was initiated by the diamond mines in Kimberley, lasted on average for only two months.³⁶ The gold mining industry stretched these contracts for periods from 3 1/2 - 10 months.

³⁶ By 1912 a South African mine worker had to do at least 90 shifts(3 1/2 months). By 1918 it was 180 shifts(7 months) and by 1924 it had increased to 270 shifts (10 months).

Mine management wanted to keep their workers as long as possible, because the longer the worker stayed, the more efficient he became. The more efficient he became, the more productive he was. That was the motto of mine management: to get as much out of their black workers as possible, without putting too much in. To management the black worker was just a pair of hands, a faceless individual, a number on a worksheet, who had to extract as much ore as possible during his contract. After his contract had expired, mine management accepted no responsibility for what happened to him.

Migrants, however, were reluctant to stay for longer periods than 6 months. They wanted to get back to their families, cattle and land, particularly during the ploughing season. It is no wonder that the mines experienced their biggest shortage of labour during the ploughing season. T.R.H Davenport gives two reasons, moreover, why blacks were reluctant to settle permanently in towns, "towns during these years offered little employment opportunities and thus blacks saw no reason to settle permanently in towns. Another reason could be that blacks felt attached to their farms and migration that took place was on a seasonal basis."³⁷

The whole transformation process of the black gold mine-workers took place very slowly when the contracts were short. Their contact with Western society was too brief and they were not favourable candidates for intensive training because of their temporary status. Only when their contracts became more permanent would they take up their rightful place on the labour front and in society.

Most of the migrants recruited from neighbouring countries stayed for 12-18 months. They gained more experience and learned to do the work faster and better, yet they were not rewarded for that. This in itself is a counter-productive measure.

The early years of mining in the twentieth century were not without turmoil. By 1911 there was an intensified conflict between 3 role-players: the government, which wanted prosperity, peace, stability and control, the white workers who wanted the

³⁷ Davenport, T.R.H., African Townsmen? South African Natives(Urban Areas) Legislation through the years, p. 95.

security of secure, well-paid jobs and the black workers who wanted advancement to better jobs. The black mine-workers found themselves restricted in numerous ways. Government was relying heavily on the mining industry and vice versa. The mine-owners needed the government to pass laws that would enable them to create and maintain the labour force they needed. P. Johnson remarks, "Because of the central importance of gold-mining to the nation's economy, government has always closely regulated its activities, especially its handling of labour."³⁸

Also in the picture was the white farmer who needed the labour of the black worker to farm more intensively. "The White farming communities were anxious to retain an adequate supply of cheap black labour to work on the farms."³⁹ The government had to keep their needs in mind too, as in fact it did. The pass laws and the recruitment of foreign labour by the Chamber of Mines at minimum rates of pay prevented any large-scale transfer of black labourers from the farms to the mines.⁴⁰

In the years before the turn of the century the black man was restricted by the various taxes he had to pay. In the early years of the twentieth century the black man found himself restricted by laws on land and laws that would keep him from acquiring any skills that would enable him to move upward in the labour market. Again mine management acted counter-productively. Management did what was politically acceptable, but not feasible from a financial point of view.

African mine-workers were also severely restricted through the pass laws. The intention of the pass law was to check for desertion, and it controlled the movement of black workers from one area to another.

By 1910 the status of the black mine-worker in the gold-mines of South Africa had changed but little. He was still regarded as a temporary visitor to the mines, he still did not have any skills as white workers claimed these as their domain and he found himself restricted in numerous ways. "The very solidity of the state provided the stepping-stones for whites, both English and Afrikaans-speaking, to take power and

³⁸ Johnson, P., Consolidated Goldfields. A Centenary Portrait, p. 58.

³⁹ Lannings, G., Mueller, M., p. 126.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 127.

entrench a system of racially based dominance that was unique in its rigidity. Segregation until 1948, followed by apartheid, were policies aimed not simply at separating white from black, but at regulating the way in which the indigenous population was drawn into a new society.⁴¹ The black people would only be drawn into society when the white people wished it and to the extent that would please the whites.

The dilemma of the black worker did not go completely unnoticed. In 1911 the Labour Relations Act was passed in an effort to try and stop the ill-treatment of black workers on the mines, on farms and in towns.⁴² This law laid down that:

- all compound managers should be licensed
- workers should be paid their wages in cash
- a contract had to be written down and explained to the worker in the presence of a magistrate, so that the worker knew what to expect from a job.
- the number of people allowed to sleep in any room of a certain size to prevent unhealthy crowding
- the minimum amount of food that a worker should be given at work
- that an employer had to provide medical care for a sick worker

Unfortunately the government did not appoint a sufficient number of inspectors to check the conditions on the mines, so the compounds remained cold and crowded.

However, another law was passed in 1911; the Mines and Works Act of 1911.⁴³ It was designed to control conditions of work and safety in the mines. It also contained a section limiting the granting of certificates of competency for jobs such as engine driving, blasting and surveying only to white miners. This law became a major obstacle in the transformation process of the black mine-worker as it eliminated him completely from certain semi-skilled and skilled jobs and put a label on him designating him by law as an unskilled worker. These restrictions would

⁴¹ Beinart, W., p. 3.

⁴² Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 37

⁴³ Crush, J., a.o., p. 7.

only be relaxed in the 1970s and lifted in 1988 on account of political and economical pressures.

The contract system further restricted the worker. Under this system the worker had to remain until mine management was satisfied that he had finished his contract. If a worker became ill, he had to stay longer to finish his shifts. If he was unhappy about working conditions he could not leave, as it was considered a criminal offence to desert and a worker could be sent to prison on this account.

If he was unhappy about his wages, there was nothing he could do. White workers could bargain for better wages, but what was a right for the white worker, was a crime for the black one. White miners had political power on account of their vote, but the black man less fortunate. The black worker not only came up against the white miner, but also against a white government that regarded it as their duty to protect the white man against the labour of the blacks.

As long as migrants were still able to make a living in the rural areas, they would stick to the pattern of working on the mines for a few months to earn cash wages, and then returning to the land to cultivate the soil. This phenomenon left the mines vulnerable to fluctuations in their labour supply as the migrants still had a back door open.

Although pressure for the Land Act of 1913 came primarily from farmers, its effects were to prove more beneficial to the Chamber of Mines which drew such a large portion of its work force from the "overcrowded" reserves.⁴⁴ Legassick is of the opinion that the purpose of the Land Act of 1913 was to spread the black labour force more evenly over the white-controlled areas, and to force black farmers and share-croppers either to become labour tenants or wage labourers.⁴⁵ The soil was

⁴⁴ The Land Act of 1913 divided the land in South Africa between blacks and whites. No white person could own land in a black area and no black could own land in a white area, except in the Cape. If blacks lived on white-owned land they had to work for the landowner, otherwise they had to live in the reserves. The reserves formed less than 10% of the land in South Africa.
Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., p. 214.

becoming poorer and it was more difficult to make a living off the land and support a family.⁴⁶

Labour relations on the mines, were not without conflict. As early as 1897 white miners went on strike when the Chamber of Mines tried to cut their wages. White miners prevented the reductions in their wages from being made, but the wages of black labourers were sharply reduced. In 1907 white miners protested against competition by black workers. In July 1913 white miners went on a massive strike to get their trade unions recognized by the mines. Another reason for the strike was the improved skill levels of the black miner as it is reported in the Mine Managers' Annual Report, "To sum up, therefore, I am of the opinion that the causes of unrest amongst our miners were due to the advancing skill of the native."⁴⁷ After riots and bloodshed mine management agreed to recognise white trade unions.

The unrest was not confined to white miners only. After the Anglo-Boer War thousands of black workers boycotted the mines because these had dropped their wages. In the Robinson Mines, 1 600 workers deserted in one year after their wages had been decreased. No one was caught or returned to the mines. In 1897, 14 000 black workers deserted from 33 mines, without anyone getting caught and brought back to the mines.⁴⁸

They went to look for jobs on the railways and in towns instead. This led to serious shortages on the mines. Desertion was quite common on the mines. If they were not satisfied with their wages or working conditions, they simply left. As long as the black worker still had his land and his cattle, he could afford simply to leave and return another day, but when he lost his hold on his land, he became dependent on the mining industry and very vulnerable in the process.

⁴⁶ Marks, S., Rathbone, R., Industrial and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870-1930, p. 207.; Keegan, T.J., Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa, p. 182.

⁴⁷ Association of Mine Managers report of 1913.

⁴⁸ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 41.

Another form of resistance by black workers was non-co-operation. Workers deliberately pretended not to understand orders. They co-operated as little as possible and even broke their tools. Some workers were careful not to do any more than they had to and some pretended not to understand orders.⁴⁹

The earliest recorded black mine workers' strike took place as early as 1896.⁵⁰ As in many years to come, their discontent was due to their low wages. It was a passive form of resistance: not returning to work, not doing as much as they needed and desertion. It was soon over and little notice was taken of their protests. The black workers were still too much divided into tribal and territorial groups and as yet had no idea of the extent to which the industry depended on their labour.

After the Anglo-Boer War it was important for South Africa to get the gold-mines functioning as soon as possible and to increase production. As the mines were all committed to start producing as soon as possible, there was a severe shortage of black labour. Black mine-workers were dissatisfied to find that their wages were even lower than before the war, but they were in no position to bargain for better wages. As stated, they were infants in industrial society and trade unions and bargaining for wages was not part of their vocabulary.

1.2 THE COLOUR-BAR

The industrial colour-bar in the South African economy and in the mining industry as such, has its roots in the attitudes of white South Africans who believed that they were superior in status and social standing to blacks. They were the masters, and the black workers the servants. They could read and write, while the blacks were illiterate, they wore civilized clothes, while the blacks wore animals skins, they went to church, while the blacks believed in the spirits of their ancestors. It was not only an attitude, but a way of life which mine management understood and applied in the

⁴⁹ Callinicos, L., Working Life. Volume 2. Factories, Townships and Popular Culture on the Rand, 1886-1940, p. 89.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 89.

industry, often in spite of protest, as it was more economical for management to use more black workers and fewer white workers. De Kiewiet remarks, "To extend the use of native labour was a better economy than remission in taxation or a reduction in customs duties."⁵¹

The cause of the rivalry between blacks and whites were at first over land, water and suitable grazing for their cattle. It would not take many years before it changed to labour, and more specifically about semi-skilled and skilled labour.

By 1911 thirty-five per cent of white miners were South Africans who had been reared with the attitude that whites were superior to blacks. They took these attitudes with them to the mines on the Rand and stated blatantly that they did not want blacks to do the skilled work as they were incompetent. "They brought into industry still more emphatically the thought and the distinctions of the frontier. Black was black, white was white, and it was intolerable that the two should meet in equality over a machine, a drill or a railway carriage."⁵² From the onset, whites were appointed as supervisors over the blacks. Under the prevailing political and ideological conditions, whites had an assumed authority over blacks which was accepted by management.

The colour-bar was not invented by the mining industry, only polished and perfected by it. In the early history of South Africa the manual labour was left entirely to the slaves and later to the coloureds and blacks. Eventually the frontier farmers came to regard any form of hard labour as the natural function of Black workers. C. Orpen agrees, "During the frontier period an association developed between a white skin and certain kinds of work on the one hand, and between a black skin and other kinds of work on the other hand."⁵³

Initially the inexperienced black workers did not possess any skills beyond an ability to perform the simplest repetitive tasks. Through observation and experience they eventually acquired some measure of skill and this made the white worker feel

⁵¹ De Kiewiet, C.W., p. 165.

⁵² Ibid., p. 166.

⁵³ Orpen, C., p. 6.

threatened. De Kiewiet writes, "Although the great proportion of natives never left the ranks of unskilled labour, a certain number crossed the frontier into more skilled work. When the rock in the mines was drilled laboriously by hand, it was accounted native work. When machine drilling was introduced, natives learned to use the machines efficiently and were not replaced. The graduation of natives from unskilled to semi-skilled operations expanded the use which the mining companies could make of cheap labour."⁵⁴

The first trade unions in South Africa emerged from 1888 and were craft unions, composed of white artisans whose original aim was to protect the standard of living to which they were accustomed. From about 1904 the white unions became increasingly involved in resisting the dilution of skilled labour. M. Horrell writes, "When rising costs on the gold-mines caused the employers to plan a more economical use of their labour force and Africans were introduced into semi-skilled categories, the attention of the white miners became focussed on the fight to prevent the use of non-white labour to undermine white wage rates."⁵⁵

In 1911 the Mines and Works Act was introduced to protect white workers against cheap black labour was promulgated. The act set aside 32 types of jobs in the Transvaal and Free State to be performed by whites only. "It sheltered whites from competition from the low-paid and increasingly skilled black worker and therefore imposed higher wage costs on management."⁵⁶ De Kiewiet agrees, "In the interest of health, safety, and discipline the use of non-Europeans in many employments upon the mines was forbidden. In reality the Mines and Works Act curbed the use which the mines could make of cheap labour, and placed upon the mines the burden of social policy which aimed at maintaining the economic superiority of the

⁵⁴ De Kiewiet, C.W., p. 165.

⁵⁵ Horrell, M., South Africa's Workers. Their Organizations and the Patterns of Employment, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Crush, J, a.o., p. 7.; Finnemore, M., van der Merwe, R., Introduction to Industrial Relations in South Africa, p. 3.

white race.⁵⁷ Legassick calls the colour-bar, "a defensive reaction by white workers who could not compete against low-wage blacks."⁵⁸

In a way the separation of black and white mine-workers suited mining companies as the work force became divided and would not unify against the companies. Johnstone writes, "the mines favoured the colour-bar because it divided white from black labour. It inhibited the emergence of common purpose and helped to preserve the economies of the migrant labour system."⁵⁹

The most important jobs on the mines, for unskilled workers were hammering or drilling, so that dynamite could be placed into the holes, and secondly to shovel rocks into trucks and trams.⁶⁰ Physically this was extremely hard work. Originally large rock drilling machines had been operated by white artisans, assisted by one or two African helpers. It soon became clear that the African was quite capable of operating the drill on his own. By 1907 it was clear that many of the manual tasks could be performed by Africans. This is how blacks became rock drillers with a white man to supervise.⁶¹

Deep-level mining was new to South Africa and experienced men had to be recruited from England, Scotland, Wales and Australia. They brought not only their skills as workers, but also as union members, and they exercised strong influence

⁵⁷ De Kiewiet, C.W., p. 166.

⁵⁸ Legassick, M., Gold, Agriculture and Secondary Industry in South Africa, 1885-1970, p. 187.

⁵⁹ Johnstone, F., Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa, p. 93.; Lacey, M., Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa, p. 183.

⁶⁰ Hammer boys went underground at 5 am in the morning, equipped with four-pound hammers and a set of freshly-sharpened drills plus candles and matches, a can of water and an old cloth. A single gang contained from 40-60 people and the positions of holes they had to drill were marked out with white paint. The black worker had to attach his candle to the rock face and then he tackles the rock by alternately hitting the drill with his hammer and turning it with his free hand. He would frequently squirt a mouthful of water to turn the dust to slush and then scoop it out. By tradition each man was required to complete a metre-deep hole per shift and was paid a bonus for anything extra. Hocking, A., p. 100.

⁶¹ Bozzoli, B., p. 303.

on the South African white workers. The skilled foreign workers soon organized themselves into unions and bargained for better wages and working conditions. In 1913 the Transvaal Miners' Association had 6 000 members.⁶² When other workers began to learn the skills involved in deep-level mining, these immigrants opened up their unions to all white workers. B. Bozzoli writes, "From the outset, white employees in the mining industry had relied upon capital's dependence on their skills to secure and defend their relatively high wages."⁶³ They also began to support political parties that would look after the interests of the white worker. The emphasis in the South African labour market then shifted from skill to race.

V.L. Allen comments, "In all societies where blacks and whites competed directly in either the labour or the commodity markets, the poor-whites were the most racist in their daily attitudes. In the mines, in consequence, the harshest and most brutal racism was found amongst whites who were just one occupational step above the blacks."⁶⁴ It was mostly in the presence of these white workers that blacks had to fulfil their daily duties. There could only be a hostile atmosphere underground.

In years to come, the white miners would use the unions and political power to protect themselves against mine-owners' attempts to replace them with cheaper black labour.

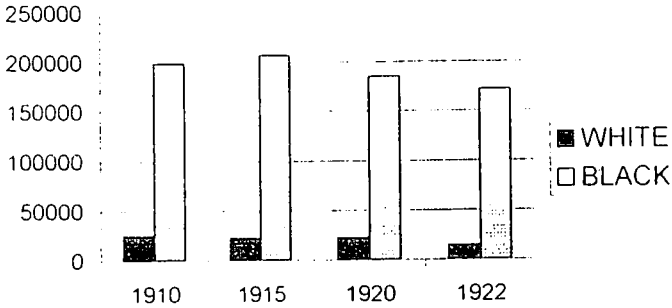
White mine-workers did have grounds to base their fears on as the following statistics indicate that the black labour force was increasing and the white labour

⁶² Callinicos, L., Vol 2, p. 72.

⁶³ Bozzoli, B., p. 304.

⁶⁴ Allen, V.L., p. 106.

force was declining.⁶⁵



SOURCE: UNION STATISTICS FOR FIFTY YEARS

The black, unskilled workers did not have the right to bargain for better wages and better working conditions. In 1911 it was decided moreover, that black workers would receive less compensation than whites after accidents on the mines and that it was a criminal offence for black workers to break their contracts or go on a strike. It is not that black workers never attempted to strike at all. They endeavoured to do so, only to be faced with the law. In 1913 black miners tried to hold a meeting, but the leaders were arrested and sentenced to 6 months hard labour. The strike grew to include 4 mines and more than 9 000 black miners were involved. The strike was followed in 1914 by the Riotous Assembly Act through which the government had the power to ban any outdoor meetings.

The government did set up a commission to look into the complaints of the black workers. There were positive changes made in the compounds, in respect of medical care and in day-to-day matters. For example, a bigger lift cage was

⁶⁵

Union Statistics for Fifty Years, Jubilee Issue, Pretoria, 1960.

installed and heating was provided in winter. However, wages remained low and the black worker was still treated as a puppet on a string.

In 1913 the question was asked in the annual report of the Mine Managers Association, what the consequences would be if the colour-bar were to be dropped in the mining industry. It was estimated that it would result in a saving of 1/10d per ton milled.⁶⁶

It must be emphasised that, although the black mine-workers had no rights, they were becoming well aware of their importance to the mining industry as this pamphlet clearly illustrates:

Listen! Workers! Listen!

Native Workers! Why do you keep in slavery? Why can't you get free as other men? Why are you kicked about and be spat on by your white employers? Why is it that you cannot go where you like without passes? Why is it that you are imprisoned when you are found without a pass? Why do you labour so hard for low wages, and why is it that you are sent to goal when you refuse to go to work? Why are you encamped in the compounds as cattle? Why is it so?

You do all the work. Without you they cannot live. You are their life. Take note of that. You are oppressed and milked and you are their cows they live on. Then you are robbed of all that belongs to you.

You have long been sleeping and the white men robbing your strength for nothing.⁶⁷

Further proof that they did not merely accept their situation passively is found in the fact that they differentiated between mines and simply deserted when they became dissatisfied. "Through an extensive oral reportage system potential workers rapidly developed an awareness, not only of the range of employment and wage rates available, but also of the variety of living and working conditions on each of the mines."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue 1892-1992, p. 26.

⁶⁷ National Archives, Pretoria. Archives of the Department of Justice, File Series JD 3/527/17, Pretoria, 1915.

⁶⁸ Maylam, P., p. 148.

During the First World War little attention was paid to prevent the organization of labour. After the war when returning soldiers had to be accommodated in the labour market, the cost of living had increased and a large number of poor-whites had moved into the cities, things were brought to a climax. Black labour also had its aspirations.⁶⁹ In 1918 black workers formed the organization, the Industrial Workers of Africa(IWA). It was not a political body, but an industrial organization whose aims were to organize workers and strike actions and to bargain for better wages. In fact, it was the first black trade union in South Africa. Despite the efforts of the IWA and, later on, the ICU black workers were still in the very unfavourable position of having to accept what was handed out to him and they had neither political nor industrial power.⁷⁰

Until the Second World War, it was the main characteristic of labour relations, that laws and amendments were designed to draw more clearly the lines between white workers, usually skilled, on the one hand, and black workers, usually unskilled, on the other hand.

Low wages were a form of power for mine management. To increase the wages for black workers would mean that they would work for shorter periods and return to their birthplace for longer periods. The Native Recruiting Corporation was of the opinion that wages should be kept low so that workers would stay for longer periods. Trading stores were set up close to the compounds. Here they sold boots, soap, cigarettes, blankets, clothes and drinks. Workers were encouraged to

⁶⁹ Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa, No. 4, p. 330.

⁷⁰ ICU is short for the Industrial and Commercial Union which was started in 1919 with Clements Kadalie, a black man from Malawi as the National Secretary. The workers' union had black and coloured members and protested about issues on a national level. The various branches in South Africa had support on the docks, in the railway services and with municipal workers, but it also had a large rural support. The organization reached a peak in 1927 when it had 100 000 members.

Horrell, M., South Africa's Workers: Their Organizations and the Patterns of Employment, p. 2; Liebenberg, I., (ed), The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa, p. 11.

spend some of their money so by the time their contracts expired, they needed to stay longer to save enough money.

During the nineteenth century black workers still had some hold on mine management. Whenever they were dissatisfied with their wages and conditions, they would leave the mines to return to tribal life with its subsistence farming. After 1913 when they lost most of the land and the reserves became over-populated and eroded, they even lost the small hold they did possess.

The issue for mine management in the years before and after the First World War was to make the most economical use of its labour force. Economically it would have been better for the mines to allow blacks into certain jobs, but, seen against the political and social background of South Africa, this would have had tremendous implications.

The colour-bar did cause a productivity problem. White workers worked shorter hours, and according to regulations, black workers had to be supervised by whites. This meant that black workers could only start working when their supervisors had arrived for work and many man-hours were wasted in the process. In 1919 Sir E. Walters said in his presidential speech at the 30th general meeting of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, "At the same time we must not lose sight of the fact that the Native will not for ever - nor indeed, by all signs, for very long - be satisfied with his present position in industry."⁷¹

The white miners were quick to strike in support of their demands and between 1913 and 1919 negotiated wage increases of more than 40%, as well as a reduction in working hours.⁷²

The First World War period was a prosperous time for the Rand mines. The price of gold went up and the mines increased their profits. The war had caused a shortage of skilled labour and the Chamber of Mines were willing to accept the white trade unions and negotiate to protect the jobs of white workers. After the war

⁷¹ Gregory, T., Ernest Oppenheimer and the Economic Development of Southern Africa, p. 496.

⁷² Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 128.

it was an entirely different story. The price of gold dropped and to make matters worse, the price of heavy machinery increased, so that expenses at the mines went up and its income decreased. From 1914 to 1919 working costs rose from 17s 5d to 22s 9d per ton milled.⁷³ Under this kind of pressure the marginal or low-grade mines were likely to close down.⁷⁴ Mine management could not cut back on wages of the black workers, as these were already so low they tried to re-organize the labour force.⁷⁵ A new machine, the jack-hammer could drill between, 20-40 holes per shift instead of 4-6.⁷⁶ Mine-owners could now lay hundreds of white workers off and give their jobs to the more experienced black workers.

When the gold price dropped even further from 130s per ounce in February 1920 to 95s per ounce in December 1921, turmoil became unavoidable. In 1920 the Low Grades Mines Commission recommended the replacement of expensive white labour by cheaper black labour and the abolition of the legal colour-bar to cut costs and provide more opportunities for black workers.⁷⁷

Just how seriously the white workers fought to maintain their privileged status is mentioned in the report of the Low Grade Mines Commission. "The principal obstacle in the way of employing competent natives on skilled or semi-skilled work in the mining industry is the objection of the white worker. This point of view is seriously maintained, and several witnesses representing the views of the white workers have said that, rather than give way on the colour-bar, they would prefer to see the low grade mines close down, despite the resulting unemployment and misery which such calamity would cause."⁷⁸

⁷³ It is the British money system. The "s" is for shillings and the "d" for pennies. The system was used in South Africa until 1960.

⁷⁴ In March 1919 the Chamber of Mines forecasted that if things prevailed 31 mines employing 14 400 whites would be in the balance.

⁷⁵ The wages of the black mine-worker had increased with just over half a penny to 2s 0.3d per shift.

⁷⁶ Callinicos, L., Vol 2, p. 81.

⁷⁷ U.G. 34-1920, Report of the Low Grade Mines Commission, p. 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 27.

Mine management spent many months bargaining with the white unions, but in 1921 they reduced the wages of white workers and dismissed many of them.⁷⁹ The slogan of the white workers during the turmoil was "Workers of the World Unite and Fight for a White South Africa!" De Kiewiet writes, "The cry ran through all the ranks of white labour that the Chamber of Mines was debasing white men to the level of black men. The ideal of a white South Africa was being sacrificed by an unholy alliance between foreign capitalists and a corrupt government. An industry which had produced over 8 million fine ounces of gold each year since 1909 could not be permitted to abandon its responsibility to civilized men."⁸⁰

On January 3, 1922 the Chamber of Mines announced that 2 000 white miners were to be laid off and new conditions of service would come into operation in February 1922.⁸¹ This led to the strike in 1922 where 25 000 white workers wanted to reinstate the colour-bar. The strike, which lasted for 67 days, did not culminate in favour of the white miners, as their wages were cut by 20-25% and they lost two paid public holidays. During the strike, 247 persons were killed and 591 injured.

The white miners' average wage decreased from 485 pounds to 375 pounds.⁸² White trade unions also received a tremendous blow. The Chamber of Mines withdrew its recognition of trade unions, a condition of service was laid down that a worker could not be a member of a union, union leaders were dismissed and members' names placed on a black list.⁸³ It was to be the new Coalition government of 1924 that would come to the rescue of the white miner.

Black workers now started doing semi-skilled jobs such as drill sharpening, waste-packing, engine-driving, pumping and carpentering. Mine-owners also saved

⁷⁹ The price of gold dropped from 130 s per fine ounce in February 1920 to 95s per fine ounce in December 1921.

⁸⁰ De Kiewiet, C. W., p. 170.; Hocking, A., p. 106.

⁸¹ Du Toit, M.A., South African Trade Unions, History, Legislation, Policy, p. 12.; Finnemore, M., van der Merwe, R., p. 4.

⁸² Herd, N., 1922: The Revolt on the Rand, p. 17.; Oberholster, A.G., Die Mynerkerstaking van 1922, p. 183.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 13.; Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 35.

money by allowing black workers to start their working day without their white supervisors.⁸⁴

So by 1922 the status of the black gold mine worker had improved. He was regarded as responsible enough to start his day without white supervision and more complicated tasks were assigned to him. The black worker had acquired some measure of skill and was given a limited amount of responsibility.

As the mines were private companies, with American and English connections, aimed at making profit, they must have preferred the low-paid black workers to the well-paid whites. It must be re-emphasised that the mines functioned for the benefit of their shareholders and were not philanthropic operations.

A black worker could survive on 2 shillings a day, because he had the compounds to house and feed him. White workers had to be provided for in towns and their salaries had to be of such a nature that care could be taken of their families. White workers also had the additional expense of taking care of the medical and educational needs of a entire family, while the black worker was regarded as single and his social security lay in the reserves with his family. The political front was about to change and along with that the status of the black worker would take a step backwards.

In 1924 the coalition between the National and Labour Parties came into power. With a clear mandate from the electorate, the plight of the skilled white worker and of poor-whites would be answered. G. Lanning comments, "The bitterness of the white mineworker and their desire to revenge themselves on Smuts and the mine-owners pushed the Nationalists, and the Labour Party into a formal alliance."⁸⁵ In the same year the Industrial Conciliation Act was passed to create the necessary machinery to settle industrial disputes. All blacks were specifically excluded from it. The government would look after the interest of the white workers and only two years later the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 was passed. In terms of

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

⁸⁵ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 130.

this act, blacks and Indians were barred from jobs such as mine overseers, mine surveyors, mechanical engineers, engine drivers and blasters. This was a step backward for black mine-workers and they would continue to pay for the colour-bar, through low wages and lost opportunities.⁸⁶

There was clear evidence from the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, before the Native Economic Commission of 1930, that there was not the slightest doubt that it could do with a materially smaller number of Whites by instead employing a large number of leading blacks and boss boys. In the Rhodesian Copperbelt the colour-bar was lifted, but the White Mine Workers' Union in South Africa was strongly opposed to any change in the labour structure. This time it had the backing of the Coalition Government. The political scenario in the 1920s reversed any advancement the black gold mine worker had made in the more skilled job categories. It would be an uphill struggle for the latter to advance in the future and the white government proved to be a tough adversary.

1.3 WHO WERE THE MINING COMPANIES WHO HELD THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN THEIR HANDS?

The mining magnates who made their fortunes of the goldfields of South Africa played a very important role in the transformation process of the black gold mine worker as they were the ones who directly regulated and manipulated the workers. They held the key to the future of the black miners. In fact they held the key to the future of a whole country, as gold mining was the heartbeat of the South African economy. These magnates were the puppeteers and the black miners were the puppets. Because of their power, financial status and expertise the former held the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in their hands and would determine their future. There were times when the mining companies they represented indicated

⁸⁶ Lipton, M., Capitalism and Apartheid. South Africa, 1910-1984, p. 113.

that they wished to improve conditions and wages for their black work force, but these intentions were not in line with the politics of the day.

Right from its origin, South African gold-mining was not for the gold miner with a bucket and a spade. Because of the depth of the gold deposits it required vast capital costs and expertise to extract the gold. Even in the 1890s it cost up to two million pounds to start a new gold mine in South Africa.⁸⁷

The South African mining industry is led by and revolves around, six giants - Anglo-American, Gencor, Barlow Rand, Goldfields of SA, Anglovaal Mining and Johnnies. The South African mining industry revolves around these finance houses. Each of these finance houses is primarily an investment company, but at the same time contracted to provide management, technical services and financial security to the group of mines it controls. Although each individual mine is floated as a separate company, with its own shareholders, chairman, board of directors, and mine manager, it is controlled by one of the giant mining houses. These companies are in fact monuments to some of the biggest figures in international mining history - Cecil John Rhodes, Barney Barnato, Ernest Oppenheimer, George and Leopold Albu and Adolf Goertz. They were the people who survived an almost endless series of labour disputes, takeovers, wars and strikes to form the foundations of South African mining.⁸⁸

Lulu Callinicos describes the early mine-owners, "The Randlords were a small group of powerful mine-owners with experience of the Kimberley diamond mines. They were able to gain control of the gold-mines with the capital they had gained from diamonds. They made themselves and the gold-mines even stronger by forming the Chamber of Mines to look after their interests. Their control over the gold-mines also gave them government support."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Green, T., The New World of Gold. The Inside story of the Mines, the Markets the Politics, the Investors, p. 33.

⁸⁸ SA Mining, Coal, Gold and Base Minerals, October 1985, p. 113.

⁸⁹ Callinicos, L., p. 18.

J.A. Hobson writes, 'It would be safe to say that this tiny group of men hold in their control the financial, the industrial and the political destinies of South Africa. Every important interest is directly managed by these men and their close business associates. They directly control banks, railways, telegraphs, coal mines and through the finance and trust companies which they direct, are able to control many other companies.'⁹⁰

The prime initiators of the group system on the South African gold-mines, were Cecil John Rhodes and Charles Rudd who formed Consolidated Goldfields of South Africa in 1887.⁹¹ This company was the first company registered in Britain to bring the Rand goldfields before the British investing public.⁹² The company is the only one of the finance houses linked directly with a major shareholder outside South Africa in London. The South African house is directly responsible for the administration of the group's eight gold-mines. When news broke of the discovery of gold on the Rand, they were absorbed in the establishment of De Beers Diamond Mines in Kimberley, but within a year they were involved in gold mining on a large scale. To Goldfields belongs the credit for the opening of the far West Rand reef. T. Green remarks on the company, "For many years, Anglo American and Goldfields of South Africa set the pace of gold mine development, and overshadowed the other mining houses."⁹³

Today most mining houses have diversified to such an extent that industrial and commercial investment holds much of the limelight, but GFSA has primarily stayed with its first love - gold.⁹⁴ Its portfolio was enlarged to include uranium, coal, lead,

⁹⁰ Hobson, H.A., *The Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, p. 272.

⁹¹ Cecil John Rhodes was by far the richest and the most powerful man. He was chairman of De Beers Consolidated and Consolidated Goldfields and he was premier of the Cape Colony since 1890. In 1895 his annual income was conservatively estimated at half a million pounds. Lanning, G. Mueller, M., p. 48.; Hocking, A., p. 138.

⁹² Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 48.

⁹³ Green, T., p. 41.

⁹⁴ In 1983 the company's net assets were valued at almost R3 000 million of which no less than 81% of group assets were in gold and uranium and 9% in other minerals.

silver, zinc, copper and tin and the company also became involved in finance and banking, industry and commerce. "This group is generally considered the most conservative of the South African mining houses and has resisted initiatives to improve the pay of black mineworkers."⁹⁵

In 1889 the flamboyant Barney Barnato, Rhodes's great rival, set up the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company(JCI), better known as Johnnies.⁹⁶ It was started as an estate company, which was more concerned with what occurred on the surface rather than underground. Later, Barnato's nephew Solly Joel involved the company in mining.⁹⁷ When it eventually turned to the mining industry, it did so with panache and by 1923 was running no less than 25% of South Africa's entire gold output.⁹⁸ This company was administered from London until 1963.

Johnnies had taken over the infant suburbs of Houghton, Yeoville, Doornfontein and Berea, the Johannesburg Waterworks Corporation, started the Barnato Bank and acquired a sizeable stake in South African Breweries before it delved into diamond and gold mining shares. It continued its relationship with South African Breweries and in 1982/83 its income from this source amounted to R18,1 million. This was more than the company's income from gold which was R17 million for the same period.⁹⁹ Rand Mines Limited was established in 1893 by two of the wealthiest of the Kimberley diamond dealers, Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit. It has grown from a one-man merchandising business dealing mainly in imported engineering supplies into a vast industrial company which in 1983 ranked 69th in Fortune's directory of the 500 largest corporations outside the United States. A total labour force of 230 000 was employed in 1983 in spheres as diverse as mining and construction, food

⁹⁵ Lannings, G., p. 315.

⁹⁶ Barney Barnato even owned the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

⁹⁷ In June 1896 Joel owned 40 mines, Wernher Beit and Kie owned 24, Cecil John Rhodes and his company Consolidated Goldfields had 29, the Barnato group owned 21, George Farrar were working 13 mines, Goerz and Kie owned 7 and Albu had 8.

Scholtz, G.D., p. 80.; Hocking, A., p. 138.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹⁹ SA Mining, Coal, Gold and Base Minerals, October 1985.

and textiles. The majority of the group's operating companies are based in South Africa, but trading interests are also held in Britain, Western Europe and the United States. Its shares are listed on no fewer than 10 stock exchanges around the world. This firm is best known for its distinctive headquarters, Corner House, which was a landmark in Johannesburg. In 1971 Rand Mines was taken over by the Barlow Group and the combination became known as Barlow Rand. Through the efforts of mr "Punch" Barlow, the company acquired the Transvaal Consolidated Land and Exploration Company and the new company was formed. At the time of the takeover, the company's operations were dominated by distribution and merchandising - earth moving equipment, motor vehicles, steel, building materials and engineering supplies. The introduction of Rand Mines triggered a change of emphasis to manufacturing rather than distribution. Rand Mines is also the owner of Harmony Gold Mine, one of the largest gold-mines in the world.

George Farrar, an English engineer and the only mine-owner without a Kimberley connection established the East Rand Proprietary Mines(ERPM) in 1893. Although the largest portion of capital invested in South Africa's gold mining industry came from England, the Germans and the French were also interested.

The German George Albu and his brother Leopold arrived in Johannesburg in 1888 and founded the General Mining and Finance Corporation as a mining finance house seven years later. Within fifteen years they held control of seven of the richest gold-mines on the Rand. On their heels came another German, Adolf Goertz, who laid the foundation stone for the company Union Corporation.¹⁰⁰

Another diamond dealer, Anton Dunkelsbuhler, who went to Kimberley as early as 1872, created the Consolidated Mines Selection Trust as a mining finance house in 1897. This company, under the guidance of Ernest Oppenheimer became the Anglo-American Corporation in 1917.¹⁰¹ Anglo-American was founded in 1917 with

¹⁰⁰ General Mining and Union corporation merged in 1980 to become GENCOR, the second largest mining house in the world.

¹⁰¹ Ernest Oppenheimer was originally a diamond sorter, who steadily matured into an outstanding financier. He masterminded the Anglo American Corporation and wanted

an original capital of one million pounds, raised primarily from British, American and South African capital. Ernest Oppenheimer, became the first manager and it was his belief that "a nation's natural wealth should benefit all her people" and this would become the policy of Anglo American.¹⁰² There has been an Oppenheimer at the helm ever since 1917, until in 1982 when mr Harry Oppenheimer bowed out to concentrate on running De Beers, the company's diamond twin. The company has its headquarters at 44 Main Street in Johannesburg.¹⁰³ Sir Ernest Oppenheimer dominated South African gold mining for several decades and his influence still lingered long after his death in 1957. During the past years, Anglo's main strength has lain in the Free State Goldfields. Anglo's interest in the Free State is an example of the risks the mining houses often have to take. When the company invested in the Free State, there were no roads, railways, power or water supplies. It was a gamble as Adriaan Louw of Goldfields of South Africa once said, "No one would start a mine today on the basis of the information that was available on Free State in 1946."¹⁰⁴ It was a risk, Oppenheimer was willing to take.

During the 1960s when the gold price remained at \$35 and no one was willing to start a new gold mine, Anglo diversified and invested in breweries, steel plants, paper and property. In the 1970s, when the gold price soared, Anglo's strategy was to merge an old mine with an existing mine to create a bigger mine. The advantage of such tactics was that the profits of the old mine, which would otherwise go for tax, could be used for expansion.

In mining, Anglo has important investments in gold and uranium, diamonds, coal, platinum, copper, nickel, oil and gas, tin, potash, iron ore, vanadium, lead, zinc, manganese and wolfram. Investments on the industrial side range from steel and

the group to work with gold and diamonds. Hocking, A., p. 139.

¹⁰² Brown, J.A., So Rich an Inheritance, p. 61.

¹⁰³ When the building was erected mr Oppenheimer told the architect that he wanted something between a bank and a cathedral.

¹⁰⁴ Green, T., p. 35.

ferro-alloys to construction and shaft sinking to motor vehicles, textiles, chemicals and food.¹⁰⁵

The principal commercial interests are in insurance, property, banking, computer services, freight and travel. Recently the company's records have shown that they have been producing 36% of all South African gold output, 29% of its coal and 47% of its uranium.¹⁰⁶

"It is the biggest mining company in Africa, it is generally reckoned to be one of the twenty-five largest corporations in the world."¹⁰⁷

In 1980 General Mining and Finance Corporation and Union Corporation merged to form GENCOR, the second-largest of the mining houses at that time. Its assets were R7 400 million in 1982 and the company employed a labour force of 200 000 workers.

Today the controlling shareholder of the combined houses is Federale Mynbou, whose main shareholders are the life assurance giant SANLAM, the Rembrandt Group and the Volkskas Banking Group. In 1982 the company produced 16% of the total gold output of South Africa, 40% of the platinum, 28% of all the coal and major interests in asbestos, chrome, ore, ferrochrome, fluorspar, electrolytic manganese and copper.

GENCOR goes far beyond mining with its involvement in companies such as Sappi, Darling & Hodgson, Kanhym Investments, Trek Petroleum and Kohler.

These mine-owners had tremendous power. Financially they were very powerful, because of the millions they controlled. They had power through the Chamber of Mines which controlled recruiting and wages and they had power through the support they received from the government.

The whole economy of South Africa focused on gold. Directly and indirectly the whole population relied on it. "Everyone in South Africa owes to mining the

¹⁰⁵ SA Mining, Coal, Gold and Base Minerals, October 1985.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950, p. 37.

standard of living he presently enjoys and the prospect of steady enhancement."¹⁰⁸ The coal mines were developed to provide a plentiful supply of power for the mines. Railways, roads and harbours were developed to provide means of transport. The mines also attracted capital to South Africa for other projects, such as the development of cheap electricity for the mines. Towns and factories developed. The government relied heavily on the mines and had to look after the interests of the mines.

South Africa has unique mining conditions, which required, and still require, a different breed of man. Mining in South Africa called for capital on a grand scale and for exceptional geological and mining skills. The mining houses in South Africa not only hold large blocks of shares of their rivals, but often have at least one seat on their boards of directors. "The mining houses represent by far the most powerful economic force in South Africa outside the state sector. They are all members of the Chamber of Mines, and interlocking dictatorships and shareholdings cement the close links between the companies."¹⁰⁹ Competition in the mining industry in South Africa is limited to the detective work that goes into geological samples.

It must be emphasised that it lay within the power of these mining companies single-handedly to change the status of the black mine-worker. In fact they proved that this was their desire in the 1920s when they gave their black workers more responsibility and better skilled jobs, but they came up against the new Pact Government which would protect white workers against the competition of cheap black labour in the years to come.

Eventually the mining companies would change their attitudes of taking no responsibility for their black workers and spend much more money, time and effort on improving the working and living conditions of their black labourers. Training, education and health matters became high priority to them. They could not,

¹⁰⁸ Brown, J.A., So Rich an Inheritance. 100 Years of Mining, p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 305.

however, give them what they really wanted - equal opportunities and better wages. This lay in the hands of the government.

1.4 THE CHAMBER OF MINES

The large mining companies had a great deal of power in the early history of mining. What enhanced this was the fact that they co-ordinated their efforts under the umbrella of the Chamber of Mines. Not only did this give them power, but also exceptional expertise as each mining group had its own staff of consulting engineers, metallurgists, geologists and experts. Combining these efforts under the Chamber of Mines gave them "the highest order of skill" as De Kiewiet puts it.

Co-operation between the mining houses was encouraged by the Chamber of Mines which was started in 1889.¹¹⁰ Before the turn of the century, fierce competition existed between the different mining houses for labour. This competition pushed up the wages for black workers to 63 shillings per month to which recruitment costs still had to be added. "To meet this situation the mine-owners established the Chamber of Mines in 1889. Its main aim was to reduce the industry's labour costs. It limited competition between the companies by standardizing wages and working conditions in the industry."¹¹¹ After the establishment of the Chamber of Mines the wages of black workers went down to 40s 10d a month.¹¹² The Chamber also significantly reduced the costs of labour recruitment. By eliminating competition among the mining companies through the maximum average agreement, and by centralizing recruiting under WNLA and NRC, the Chamber has reduced the cost of recruiting and kept black wages at an extremely low level."¹¹³

¹¹⁰ The German, Hermann Eckstein, was the first chairman of the Chamber of Mines. After his death in 1893 the British Jew, Lionel Phillips, acted as chairman.

¹¹¹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 45.

¹¹² Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold-mines, p. 45.

¹¹³ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 155.

The Chamber of Mines was an instrument in the hands of mining magnates to combine their efforts in keeping wages of workers as low as possible. It eliminated any competition between different mines as all wage increases had to be negotiated by the Chamber. In the history of the mining industry the Chamber was often a smoke-screen behind which the mining magnates co-ordinated their policies to keep costs low and increase profits.

F. Wilson even goes beyond this to and claim that, "It is clear that the wages of black miners have not risen in real terms since the Chamber of Mines was founded."¹¹⁴ and "The Chamber has been very successful. In real terms black earnings in 1969 were no higher and possible even lower than they had been in 1911, while over the same period the real earnings of Whites had risen by over 70%."¹¹⁵

The Chamber of Mines of South Africa is a volunteer organization consisting of the independent mining finance corporations, individual mines and mining companies. It is a central co-operative organization to which the financial houses and individual mines can belong. The Chamber provides an extensive advisory and service function to its members and the industry on a co-operative basis in such areas as industrial relations, education and training, security and health care, as well as technical, legal and public affairs, environmental conservation, rescue and statistical services.

Its chief functions are:

- to act as a spokesman for the industry as a whole
- to refine gold and uranium
- to set and enforce safety standards
- to negotiate labour matters with the mining unions and officials' organisations
- to train white mining personnel and recruit the African labour force

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 154.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold-mines, p. 46.

- to undertake extensive research into all technical aspects of South African mining.¹¹⁶

De Kiewiet comments, "The sharing of overhead expenses, collective buying, and similar common policies helped to lower the costs of production and, by the magic wand of economy, to turn millions of tons of low-grade rock into profitable ore."¹¹⁷

The Chamber is also responsible for the refining of all gold produced in South Africa at the Rand Refinery in Germiston.¹¹⁸ Each mine melts its gold into bars of roughly 1 000 ounces which are between 85 and 90 % pure. At the Rand Refinery the bars are refined to 996 parts per thousand pure gold and cast into the standard 400 ounce bars that circulate internationally.

Since 1971 the Chamber has been involved in marketing Kruger Rand coins and promoting the image of gold internationally. The Chamber also acts as the gold mining industry's agent for the sale of gold to the Reserve Bank. "So at all stages in the mining, production and marketing of gold, the Chamber co-ordinates the industry's activities."¹¹⁹

The Chamber of Mines was like the watchdog in the transformation process of the black gold mine-workers. It was ever present as it co-ordinated all the activities on the labour front in the mining industry. It adapted to any changed circumstances and came up with a solution for every problem concerning the industry. When there was an insufficient labour supply, the Chamber invented measures to deal with it. When no alternative to hostel accommodation was found, the Chamber perfected

¹¹⁶ Hocking, A., South African Mining, p.34.

¹¹⁷ Just to show how effective they have been. Although the mines became deeper and were more costly to operate, working costs over a period of years showed a progressive decline. In 1897 the average working costs were 29s 6d per ton milled, while forty years later in 1937 it was 18s 11d.

De Kiewiet, C.W., p. 161.

¹¹⁸ The refinery at Germiston is the largest in the world and handles three tons of gold each working day. The finished bars are then handled by the South African Reserve bank.

¹¹⁹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 301.

the existing system. When disease threatened the industry, the Chamber dealt with that too.

The ruling council of the Chamber is composed of the chairmen of the major finance houses, men like Harry Oppenheimer, Charles Barlow and Adriaan Louw. The president is usually appointed from among the members of the key Gold Production Committee, which is the forum for discussion of matters concerning gold mining. Each mining house is represented on the 7-man Committee which meets once a fortnight. The Gold Production Committee determines the industry's labour recruitment policies and wage rates. It also handles negotiations with white mine-workers.

At present the Chamber of Mines is still a volunteer organization that combines the different efforts of the finance corporations and mining companies. It still provides an extensive advisory and service function to its members in the areas of industrial relations, education and training, security and health care, as well as technical, legal and public affairs, environmental conservation, rescue and statistical services.¹²⁰

The Chamber also offers a comprehensive range of rehabilitation and social services for all its employees through the Employee Assistance Programme. In addition it also runs a rescue training service with branches in Carltonville, Dundee, Evander and Welkom and a rescue drilling rig at Witbank for emergency use on coal mines.

In the 1990s the senior management structure of the Chamber was revised to enable it to focus its efforts clearly on behalf of the mining industry in order to influence the emerging political, economic and social environments in which mining would take place in South Africa.

¹²⁰

The Chamber of Mines also joins forces with the Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA), which serves most of the nearly 500 000 skilled and unskilled workers, with CAMRO, the mining research organization, with the Rand Refinery and the Nuclear Fuels Corporation.

The Chamber of Mines does co-ordinate the industry's policies concerning taxation, legislation and national monetary policy, but its main function is to reduce costs. About half of the annual budget is spent on research designed to reduce working costs.¹²¹

The only people who are favoured by this group system initiated by the mining magnates are the companies and shareholders. It is certainly not a system which favours the workers. Because the mines are involved in the group system, they have to protect the older and marginal mines. Wages of the black workers are kept so low, that even the marginal mines would still make a profit. Lanning agrees, "Black wages are kept at the level that enables the marginal mines to keep in production, even if it means some reduction in the profitability of the richer mines, because of labour shortages, and the low production of unskilled labour."¹²²

The Chamber of Mines would play a tremendous role in the transformation of the black gold mine worker. It would recruit the black worker, set housing and living standards, negotiate wages and lay down safety regulations underground. The Chamber played a role in determining the daily routine of the black worker and may be seen as a puppeteer, pulling the strings, and the black worker had to respond accordingly. In this way, the Chamber of Mines held the destiny of the black worker in its hands.

1.5 THE MINING INDUSTRY IN THE YEARS BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

The physical conditions of mining were growing more demanding every year. The depths of the mines were increasing and distances from the main shafts were becoming greater. Ventilation and the control of underground temperatures were becoming more difficult as depths increased and humidity was a serious problem.

¹²¹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 300.

¹²² Ibid., p. 157.

More work had to be done manually as working areas became less accessible to machinery.

Despite intense recruiting efforts by the mines, the industry still found itself short of unskilled labour in the 1930s. The manufacturing industry provided stiff competition. The mining industry had to look at labour sources in Mozambique and even farther north than the 22 degree latitude.¹²³

Labour sources were available in countries like Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, South West Africa and Angola. Recruiting stations were set up and agreements entered with the governments, determining the number of workers that could be recruited.¹²⁴

During the 1940s several challenges were put to the mine's labour system. Firstly the more urbanized workers quit their jobs on the mines in favour of better employment in other industries. Another reason for the shortage of labour was that some 100 000 blacks were involved in the war effort and another 50 000 had probably replaced the coloured men who had volunteered for active service.¹²⁵

On the political front the Pact Government created a Department of Labour with Col F.H.P. Creswell as the first minister. He "devoted his whole political life to ousting the black from the mines."¹²⁶ The functions of this department included employment, rehabilitation of unemployed and poor people from the rural areas, conciliation boards, industrial councils, the Wage Act, apprenticeships, social affairs and welfare. Col. Creswell immediately appointed the Mining Regulations Commission to study the labour situation on the mines. The Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926, based on the Commission's report, reinstated the colour-bar on the mines

¹²³ Mr W Gemmill, a former manager of the Chamber of Mines moved to Salisbury in 1940 to organise WENELA's efforts to recruit more workers.

¹²⁴ Of the 31 000 foreign workers recruited by 1951 approximately 23% came from Malawi, 16% from Tanzania, 10 % from SWA, 6 % from Zambia and 45% from Angola, Northern Mozambique and Botswana.

¹²⁵ Jeppe, C.B., Gold Mining on the Witwatersrand, p.175.

¹²⁶ Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., p. 316.

and reserved skilled or semi-skilled work for white workers. "The cost of the Pact Government's labour policy was borne by the black labour force."¹²⁷

The African would not therefore be attracted to the mines with their low wages and bleak opportunities. Consequently the mines were forced to do more recruiting outside the borders of South Africa. Nevertheless, the mines were still seriously short of labour in the years 1924-1930.

Population pressure on the rural areas and the industrialization of the Rand led to a large influx of labourers into urban areas. From 1926 to 1936 over 150 000 rural whites moved into towns while the percentages of Afrikaners on the farms declined from 80% in 1911 to 48% in 1936.¹²⁸ The same factors that were forcing unskilled whites into towns also moved the blacks. The world-wide depression which lasted from 1929 to 1933, did not affect the gold mining industry and when South Africa abandoned the gold standard, the price shot up from 84s to 125s. This relieved the pressure of rising working costs and foreign capital began to flow into the Rand again. From 1933-1940, 80 million pounds of foreign capital were invested in the gold-mines.¹²⁹ The money was used to develop the Far West Rand mines and to expand existing mines.¹³⁰

There was also no shortage in labour. The aftermath of the depression and severe droughts supplied enough labour at the same pay levels as before. In 1936 the number of Africans employed on the mines reached 360 000, compared to 210 000 in 1930.¹³¹ In 1933 white miners demanded a pay increase of 20-35% and shorter working hours. Their wish was granted and the mining companies even offered whites a provident fund. Another feature of the industry between the two world wars,

¹²⁷ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 130.

¹²⁸ Horwitz, P., The Political Economy of South Africa, p. 474.
Bunting, B., The Rise of the South African Reich, p. 375.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 474.

¹³⁰ Company profits shot up from an average of 13.4 million pounds(1923-1932) to 36.48 million pounds(1933-1940). The Government's share in tax paid by the gold mines rose from 3.5 million pounds a year to nearly 14 million pounds.

¹³¹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 137.

was the growth in South African ownership at the mines. By 1935 South Africans held 40% in the gold mining industry, compared to 14% in 1914.¹³²

It is important to note that blacks were excluded from the centres opened in 1940 to train skilled and semi-skilled workers for the engineering, electrical and motor trades. During the years of the Second World War white women were preferably trained in factories to produce armoured cars, guns and shells. The government was adamant that whites, even in their absence, should still be protected against black competition. Jack and Ray Simons says the following about conditions during the war, " Yet white supremacists in every walk of life refused to release the productive capacity of black and brown South Africans."¹³³ Black workers were still in demand only for the unskilled labour opportunities.

Black mine-workers did, however, find that their responsibilities had increased in the absence of the whites who went to the battlefields, but the compensation remained the same. After the Second World War it was difficult for them to step down again and perform the unskilled labour. Black mine-workers were becoming increasingly aware of their rights, or rather lack of rights, on the mines and in 1941 the African Mine Workers' Union was formed.¹³⁴ Both the companies and the government recognized that the union posed a serious threat to the structure of the gold mining industry. Since 1922, black mineworkers had borne the cost of maintaining and expanding the industry. The African Mine Workers' Union demands for higher wages threatened company profits, marginal mines, gold production and foreign exchange earnings, unless white miners allowed a relaxation of the colour-bar.¹³⁵ The government was certainly not prepared to confront the white miners and all strikes and work stoppages by black workers were prohibited.

¹³² Frankel, S.H., Capital Investment in Africa, p. 93.

¹³³ Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., p. 535.

¹³⁴ The number of African trade unions on the Rand rose from 20 with a membership of 23 000 in 1941 to 50 with a total membership of 80 000 in 1945. With a more permanent black work force in the towns, it was easier to form and organize trade unions.

¹³⁵ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 141.

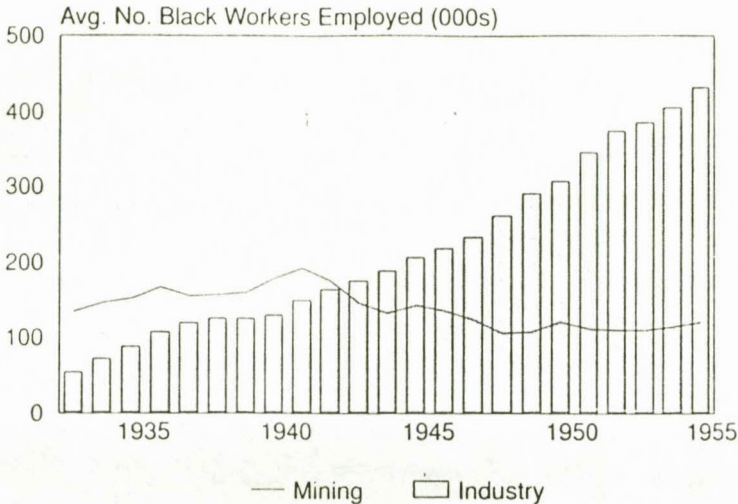
During the war, the profits of the mines decreased because of inflation. The industry was also very vulnerable to rising costs during this period, and the stable gold price meant that the mines had to absorb their increases. The motto of successive South African Governments had always been: when in difficulty ask the mines for more. Genl. Smuts as the war-time Prime Minister, certainly acted on this principle. He called upon the mining companies for financial back-up and manpower to manufacture war-time materials. The mining industry also found itself in need of millions of dollars to develop the newly discovered goldfields on the West Rand and the Free State. To accommodate the demands, the wages of black mine-workers were kept low.

The government's policy of encouraging internal migrant labour had impoverished the reserves to such an extent that between 1933 and 1939, some 135 000 Africans sought work on the mines.¹³⁶ This represented a 50% increase of African labour. Many Africans were, however, put off by the low wages in the mining industry, and flocked to the greatly expanding industrial sector where black wages rose by over 50% during the war.¹³⁷ Mine labour was never popular with the black workers because of the element of danger involved, even less so because of the low wages being paid. After the Second World War the mining industry would find itself continually short of labour and some changes had to be made.

The following table indicates the decrease in numbers of black workers in the mining industry and the increase in the number of workers entering other industries. It is ironic that those other industries, which owed their existence to the mining industry, were now competing directly for the labour of the black workers:

¹³⁶ Pallister, D., a.o., South Africa Incorporated, p. 38.

¹³⁷ The industrial labour force in South Africa rose from 55 638 in 1933 to 433 056 in 1955.



Source: Data from *Union Statistics for 50 Years* (Pretoria, n.d. [1960]), p. G7.

It is also important to note that the presence of a large percentage of foreign workers in the mining industry had a retarding effect on the transformation process of the black gold mine worker in the sense that it had a crumbling effect on the unity of the workers. These workers also acted as an easy replacement for South African workers and weakened the little hold the black worker had on management. The foreign migrants were not politically motivated as it was not the country of their birth and they would be difficult to mobilize. Once the work force became more localized and more permanent, that was when the transformation process gained momentum. The influx of Africans into the urban and mining areas sparked off a new wave of militancy during the war years. Mine-owners were dead set against black trade unions. The Chamber of Mines was of the opinion that, "Trade unionism as practised by Europeans is still beyond the understanding of the tribal Native."¹³⁸ The Trade and Labour Council, which did not object to coloured workers joining

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.



; 148 806 0X

unions, argued that black Africans had "not yet reached a stage of mental and cultural development in which they can be entrusted with the rights and duties involved in recognition of their unions."¹³⁹ The fact that the vast majority of workers were still illiterate, contributed to the assumption that blacks were not yet ready for trade unions. Ironically, the government did very little to try to improve illiteracy.

In 1941 a Council of Non-European Trade Unions was set up, claiming a 58 000 membership in 1945. The council's inaugural meeting was presided over by Moses Kotane, a member of the ANC and the Communist Party of South Africa. The wartime living conditions, inflation and low wages led to a rapid expansion of the black trade union movement. An emergency regulation, War measure 145, had to be adopted to prevent work stoppages and strikes.¹⁴⁰

At the beginning of the 1940s trade unionism in the gold mining industry was in its infancy. It was very difficult to organize black mine-workers, because of their diversity, temporary status and the fact that they lived in closed compounds. The impregnable compound system isolated workers from outside influences and migrants had an under-developed working class consciousness in relation to the more permanent population on the Rand.

In 1941, Gaur Radebe and Edwin Mofutsany, discussed the formation of a mine-workers' union. Wartime conditions, including inflation and low wages in most industries had produced a rapid expansion of the black trade union movement.¹⁴¹ The mineworkers' union depended heavily on the mine clerks to undertake the organizational tasks on the mines and they had access to the compounds and the workers. In 1941 the African National Congress and the African Mine Workers' Union threatened with strike action against the low wages of black workers.¹⁴² Black workers received an increase in 1944 which was not enough to satisfy the union.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴⁰ The war measure imposed stiff penalties, heavy fines and imprisonment of up to three years.

¹⁴¹ Stein, M., Max Gordon and African Trade Unionism on the Witwatersrand, 1935-1940, p. 31.

¹⁴² Hocking, A., p. 161.

The union grew steadily and by 1944 it had 25 000 members.¹⁴³ J.B. Marks was elected chairman of the African Mine-Workers' Union in 1945. Wages were the main concern of the trade unions. In 1942 the average wage of a black mine-worker was 2 shillings a day. The Chamber of Mines justified these low wages by saying that the mine worker had the additional benefit of agricultural production in the reserves.

At the 1945 annual conference of the African Mine-workers' Union, the 2 000 delegates drew up a list of demands. These included:

- Unhindered organization of workers.
- Family housing, instead of bachelor housing in the compounds.
- Two weeks paid leave a year.
- A minimum daily wage of 10 shillings.

A wave of strikes in several industries occurred during the war. The strike in the coal mines of Natal in 1942 was followed in January 1943 by a strike of the African Gas and Power Workers' Union against the Victoria Falls Power Company. This company supplied electricity to the mines. The Smuts Government appointed a commission of inquiry, The Witwatersrand Mine Natives' Wage Commission, under Justice Lansdowne. The Commission reported that African mine-workers could not survive on their wages and that it found that more than three quarters of the 308 374 Africans were paid less than the Chamber of Mines average daily wage. The Commission also reported that the reserves were so impoverished that Africans could not expect an income from them.

An increase of 30% in wages was advised. The Commission rejected the recognition of black trade unions and stated that African miners had "not yet reached the stage of development which would enable them safely and usefully to employ trade unionism as a means of promoting their advancement."¹⁴⁴ This was welcomed by the Chamber of Mines.

¹⁴³ Liebenberg, B.J.(ed), South Africa in the 21st Century, p. 312.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

1946 was a crisis year, when the African Mine-workers Union demanded a minimum wage of 10 shillings a day and a repeal of War Measure 145 that prohibited strike action. After the Chamber of Mines ignored the demands, 70 000 to 100 000 African mine-workers went on strike on 29 different mines.¹⁴⁵ Genl. Smuts sent the police and army troops to drive the men back to work. Twelve people were killed and 1 200 injured. Several strike leaders were arrested. Some black workers had taken discharges before the trouble started and months later recruiters were still trying to reach their quotas of black workers. Ian Waller comments, "At no stage was the government or the Chamber even willing to discuss, let alone to grant, the demands of the strikers."¹⁴⁶ Troublemakers were blacklisted so that they could not be employed on other mines.¹⁴⁷ Judged in terms of what it set out to achieve - higher wages, better working conditions, union recognition and an end to the migratory system - the strike was a failure, yet it forced the black political organizations into a radical change of tactics.

In August 1946 the Native Laws Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Judge Henry Fagan. Its report, issued in 1948, rejected complete segregation as totally impracticable. African urbanization, it stated, was a natural and inevitable economic phenomenon, and migrant labour could not endure forever. When the Fagan Commission recommended limited recognition of black unions in 1948, the mining industry mounted the strongest opposition of all employer groups, arguing that unions for workers were unthinkable. The victory of the National Party later that year ensured that there would be no major changes in the way labour was mobilized and controlled. Anglo American had plans developed to settle some of their more skilled workers permanently on mine properties, but the National Party stopped these proposals.¹⁴⁸

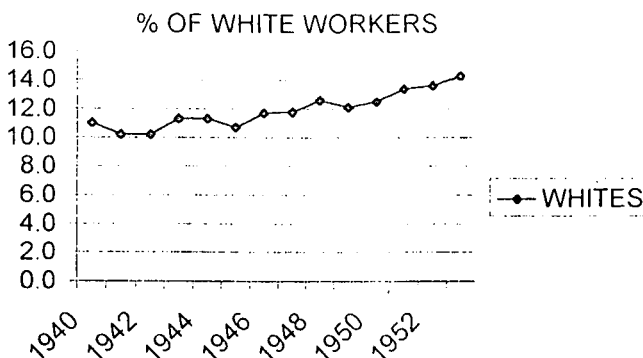
¹⁴⁵ Hocking, A., p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ Waller, I., "Pressure Politics", Encounter, 3 August 1962.

¹⁴⁷ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 63.

¹⁴⁸ The National Party restricted the number of workers in family housing on mine properties to 3%. In the thirty years that followed, no large gold mining company came close to placing 3 % of its workers in family housing even though they were

Black workers in South Africa had a long history of trying to increase their wages and the conditions under which they laboured. They had to battle not only against management, but also against their white supervisors and the government. From 1948 onwards, the state proved to be a tough adversary with its racially discriminatory practices. It would protect the white worker with a vigour as the following ratios indicate the employment of more white miners:



SOURCE: THE CHAMBER OF MINES

The National Party made it quite clear that it considered black residents only as temporary visitors to towns and that blacks should not be allowed to compete with white skilled labourers.¹⁴⁹ The fact of the matter was that not all African miners were temporary migrant workers. Many would renew their contracts repeatedly for periods of up to 20 or 30 years. Some had wives and children in the adjacent townships and were permanent residents whose interests had to be considered. Influx control to these locations was very strict in an endeavour to limit the size of the urban population. Moreover, entry was denied to women from rural

¹⁴⁹ permitted to do so.

¹⁴⁹ Doxey, G.V., The Industrial Colour-bar in South Africa, p. 179.

areas. Residents who qualified could build their own houses or have them built by the government. It is important to note that they could only rent these sites and that they were located some distance away from the city so that subsidized transport had to be provided. L. Marquard says, "It is difficult to understand, except on ideological grounds, why it missed this golden opportunity of promoting a more stabilized urban community and of gaining the goodwill of thousands of Africans by granting freehold rights."¹⁵⁰

The government instituted a new form of tax to provide for the extra costs involved, the Native Services Levy which was a tax of 25 cents a month for every African employed in commerce and industry.¹⁵¹ L. Marquard says, "Again, in the desire to separate black and white by the greatest possible distance, the new townships were sited so far from the centres they served that despite subsidized transport, the added costs in time and money were a heavy burden on workers and industry and commerce."¹⁵²

These new sites also made provision for schools, churches, markets and shops and were ethnically zoned. The government wanted the Africans to keep their traditional ties as strong as possible so that the chiefs could still maintain contact with the tribesman and tribal law would still apply. The schools would also provide for education in the native tongue. This was only an illusion as many Africans had already lost their ties with the reserves and chiefs and inter-tribal marriages were taking place.

The period migrants stayed away from the reserves were getting longer. Sometimes these were not merely prolonged by the necessity of earning wages, but by the lure of the city life and the attachment to loose women who flocked to the cities to be free from the strict moral codes of the tribal areas. "Migrant labour and influx

¹⁵⁰ Marquard, L., The People's and Politics of South Africa, p. 47.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 46.

controls disrupt family life, waste manpower, breed inefficiency and cause instabilities in both rural and urban communities."¹⁵³

Despite the fact that Africans could not own their own home and had to live in the shantytowns and slums they were able to afford, the government also restricted their movement. They were not allowed to visit certain areas at night or they incurred arrest if they defied this regulation. From 1952 onwards passes had to be carried and local authorities had the right to remove idle or undesirable natives.¹⁵⁴ The social decay was obvious. The men, some of them married, working in the urban areas would get several other woman to live with from time to time. The children born from these unions would grow up without proper parental control, most of the times they would not even know their fathers. They were very accessible to the influences of gangs and violence. It was against this unstable social and economical background that yet new riches were discovered in the Orange Free State and mining activities were extended.

W.G. James remarks, "At first, would-be African miners were reluctant and erratic migrants. They had to be nudged out of their rural world and prized away from their subsistence agriculture."¹⁵⁵ Now they were coming of their own free will, in huge numbers. The waiting-list for houses in Orlando which stood at 143 families in 1939, by 1941 rose to 4 500 families, while two years later it reached 16 000.¹⁵⁶ The housing problem was now out of hand.

If one examines the demography of each town in South Africa, one will find that it has at least one or more black township or location. This phenomenon is not

¹⁵³ Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., p. 616.

¹⁵⁴ All Africans had to carry a reference book which consisted of 96 pages. It had to be carried at all times. From the black university professor to the black railway worker, everybody had to wear a pass or they could be arrested. It provided the authorities with an instant guide to any African's life and working history.

¹⁵⁵ James, W.G., Our Precious Metal, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ New Nation, p. 66.

difficult to understand, because from the viewpoint of the blacks, where there are whites, there is work and where there is work, there is money.¹⁵⁷

Homeless families bundled into any available space they could find. Many became sub-tenants or lodgers of tenants in the black locations. Three or four families sometimes shared a tiny house. Women were increasingly replacing men in the domestic services and men were moving into backyards with their wives.¹⁵⁸

After a period of 50 years and two world wars the black gold mine worker still had the status of temporary worker who was only provided for during the time of his contract. He was still without a union and had no economic, social or political rights. The black worker had certainly become more skilled, but he did not get the increased wages associated with improved skill levels. He still had to be supervised by the white miner. Still regarded as an adversary and not as a participant in the South African economy, he had to bear the brunt of increases in production and costs.

To make matters even worse, the National Party Government was to dampen any advancement he could make and put the black gold mine worker into a hibernation period that would last a further 20 years. When he awoke from this hibernation in the 1970s he would prove to be a tough adversary - more skilled, more militant, better organized and totally unwilling to accept his low wages, bad living and working conditions and temporary status.

¹⁵⁷ Tiley, A.S., Bridging the Communication Gap Between Black and White, p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ In the early years of the twentieth century men were often employed as domestic servants in homes of white families. As the mines and industries needed more labour, black men were replaced by black women to serve as domestic servants.

CHAPTER TWO - THE STATUS OF THE BLACK GOLD MINE-WORKER IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE MINING INDUSTRY

2.1 A PROFILE OF THE GOLD MINE-WORKER UP TO 1946.

In order to grasp the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker in the late twentieth century more fully, a clear profile of the early miner is necessary for the purposes of comparison. It is necessary to understand that the black gold mine-worker was illiterate and without any skills. It is necessary to understand why he came to the mines and the social and economical impact it had on his life.

This chapter indicates that the black miner's situation remained virtually unchanged for many decades and that his outcry against poor working conditions, low wages and job restrictions remained unacknowledged. The diversity of the work force and the fact that workers from all over southern Africa rubbed shoulders on the mines is likewise indicated. The tribal diversity made it difficult to mobilize the work force.

Before the discovery of diamonds and gold, people lived off the land. They owned cattle, sheep, and goats and cultivated their crops. Very few people lived in towns and many wars were fought over land. The people living off the land were subsistence farmers who produced all they needed. Anthony Hocking writes, "fruitful harvest persuaded many to stay home."¹ A man's wealth was determined by the number of cattle he owned and the women were responsible for growing the crops, preparing the meals and raising the children.² The men hunted and each male had a role to play in his society. As long as there was enough land, subsistence farmers could survive. "It is also true that to this day the urge to acquire cattle, either as a symbol of status or for payment in lobolo³ transactions, is a strong factor in inducing Africans to sell their labour."⁴

¹ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 64.

² Tiley, A.S., Bridging the Communication Gap between Black and White, p. 4.

³ Lobolo is traditionally the amount of cattle a black man had to pay to marry a woman.

⁴ Doxey, G.V., The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa, p. 49.

When the Dutch became increasingly dissatisfied with British rule, they moved deeper into the interior and wars over land became common. The young men spent more time fighting wars over land, than with the cattle and the tribe. Soon there was not enough land to make a living and many black workers became farm labourers on white men's land. In return for working for the farmer, the black man received a small piece of land and wages in kind.⁵

As the interior became more densely populated, trade began to emerge. Crops were traded for knives, blankets and ploughs. At first they traded by means of exchange, but later money would be used. W. Beinart writes, "Taxation and land loss were not the only forces at work in transforming African societies. Trade almost always pre-dated such processes."⁶ Cotton and woollen goods were also popular among the black people. Western clothes saved them the trouble of preparing animal skins to make their own clothes.

Farming was not always successful. Farmers had to cope with locusts, cattle disease, summer floods and droughts. This was one of the attractions of gold, it was subject to neither the elements nor disease. A further attraction lay in the fact that wages were paid in cash, and not in kind, so the black man could pay his taxes, buy rifles and farm implements. Money became very important in the pre-twentieth century, to white and black alike.

Farming activities of black workers were characterised by overgrazing, impoverishment of the soil, a shortage of proper fencing, marketing disadvantages and poor transport.

They left their homes in various parts of the country, travelling long distances to the mines and working there for certain periods before returning home. V.L. Allen

⁵ Even the white farmers did not earn a significant cash income. Labourers were mostly paid in kind, in the form of cattle, grazing rights or the permission to erect a hut. The relationship between the white farmer and the black worker was essentially that of masters to servants, improved by the fact that both of them were mutually dependent on each other and by the fact that the white farmer felt a high degree of paternalism for his black servants.

⁶ Beinart, W., Twentieth Century South Africa, p. 20.

remarks, "They went voluntarily, generally in response to the needs of their tribes. Although they placed their thumb prints on contracts, they usually worked only as long as they needed to acquire a gun, or perhaps cattle or blankets or grain."⁷

At first it was only the unmarried young men who came to the mines, often sent by their chiefs. Eventually married men also left to earn wages, as they could no longer support their families. They went for short periods such as three months, but eventually these periods increased and some never worked the land again.

These migrants led a double life. "One life was at home working with the family, loved and respected by sons and fathers, and the other was in the towns, working with machines and being surrounded by strangers in a hostile atmosphere. In the cities they lost their dignity and were mere muscular machines, placed there to produce for strangers."⁸

It must be noted that it was not only the individual black worker who benefited to some extent from working on the mines. Though individual wages were low, the total amount earned by the migrants was large and meant a substantial income to the impoverished rural areas. Suppliers, local traders and officials all benefited from the revenues generated by the migrants. Chiefs were drawn in by the lure of additional cash income. "Mine migrancy survived then, as it does today, partly because of the extent and diversity of the interests that benefited from it."⁹

The black labourers came to the mines as a result of a number of push and pull factors that need further discussion.

One of the most important factors to lure the blacks to the mines was money as already mentioned. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Africans experienced a need for cash. They had two alternatives: they could either sell the produce from their land or their muscle power to white employers. Not all wages were paid in cash, such as in the mining industry. Farm workers were often paid in

⁷ Allen, V.L., The History of Black Mine Workers in South Africa, p. 107.

⁸ Callinicos, L., A People's History of South Africa, Volume 1, p. 28.

⁹ Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire. A History of Black Migrancy and the Gold Mines, p. 4.

kind, receiving cattle, sheep or grain as payment. This made the mines an option for consideration by the black man.

Why did the blacks experience the necessity for cash earnings? They needed cash mainly for the acquisition of guns and ammunition. The tribal chiefs became focused on acquiring guns which could only be bought from Western traders and paid for in cash. Guns were used for hunting, in tribal wars and in defending their land against white colonialists. "In the nineteenth century guns had been important imports. Muzzle-loaders in African hands did not delay the forward march of colonialism for very long, but they were seen as vital by African chiefs throughout the sub-continent both to claim a breathing space against settler commandos and as a defence against African neighbours."¹⁰

The role of the tribal chiefs in the entire migration process should not be under-estimated. As V.L. Allen reports, "It was highly unlikely that individual members of a tribe would take themselves off, many hundreds of miles away, to search for an economic activity which was alien to their own values without discussion and direction from the tribal chief or elders. In other words, a tribal decision was made about it. It is likely, moreover, that the decision to migrate was taken for them, in order to exploit the opportunities, which the demand for labour had created for the benefit of the tribe as a entire."¹¹ The Pedi chiefs organized groups of young men to earn money on the mines to purchase guns to defend their political independence. Families even sent out their young sons and fathers tried to control the wages of their sons or ensure that cash was invested in rural assets such as cows, ploughs and wives.¹² Doxey argues, "The gradual broadening of the orbit of African wants - the desire to own manufactured cooking utensils, clothing, and, of course, in time the desire to possess a watch, bicycle and sewing-machine - proved too slow for the vast labour requirements of the Witwatersrand mines."¹³

¹⁰ Beinart, W., p. 20.

¹¹ Allen, V.L., p. 46.

¹² Beinart, W., p. 30.

¹³ Doxey, G.V., p. 51.

This was also proven by the fact that the supply of workers to the mines was constantly interrupted by Africans leaving with their guns to fight in tribal disputes. Blacks also needed cash to buy improved farming implements they could not manufacture themselves. When they acquired enough money to buy these implements, they left the mines to cultivate their land. In the 1890s more than 5 000 black workers had deserted.¹⁴ This was one of the main shortcomings of the migrant labour practice and led to inefficiency in the industry as a whole. In the annual report of the Chamber of Mines in 1889 it is reported that, "a native worked to secure a definite sum of money. The higher his wages the shorter his stay."¹⁵ More information in this regard will follow later.

Migrants were unreliable and left whenever they were needed at home, e.g. during the planting season. They worked for such short periods that they were often unable to acquire the necessary skills. V.L. Allen agrees, "Indeed as it was practised, it was grossly inefficient for migrants were unreliable, working for such short periods that they were often unable to acquire even the most rudimentary skills. In real terms migrant labour was expensive."¹⁶ F. Wilson emphasises the unskilled nature of the migrant worker, "The limited time horizon of the migrant labour system prevents the individual from ever developing the full skill potential of its labour force, because it severely restricts the period in which the individual would otherwise have been able to reap the returns of greater specific investment in it."¹⁷ Yet, this situation suited the government and the mining houses, for since the migrants were regarded as temporary visitors to the areas, the authorities did not have to take responsibility for their social and medical care, families and general well-being.

There must be no doubt concerning the fact that migration in the late 19th century also suited the black worker, although to a lesser extent than the the mining

¹⁴ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 57.

¹⁵ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1889.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911-1969, p. 113.

companies. "Labour migrancy also suited the needs of the workers and the rural societies from which they came, at least in the early phase."¹⁸ They took home with them cash, materials, blankets and fractions of civilization.

The blacks were also encouraged or prodded into the industry by various other factors. The most important of these was the implementation of various taxes to force the able-bodied black workers to leave the land and work in the cities. There were mainly three forms of taxation which affected the lives of the blacks: hut tax, poll tax and labour tax. Doxey writes about these taxes, "In such circumstances, where no endogenous motivations exist which would induce people to forsake the subsistence economy and seek paid employment in the labour market, it may become necessary to introduce exogenous stimulants, either direct or indirect."¹⁹

In the early days of the mining industry there was an acute shortage of unskilled labour and the numbers of black workers who did come to the mines were quite inadequate. South African mining is very labour-intensive, as it involves deep-level mining, and workers had to be encouraged in bigger numbers to leave the land and become involved in industrial society. The South African government imposed these taxes to ensure a sufficient flow of workers to the mines.

Black tribes had to pay R1 for every hut in a homestead. Known as the hut tax, this was collected by the tribal chiefs and handed over to the government. From 1889 the government refused to accept cattle as payment and demanded cash payments. A young black male had to work three months on the mines to pay this tax for himself and his family. Many black subsistence farmers were forced to work on the mines to earn their taxes.²⁰

Poll tax amounting to R2 per annum had to be paid by every young male older than 18 years, black or white. This tax was implemented in 1905. Since unskilled

¹⁸ Warden, N., The Making of Modern South Africa, p. 44.

¹⁹ Doxey, G.V., p. 48.

²⁰ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 23.

workers were earning anything from 5 to 19 cents a day on the mines, it took them several months to earn enough to pay their poll tax.²¹

In 1884 the Glen Grey Bill was passed. This incorporated a labour tax of 10s. a head on selected male natives. This act was passed by one of the mining magnates, Cecil Rhodes, who was also Prime Minister, "You will remove them (the Natives (sic)) from that life of sloth and laziness, you will teach them dignity of labour and make them contribute to the prosperity of the State, and make them give some return for our wise and good government."²²

Colonial administrators imposed their taxes on the African households and demanded payment in cash, whereas earlier on it had been permissible for taxes to be paid in kind. Unlike previous contributions by chiefs, which had been in kind, these payments were not decreased in times of harvest failure, drought or cattle disease. It is evident that this tax was aimed at driving the young males to work on the mines, when one considers that it was not payable if a worker could prove that he had worked for wages for three months.²³

A pass law was also adopted by the Transvaal Volksraad in 1895 to assist in the control of the black work force and discourage labourers from breaking their contracts.²⁴ "The job seeker was therefore at the mercy of all his employers. What they said about him decided whether he would get a job in the future. The wage he had been paid in the past decided the wage that he would be paid in the future."²⁵

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²² Cape of Good Hope, Hansard, 1884, p. 362.

²³ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 23.

²⁴ Any white person or a policeman could ask a black person for his pass. On the pass appeared the black person's name and address, his father's name and his chiefdom. The black person could be traced easily if he ran away, deserted or committed a crime. It also contained the district where he was allowed to look for work. A worker had about 6 days to try and find work in a district before he had to move on to another district. The pass also had his employment history. The names of his employers, the type of work he had done, his employer's opinion about the quality of his work and the wages he received. Wilson, F., Migrant Labour in South Africa, p. 3.

²⁵ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 41.

Rinderpest and drought also ensured the continued flow of black workers in the 1890s. The rinderpest epidemic of the late 1890s had been particularly devastating. 1903 was a year of severe drought, and it was followed by a spread of East Coast Fever. One effect of all this was an enormous increase in the number of Africans who entered into wage labour.²⁶

The deteriorating rural economy of the black man also assisted in the process of pushing him to the gold mines. His economy was a simple agricultural subsistence economy that did not generate cash or enough food to exchange for money and goods. The black man's land had no fencing and the soil was scratched rather than ploughed. He could only afford poor quality seeds and did not possess the knowledge or skill to prepare the soil properly for crops.

Traditionally, Africans measured their wealth by the number of cattle they owned. It was more a case of quantity rather than quality, which soon led to over-stocking. This was not a problem while land was plentiful, but after the arrival of the white man, land was becoming scarce. The over-stocking left the land in semi-desert conditions.²⁷

The system of migrant labour created a cycle of poverty in the rural life of the black man. The women had to work very hard to cultivate the land. They alone had to cope with floods, droughts and disease. As soon as the young boys became strong enough, they also left for the mines. The women who remained behind could not farm as productively without the help of the men. Van der Horst and Stadler argues that the absence of the men from the reserves had more disadvantages than advantages.²⁸

The Western way of life of buying clothes, food and tools from trading stores became part of the way of the black man and families began relying increasingly on cash. Consequently, not only the black worker was transformed over the years, but

²⁶ Maylam, P., A History of the African People of South Africa: From the early Iron Age to the 1970's, p. 140.

²⁷ Marquard, L., The People's and Politics of South Africa, p. 34.

²⁸ Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., South Africa in the 20th Century, p. 189.

also his wife and children. In fact, an entire society and several generations of black people were affected.

There is no doubt that the most important incentive for black workers to come to the mines, was money with which to pay their taxes and buy cattle, but there was another incentive for some.

The two main activities for the black tribes of Africa, before colonisation, had been hunting and fighting. These provided excitement and adventure to the young black men. With the coming of the white man, these activities were disappearing and some of the youths found themselves becoming bored. All that was left was a little ploughing, beer drinking, dancing and endless conversation.²⁹ For some it was not enough. City life sounded much more exciting.

The early black gold mine-worker was thus a farmer. A man who came from a large family in which everyone had a specific task to fulfil. He made all his implements himself and cultivated all the food he needed. He looked after his cattle and instructed the young boys on ways to take over from him one day. Then the white man with his farming methods, guns and implements arrived. Where black people had been accustomed to trading in order to satisfy their needs, they now had to use cash to buy necessities from traders. The government needed their labour and taxes made it difficult for them to work their land full-time basis. As a result they became part-time farmers, and part-time gold mine-workers.

It must be emphasised that the black worker had something to gain by working on the gold mines and that the relationship between the black worker and the mine owners was a symbiotic one in which both parties benefited. The mine owners received the labour they so desperately needed and the black worker received cash earnings with which he could fulfil his various needs. However, the mine owners were the chief beneficiaries and could have given the black workers a fairer deal in the process.

²⁹ Cartwright, A.P., The Gold Miners, p. 221.

2.2 HOW DID THEY GET TO THE MINES?

The journey to the mines was a long, hazardous and unpredictable one: The African left on this journey with anticipation, and came back with a blanket, colourful hat, and cash in his pocket. A missionary described an early migrant worker, "The returned migrants bearing themselves proudly passed the mission station, each was wrapped in a long sheepskin cloak which he had earned in the Cape Colony and carried a gun and a small bag filled with goods. This was all the reward for one or more years' labour. They all wore various forms of headgear, some had red woollen tossed caps, others felt and straw hats abundantly decorated with feathers."³⁰

Getting the black workers to the mines, was one of the earliest problems the Chamber of Mines had to deal with. There was almost no infra-structure in the country as yet, and so it was difficult to get messages across.

In the early years of mining, transportation was very primitive and workers had to walk to and from the mines. Considering the vast distances of between 100 to 1 000 km and more they had to travel, it is understandable that some never made it there and back. In the annual report of the Chamber of Mines in 1894 it is recorded that, "At the Transvaal borders and for the succeeding hundred miles there is a scarcity of food and shelter from the borders to the Rand, and at almost every store and dwelling near the road can be found those whom sickness and fatigue has compelled to give up the road to either find a friend or perish."³¹ When their contracts expired they had to walk back home again and face wild animals, white farmers or rival tribes as all of the land was claimed to be under someone's jurisdiction. That was if the walk did not kill them. Two to three per cent of all workers died on their way to or from the mines.³² Hundreds of migrants arrived at

³⁰ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 42.

³¹ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1894.

³² Ibid., p. 52.

the mines, tired, hungry and with bleeding feet. Many had to receive treatment in hospital before they could start working. Most of these workers were under-nourished when they set out, and food was not readily available on the journey. Sometimes they travelled in large groups of 200 people, partly for reasons of safety and when they were sent by their tribes. Doxey agrees, "There can be no doubt that the accounts given by returning Africans at their kraals of the privations endured en route, and even on the mines, together with the fact that many never returned to tell any tale, must have had a strong influence in preventing others from undertaking similar journeys."³³

Migrants were often hijacked by white farmers, not for their valuables but for their labour and sometimes they had to work for these farmers for three months before they could continue their journey. "For Africans it was a tortuous undertaking to have to walk through territory controlled by hostile, labour-hungry Orange Free State farmers."³⁴

D. van Zyl agrees, "For the migrant worker the journey to the Rand was fraught with hardship. Before the railways were built, the workers travelled the long distances - sometimes over 800 km - on foot, suffering hunger, thirst and exposure. To alleviate their plight, recruitment agencies set up depots, particularly on the routes from the Northern Transvaal and Mozambique where migrants were able to sleep over and recuperate."³⁵

The return journey was more dangerous as workers then had cash, guns or other valuables and often fell victim to robbery and murder. They were frequently arrested by the police and would have to pay a fine before they could continue their journey. Sir James Sivewright writes about the harassment, "Transkeian natives complain bitterly of being jostled, thrashed, and in the course of fumigation, even robbed of their hard-earned wages by police in charge of fumigating stations between

³³ Doxey, G.V., p. 53.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁵ Van Zyl, D., The Discovery of Wealth. The Advent of the Industrial Revolution in Southern Africa, 1870-1899, p. 91.

Transvaal and the Free State."³⁶ Migrants later placed their material belongings with traders, who for a fee, would transport them back to their tribal homes. Only when they started travelling by rail, did migrants feel safe. "It is perhaps no small wonder that service on the Johannesburg mines was, in time, regarded by many as proof of manhood."³⁷

From 1889 to 1899 the mine owners developed a system of paying agents or "touts" to recruit their black labourers and bring them to the mines. These agents were paid R2 to R2,50 for every black worker they sent to the mines.

The system had many shortcomings. Agents often lied to workers and lured them to the mines under false pretenses. To this day, recruiting agents in Lesotho are called "dikalatsane" or deceivers.³⁸

2.3 WHERE DID THEY STAY?

Once the workers arrived after the long, exhausting journey they were housed in compounds. The compound system on the gold mines, was taken from the example set by the diamond fields in Kimberley. The system has been in existence for the past century and has been heavily criticized, but no one has been able to evolve a more economical and practical method of housing thousands of migrant workers. There was just no alternative.

The early compounds of the gold mining industry were wood or iron shacks and looked like camps. Inspectors reported that these compounds housed 20 to 50 workers who slept on concrete bunks, built one above the other such as shelves. Many did not have any flooring and in the rainy season it was very muddy. At first the compounds had no washing facilities, but by 1903 they were fitted with concrete

³⁶ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1896.

³⁷ Doxey, G.V., p. 54.

³⁸ Callinicos, L., Vol 2, p. 33.

baths in the centre.³⁹ D. van Zyl writes about the living conditions, "Although in Johannesburg and in mine compounds the workers were housed in relative comfort, their quarters were usually overcrowded and poorly ventilated, with inadequate sanitary facilities. Many blacks also lived in shanty towns in the poorer residential areas."⁴⁰

It was difficult for the migrant worker to leave his family and often his wife and children behind to come and spent a few months on the mine. It might have been more satisfactory if he could have brought his family. In the beginning this was not possible, because of the dilemma of his farming activities. A.P. Cartwright argues, "If his wife and family came to town what, he asks himself, would become of the precious crops and cattle - the cattle that are his savings bank?"⁴¹ They were not only his saving bank, but also his pension and medical fund.

The compounds were not fitted with windows or lights and the only heating came from an "Imbandla".⁴² The smoke and lack of ventilation was not very healthy and rooms were either very cold in winter, or very hot in summer. Life in the compounds was totally different from living in a small hut. In the compounds there was no privacy and workers had to dress, undress and wash themselves in front of strangers.

In the compounds the workers were provided with food, which was barely enough to satisfy them. Their food rations were 5 pounds of mealie meal and 2 pounds of meat a week.⁴³ These rations were not enough for manual labourers who had to work 10 hours or more at a shift. The workers had to spent some of their earnings on buying extra food.

In the early years the workers did not have much free time, but eventually mines began organizing activities for workers in their spare time. Sports available in the

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ Van Zyl, D., p. 91.

⁴¹ Cartwright, A.P., p. 62.

⁴² An "Imbandla" is a big tin of hot coal giving off highly dangerous smoke fumes.

⁴³ Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 45.

compounds included volleyball, skittles, athletics and boxing. Movies were shown frequently with a projector mounted on a vehicle while a microphone was used to interpret the pictures into the black men's languages.⁴⁴ This was done to keep them out of trouble. Tribal dances were encouraged as this gave the workers an opportunity to express themselves while they maintained their tribal links. Biccard Jeppe writes, "It should be noted that the native mine workers are not de-tribalized: they are not urban natives. In the compounds they are distributed according to tribes, and often according to family relationships."⁴⁵ Some workers spent their money on liquor or women and eventually had to stay longer to save money.

Right from the start it was quite clear that the compounds only made provision for single black males. The black mine-worker was paid just enough to support himself in the towns - not his family. The land in the reserves had to support his family. The pass laws also prevented black miners from settling with their families in nearby towns.

A lot of effort, organizing and management went into the compound system. It was still the most economic way to feed and house only the worker and not providing for an entire family. By doing this, the mining houses could also justify the low wages they paid black workers. They argued that they housed and fed them.

It was not just a matter of providing housing if they catered for a more permanent work force, it was then also a matter of providing schools and hospitals for the women, children and older members of the families. There is no doubt that the system of migrant labour and the compounds saved the mine owners millions of rands every year.⁴⁶ The chiefs and heads of families were also keen for workers to return to their homes for they needed their cash earnings and labour.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Hocking, A., p. 168.

⁴⁵ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, p. 98.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁷ New Nation, p. 61.

Not only did the compound system save the mine owners money, but it also served as a means of control. They could make sure that workers turned up for work every day and they could not desert so easily.

Each room in the compound housed members of the same tribe and a headman would be appointed to look after the interests of the workers. Then there were "indunas" who acted as liaison officers between the compound manager and the different tribes. Each room also had an "isibonda" who was elected by the workers and who brought complaints and suggestions to the headman.

The compound system worked so well from the employer's point of view that a number of municipalities on the Rand erected compounds to house their workers.

For the migrants, living in compounds in the mines, came as a great shock. Most of them were farmers who had never even been in a large town. They had never been underground or operated machines and were now working for strangers. They had been accustomed to working according to the seasons and the hours of sunlight every day. Now they had to work in shifts of up to 10 hours and live in over-crowded rooms. It is not that the black workers who did not go the mines, had more prosperous alternatives.

"As was to be expected in a rough and ready community, the negative effects of urban life were soon apparent on the Rand. Alcohol abuse was prevalent, since liquor was readily available at the hundreds of canteens and bars that had sprung up. Among the lower classes in particular, drunkenness ran rife, affecting their fitness for work and leading to poverty, unemployment and crime. The authorities and the mine management attempted unsuccessfully to fight the evil of alcohol, particularly by cutting down on the number of canteens. Prostitution was a further problem, so much so that at one stage the government considered legalising brothels - a plan that was eventually abandoned. A marked increase in crime included smuggling, theft (often of unworked gold), rape and murder."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Van Zyl, D., p. 92.

As early as in 1894 it was reported in the annual report of the Association of Mine Managers that none of the managers could have foreseen that liquor abuse would become such a big problem among the black labourers.⁴⁹ In 1907 it was decided that the total prohibition of sales to natives would be in the best interest of both worker and employer. Mine managers were already brewing kaffir(sic) beer as part of the rations and the Law Department warned that it would be stopped if the beer was found to be too strong. In 1911 the mines received a letter from the South African Police in which they blamed the mines for the excessive drunkenness. They attributed it to the illicit brewing being carried out in compounds and locations.⁵⁰

In the compounds built before the Second World War, beds were not provided and the men had to sleep on the concrete bunks or had to buy beds from their predecessors. Ernest Cole, a black South African photographer who worked for Drum magazine described the conditions in the compounds: "The living conditions of the men who worked on the mines are miserable almost beyond imagining - worse even than in the worst slums in Johannesburg. The miners are quartered in long brick-walled structures with corrugated iron roofs. They live 20 to a room that measures 18 by 25 feet. Each man has a concrete cubicle, the slab floor of which is his bed. What little furniture the common room contains - a few wooden tables and benches - are made by the occupants. Threadbare tunics and trousers hang about, it is a jungle of clothes. The most privacy a man can get is to hang a blanket in front of his bunk."⁵¹

In some compounds the beds had concrete sides so that the men could only climb onto the bed from the one end.⁵² Dining rooms were a luxury and most of the time the men ate their food in their dormitories or outside. No women were allowed into the compounds.⁵³ These compounds were built according to government

⁴⁹ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue 1892-1992, p. 13.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵¹ Pallister, D., a.o., South Africa Incorporated: The Oppenheimer Empire, p. 136.

⁵² The rooms were 18 ft by 22 ft for 20 native workers and 25 ft by 25 ft for 40 workers.

⁵³ This type of housing was very likely the reason why industrial unrest was less

regulations, ensuring the maximum amount of light and air. The men were placed in the compounds according to the districts where they originated from so that frequently members of the same tribe and even family were in the same room. Mine management tried to keep the members of different tribes together so that tribal bonds could be strengthened and not weakened. Each room also had a "monitor" who acted as a spokesman for that room and was responsible for the order and good conduct of his tenants. In some compounds the members of a tribe could elect a "police boy" and in other compounds one was appointed by the compound manager. In every compound there was also an induna or chief native for each tribe who acted as a liason between the natives and management.

The plumbing in the compound was not only outdated but also inadequate. The shower rooms were crowded with men trying to bathe while others were doing their meagre laundry. At mealtimes the men lined up to have their ration of food. Every man had to show a job ticket and only those who worked could eat. Breakfast was at 5 am and consisted of porridge and coffee. Lunch usually consisted of "Nyula" which is a stew of cabbage, carrots, other vegetables and sometimes meat.⁵⁴

Whenever possible the men would go outside the compound to buy extra food. They usually bought mealie meal which they then cooked themselves. There was no dining hall, but there was a beer hall where men could buy liquor.⁵⁵

On Sunday the men usually had their day off. Boredom made it almost the worst day of all. They were separated from their families and the mines offered almost no recreational facilities. The men mostly sat outside their rooms, doing nothing, while some took a job gardening or sewed new patches to their clothing. Some did tribal dancing. "Thus their blank and indistinguishable days, there is even a word in mine talk for sleeping with another man - matamyola."⁵⁶

successful among black mine workers, because the police could surround a compound fairly easily and could thus isolate those who were taking part in organized protest action.

⁵⁴ Pallister, D., a.o., p. 137.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 137.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

A worker who was sitting in a kraal, talking about his cattle one day, could within a week be 1 000 miles away, having travelled by train, seen a city for the first time, and be working 2 000 ft underground. See Appendix 2.

The black workers went down the mine from 4 to 6 o'clock in the morning. When they reached the level they were working on, they had to wait for the white boss who arrived at 6:30 am. They would start by getting the tools ready and filling up the holes where the dynamite had not exploded the day before. They would then spend the day shovelling broken rock into trucks to be taken up to the surface. It was then time to drill new holes. Black workers hammered deep holes into the rock to fit a dynamite fuse. The skilled, white miner would then fit the dynamite and the workers would leave. Some workers had to stay until the blasting was finished which could be till 7 o'clock at night. During this long day, they were not provided with food and had to take down their own food.⁵⁷

The night shift worked equally long hours. They would go down the mines at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and only return at 6 o'clock the next morning. After a shift the workers still had to collect their food ticket, before they could eat, talk for a while and then go to sleep before the next shift.⁵⁸

The mine owners wanted the greatest output from the workers, at the lowest input. Bad living and working conditions made for high mortality rates and often discouraged workers from coming to the mines. Many of the mine workers died because of accidents and disease.

Pneumonia, scurvy, meningitis and dysentery caused the deaths of 3 762 Africans in 1903. The death rate fell to 33 per 1 000 in 1906, after the Milner administration had enforced minimum standards of diet, housing sanitation and hospital care.⁵⁹ The high death rate, injuries without compensation, bad food and accommodation gave

⁵⁷ Callinicos, L., Vol 2, p. 52.

⁵⁸ In their free time the workers made conversation about topics such as the weather, the crops at home and daily events.

⁵⁹ Marquard, L., p. 57.

the mines a bad name amongst workers who often deserted to find less hazardous employment with better wages.

Traditionally the black man's tribal loyalty was very strong. He took pride in the fact that he was Zulu or Fingo or Xhosa and tended to look down on other tribes. In the work place the workers communicated by means of "Fanakalo" a miners' Esperanto that was essentially a language of command with a simple vocabulary and easy grammar.⁶⁰

Tribal fights took place on the mines, where the men from different tribes were housed separately. Despite their tribal ties, life in a Western civilization did break down tribal customs progressively and loyalties to chiefs and tribal customs gradually gave way. On the mines the chiefs had no power. This was part of the dualistic life of the mine-worker. In the rural areas he wore tribal costumes and followed tribal rules. In the cities he wore overalls and boots and came into contact with the Western lifestyle.

During the 1940s, some mines started special social welfare work amongst their black workers. Welfare committees were established, libraries, reading and writing rooms were provided and adult night schools were started. It was a start.

2.4 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The harsh life of the mine workers, poor food and medical care and the dangerous work underground caused the deaths of many mine workers every year. In 1903, 5 022 black miners died on the mines:

- 59% of the workers died of pneumonia and meningitis from the crowded, damp conditions and the sudden changes in temperature
- 14% died of tuberculosis because of the sudden changes in temperature and the damp conditions
- 12% died of intestinal infections because of poor nutrition

⁶⁰ Hocking, A., p. 315.

- 6% died of scurvy from the lack of vegetables⁶¹
- 4% died of accidents underground because of the dangerous work
- 5% died of Baccillosis.⁶²

The major causes of accidents on the mines were falls of hanging, blasting and shaft accidents. A dangerous hanging wall in the Rand rock formation was difficult to detect and gave little warning. Even the most experienced and careful miner might fail to recognize it.⁶³

In 1903 the death rate among miners was 11,2%.⁶⁴ By 1911 the mining industry was dealing with well over 200 000 men and their health services were still lacking. The mines had to deal with diseases such as phthisis, pneumonia and silicosis, but no research had been done in this regard.⁶⁵ These diseases occurred underground, specifically where there was a sudden change of temperature, if the workers moved from the station to their workplace and vice versa.

Because ailments and diseases affected production on the mines it was a matter of concern for the mines and the government. The government provided a site on Hospital Hill in Johannesburg and the Chamber of Mines built the laboratories and offices there to investigate medical conditions brought on by mining.⁶⁶ "It proved to be one of the most valuable investments the mining industry ever made and has been worth twice its weight in gold to the people of South Africa."⁶⁷

One of the biggest health threats to the mines were the exceptionally high cases of pneumonia. Native workers recruited in tropical Africa proved particularly susceptible and the death rate was so high that in 1911 the mines decided not to

⁶¹ In 1902 it was decided to include rations of sugar, coffee, vegetables, fruit and kaffir (sic) beer in the diet of black workers to try and prevent the incidence of scurvy. Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue 1892-1992, p. 19.

⁶² Callinicos, L., Vol 1, p. 49.

⁶³ Hocking, A., p. 79.; Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 22.

⁶⁴ Pampallis, J., Foundations of the New South Africa, p. 29.

⁶⁵ Between 1905-1912 the death rate per 1 000 workers were 88.13.

⁶⁶ Cartwright, A.P., p. 228.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 228.

recruit from these zones any more. The number of pneumonia cases dropped, but tuberculosis and other lung ailments continued to threaten the health of mine workers.

Dr. Samuel Evans, chairman of Crown Mines, visited the Panama Canal where he met maj-gen Gorgas, a United States army doctor who had great success in looking after the health of the workers who built the canal. He was particularly successful in treating pneumonia.

Gorgas was invited to the Witwatersrand mines to report on the health organization of the mines. He came in 1913 and recommended a complete re-organization of the existing system.

Because of the costs involved, not all mining companies were prepared to accept the recommendations, but the Corner House group decided to put his ideas into operation. Dr A.J. Orenstein was put in charge of medical services.⁶⁸ He re-organized the hospital system, the compounds, the diet of native workers and the sanitation on the mines.⁶⁹

Another health threat to black and white mine workers was pneumoconiosis or phthisis. This disease is caused by dust getting into the lungs, and this then leads to tuberculosis. Some workers are physically more liable to get the disease than others. L.M. Nesbitt an English-born miner who worked on the mines of South Africa, writes about the dust, "The deadly quartz dust hung like a fog always in the air; we breathed it continuously. With each breath the miner drew, thousands of these glassy splinters rushed into his lungs, piercing the tissue and causing lesions that could never heal."⁷⁰ The mines tried to control dust in their ventilation currents

⁶⁸ Dr Orenstein lived to see the silicosis hazard in mines on the Rand reduced from 900 cases in every 10 000 men to 80. He was awarded the gold medal of the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy of London in 1949, because he devoted his life to the health of mine workers.

⁶⁹ The mortality figures for TB were 11.78 per thousand workers in 1915 and it dropped to 2.23 per thousand in 1935. Annual Report of the Rand Mines Health Department, 1935.

⁷⁰ Nesbitt, L.M., Gold Fever, p. 10.

and also allowed only the workers who were more resistant to the disease into certain areas in the workplace.⁷¹

It was only after the First World War that steps were taken to reduce the amount of dust underground. Before the development of water-fed drills and the introduction of hoses to spray water in drilling areas, the concentration of dust was so high that the men working on the drills were likely to get bad silicosis within five or six years. White mine-workers were particularly susceptible to phthisis and silicosis, as few of the black workers stayed long enough on the mine to become sufficiently contaminated.

The compounds built before the First World War could house between 60 and 90 men in a single room, creating a serious health threat. After the 1930s compounds were built to house a smaller number of mine workers and living conditions as well as health hazards improved to some extent.

The mines had also developed a much better method of coping with pneumonia. After 20 years of research, jointly sponsored by the government and the Chamber of Mines, the Lister anti-pneumonia vaccine was developed.

Workers from the tropical areas could then again be recruited and vaccinated. Special measures were taken with these workers and they ended up in rooms with less than 20 persons. They first worked 12 shifts on surface and then another 14 days of acclimatisation, doing light underground work. At the end of shifts they were examined for cuts and abrasions to prevent infections. Compound staff also inspected the rooms every morning, to remove sick workers and send them to hospital. Workers were also weighed on pay day and if any consistent weight loss had occurred they were taken to hospital.

When it came to tuberculosis the mines adopted the attitude that it was not just a mining disease, as many Africans coming from the rural areas, suffering from malnutrition, were already prone to it. The mines therefore did not accept full responsibility for a disease such as TB and workers who contracted the disease

⁷¹ Jeppe, C.B., Gold Mining on the Witwatersrand, Volume 2, p. 197.

were returned home.⁷² Contemporary studies at the time differed. They showed that mine work was a major source of infection and re-infection of diseases such as TB and syphilis.⁷³ Even in Basutoland there was a sharp increase in the individuals who contracted TB and it was also contributed to the labour recruiting of the mines.⁷⁴ Another health threat to the workers in South African mines, was heat stroke, especially to the new recruits. It occurs in the severe temperatures and humidity underground. This disease could be controlled by the provision of satisfactory air conditioning, by proper rest and a reasonable acclimatisation period. If it was detected in time, it could be treated without any severe consequences. It was decided that new recruits should wear a special arm-band so that they could be easily identified underground and treated immediately.⁷⁵ Heat rash was also an inconvenience for some workers, but did not present a health threat.

Miners' cramp sometimes occurred due to oversweating and loss of salts. This problem was countered by adding some lime to the drinking water.

Septicaemia and Tetanus also presented some danger when proper care was not taken to apply dressings to wounds, however big or small.

The bad safety records of the mines and the potential health hazards not only affected the production of workers, but also led to desertion. Some of the workers were caught, punished and sent back to the mines. Some never returned and found employment elsewhere.

In 1943 the Miners' Phthisis Action Committee expressed alarm about the incidence, treatment and compensation of lung disease in black miners. It advocated a

⁷² In the Report of the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wage Commission in 1943 it is argued that the general health conditions in the rural areas were not that bad and that Transkei and Basutoland had an increase in the population of over 2% per year, one of the highest in the world. It would not have been possible if conditions in these areas were so bad.

⁷³ Report of Sir Walter Johnson on Medical Administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, July 1937.

⁷⁴ Dyke, H.W., "Basutoland Annual Medical and Public Health Report for 1942, p. 24.

⁷⁵ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 47.

nationwide system of health care for blacks suffering from phthisis, tuberculosis and other lung disease.⁷⁶ In the same year the National Health Services Commission also emphasized the need for a universal health care system for black workers.⁷⁷ The mining companies expressed the hope that a "herd immunity" would develop among the black mine workers.⁷⁸

Only after the Second World War was a comprehensive X-ray examination using miniature radiography introduced for the black work force. It enabled the medical officials to detect the disease much sooner, and remove the patient from the work place where he could infect others. Workers who arrived with the disease would not be contracted.⁷⁹

At the same time sulfa drugs and penicillin were developed which assisted greatly in the treatment of diseases such as pneumonia. It is noted that at first the mines had a curative approach to all disease and when matters persisted, they started a preventative approach.

In 1951 WNLA reported that workers returned to their rural areas in better health than when they arrived. They also take with them substantial sums in deferred pay and cash to support their extended families. Although a few never returned, death rates were low, 5 per 1 000 from disease and 2 per 1 000 from accidents.⁸⁰

Jonathan Crush writes, "mine medical services began to benefit from a shift in emphasis to sanitation, nutrition, and disease prevention, as opposed to care that had begun twenty years earlier. Some of the earliest research on disease afflicting the black community was funded by the industry through the South African Institute of Medical Research."⁸¹

⁷⁶ Report of the Miners' Phthisis Acts Commission, 1941-1943, Pretoria UG, 22-43.

⁷⁷ Journal of South African Studies, 13, p. 180.

⁷⁸ Gold Producers' Committee Memorandum on the Mortality Amongst Tropical Natives, 21 April 1938.

⁷⁹ Crush, J., a.o., p. 43.

⁸⁰ WNLA statement to the International Labour Office, 27 September 1957.

⁸¹ Crush, J., a.o., p. 53.

Despite major improvements in medical facilities in the mines, the black miners remained at risk.⁸² Working underground was, and still is, dangerous.

In reality the black mine-worker was a farmer, who was ignorant of diseases such as TB and pneumonia, a subsistence farmer who came from a close-knit family and who had a role to play in his tribe. He was a full-time farmer and a part-time miner. Because of the continuous need for cash earnings, he came to the mines on his own initiative, or was sent by his family or tribe. In the towns he caught a glimpse of Western civilization before returning to his tribal roots. With the deterioration of his simple economy he had no alternative, but to go and earn a living on the mines. Some of them preferred city life, "In the course of their sojourn on the mines or elsewhere, however, many Africans acquired the taste for other goods and services, for example European-style clothes, liquor, sewing machines, which were only obtainable in exchange for money payment."⁸³ Some had great difficulty in adapting and did not want to be transformed by Western society. What they did not realize yet, was that their mere contact with a Western lifestyle and Western economy had already transformed them.

Before the discovery of gold in the golden Orange Free State the black mine-worker had no social status and white people regarded him as inferior to them. He was illiterate, unskilled and still clung to his tribal bonds. J.J. Fourie writes very frankly, "In the eyes of the white and often arrogant capitalist, the blacks were mere instruments of labour, looked down upon as a worthless, lazy and unprofitable class of humanity."⁸⁴

There was a policy of complete segregation and the black worker was not allowed to live close to the white worker. On the labour front he was the one doing the unskilled manual labour, and on the political front he was completely disregarded. He was regarded as a temporary visitor with no ambitions on the labour front and no political

⁸² R.Reily, acting Resident Commissioner to High Commissioner, 3 April 1935.

⁸³ Doxey, G.V., p. 49.

⁸⁴ Fourie, J.J., Die Koms van die Bantoe na die Rand en hulle posisie aldaar, 1886-1899, p. 263.

voice. In the next few chapters the complete transformation of the black worker into a skilled, politically fulfilled worker will be unfolded. This is a journey that takes the black man from his rural area into the white man's towns. It is a painstakingly, slow process that takes place over several decades and only gains momentum during the last 15 years.

CHAPTER THREE - THE MIGRANT LABOUR PATTERN

3.1 A UNIQUE MIGRATORY PATTERN WAS ESTABLISHED

The history of mining in South Africa goes hand in hand with the development of a migratory system that is unequalled in scale and longevity.¹ The importance of the migration of hundreds of thousands of black workers to and from the mines in the entire transformation process of the black worker should not be underestimated. "As the industry's investment, engineering, design and production techniques are all based on large numbers of unskilled mineworkers, the availability of black labour has always been a major determinant of the South African gold mining industry's output."²

The underlying principle of the mining industry was that more white workers meant fewer profits, whereas more black workers meant more profits. The appetite of the mining industry for native(sic) labour was insatiable.³ The mining companies and WNLA saw foreign workers as an investment against future labour shortages.⁴

Black people from all over Southern Africa became temporary contract workers. One of the main disadvantages of this temporary system, from the viewpoint of the black worker, was that it prevented him from acquiring any skills and abilities needed if he wanted to improve his situation. This suited the white workers at the time, because it made the black labourer much less of a threat. The black worker was powerless as he possessed no skills.

In other industrializing societies, labour migration was a transitory phenomenon that took place from a rural to an urban area in a short period of time. In South Africa

¹ Migrancy can best be described as a system whereby a proportion of the black labour force do not reside permanently at or near their place of work, but circulate continuously between the subsistence economy and the white man's cities and towns.

² Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 158.

³ Franklin, N., Economics in South Africa, p. 33.

⁴ WNLA, Annual Report, 1934-1945.

however, migration is a continuous process that has lasted throughout the past century. It is a complicated, costly system, that might be discredited by many. Many historians and philanthropists such as Lulu Callinicos and Francis Wilson have questioned and criticized it. The fact, however is that there was no alternative.

If one looks at alternatives to the migrant labour system, a more permanent work force comes to mind. This would have to be provided with houses, water and electricity, schools and hospitals, not only for individuals themselves but also for their families. The financial implications on municipalities and local authorities would have been tremendous. Socially, South Africa was not prepared for it during the early years of the twentieth century and it was certainly considered as an option by the South African government with its policy of apartheid. The migrant labour system has not only shaped South Africa's economical history, but also its political history. Apartheid and racism were deepened, developed and perfected on the mines and through the migrant labour system. The system has its roots in the policy of segregation in South Africa.

Pampallis argues that, "The migrant labour system thus allowed the mine owners to pay lower wages while evading all responsibility for housing, health care, education and welfare of the workers' families. In this way production in the most backward, poverty-stricken sector of the economy was subsidizing the profits of the mining industry, the most modern sector."⁵

The system put constraints on the labour freedom of the workers and prevented competition between the mining groups, which kept wages low.

Not much has been written about the early migrants as mine owners were much more focused on production than on the producers. They were often portrayed as raw but happy and willing peasants, attracted by the city lights, eager to prove themselves, save enough money to acquire some cattle and land, and, on their

⁵ Pampallis, J., Foundations of the New South Africa, p. 44.

return, marry and start a family. There is also a darker reality to the migrant worker, that of dispossession, social dislocation, disease and death.⁶

Migrants were housed and fed in compounds, they usually worked for 4 to 6 months before returning to their villages. When they returned to the mines, not even the same mines, they had to be instructed in their specific job all over again. L. Marquard writes, "The migratory labour system tended to be inefficient and wasteful. The large turnover of workers involved high recruiting and supervisory costs. Every raw batch of peasants had to learn mining techniques and undergo the painful process of adapting themselves to a strange environment."⁷

C. Orpen adds, "It was also a satisfactory arrangement for many industries in that it enabled them to get new recruits at a low cost each year. What was lost in efficiency and training costs was more than offset by the very low wages that could be paid."⁸ Lanning compares the cost-effectiveness of migrancy to the human factor, "Black labour may be cheap for the mining companies, but the human costs of the migrant system are high and most of them fall on the black miners and their home communities."⁹

From the start of the migrant labour system the demands of the mines for unskilled labourers far exceeded the number of people in South Africa prepared to enter into wage labour. Measures had to be taken to induce more Africans to leave the land. Many decades later the movement to the cities would be spontaneous.

There is no doubt that the migrant worker initially had something to gain by working on the mines. The wages earned played a vital role in preserving the rural household and it was one of the better alternatives a young black man had towards the end of the nineteenth century. But the social and psychological consequences of leading a double life would affect many generations.

Migrancy was not completely unfamiliar to the blacks.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ Marquard, L., *The People and Politics of South Africa*, p. 52.

⁸ Orpen, C., *Productivity of Black Workers in South Africa*, p. 11.

⁹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 156.

The migration of young black males had started long before diamonds and gold were discovered in South Africa. During the 19th century young, male Africans had moved increasingly from their tribal homes to wage employment, often hundreds of miles away, to work as porters, kitchen servants, messengers and general labourers. They often left their homes in summer to work on white farms. After a period of time, they would return to their homes, having earned sufficient cash for their particular purpose.¹⁰ At first the women did not follow for they could not be released from their food producing and child rearing activities.

African tribes were also familiar with migration long before the first white settlers came. Tribes often moved to new areas in search of fertile land, pastures or game, as this was the only guarantee of their subsistence. After a drought, flood or pest they would often move in search of new land.¹¹ As White settlers continued to occupy land, it had become almost impossible for Southern African tribes to practise their traditional, nomadic life style. The White farmers not only brought themselves, but also their economic thoughts and beliefs, to the interior of the country which would often imply taking over the land of the African and using African workers as labourers.¹² It must, however, be understood that this migration took place on a very small scale.

The pattern of migrancy occurred on the diamond mines in Kimberley many years earlier, but developed on a much larger scale in the gold mining industry. In 1880 there were 14 000 labourers working on the gold mines, and only 5 years later there were 100 000 black migrants.¹³

V.L. Allen remarks, "They went voluntarily, generally in response to the needs of their tribes. Although they placed their thumb prints on contracts, they usually

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

¹¹ De Kiewiet, C.W., A History of South Africa, p. 79.

¹² Omer-Cooper, J.D., Colonial South Africa and its Frontiers, p. 368.

¹³ Callinicos, L., A People's History of South Africa, Volume 1, p. 22.

worked only as long as they needed to acquire a gun, or perhaps cattle or blankets or grain."¹⁴

At first it was only the unmarried young men who came to the mines, often sent by their chiefs. Eventually married men also left to earn wages, as they could no longer support their families. At first the migrants went for short periods such as three months, but eventually their sojourns became ever longer and some never worked the land again.

Doxey agrees, "Africans were thrust into a strange way of life, alien to their own, and required to learn new languages and adjust themselves to a different moral code, while at the same time adapting their habits to the disciplined nature of industrial society, with its emphasis on punctuality and regular hours of work."¹⁵

Migration also served the area from which the miner was recruited. Though individual wages were low, the total amount earned by the migrants was large and meant a substantial income to the impoverished rural areas. Suppliers, local traders and officials all benefited from the revenues generated by the migrants. However, agriculture in the rural areas became more difficult as the land was scarce and the soil barren. It was becoming more difficult for women to make a living off the land. No development took place in the reserves, no factories, shops or towns developed, and the reserves became poorer. "The main reason why they left their home villages was poverty."¹⁶

Just like their male counterparts some of the women left for other reasons, such as freedom from their conservative parents, who often chose a husband for them, and boredom. Some became Christians through their contact with the Christian mission schools and developed a taste for a Western lifestyle. Gradually the black population became semi-Westernized. The black miner would lead the exodus of the women and the children into South African towns and cities.

¹⁴ Allen, V.L., The History of Black Mine Workers in South Africa, Volume 1, p. 107.

¹⁵ Doxey, G.V., The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa, p. 87.

¹⁶ New Nation, p. 99.

Between 1911 and 1921 the numbers of black women living in Johannesburg grew from 4 000 to more than 12 000.¹⁷ Authorities were concerned that children born in the urban areas would grow up and stay in towns and cities. They did not favour a permanent urban working class. Black women who lived near towns often brewed beer as a means of income, and the authorities strongly disapproved of this as this led to drunkenness and other social and economic consequences. Not arriving for work on a Monday because of alcohol abuse was a common feature in the South African economy.

In 1921 the Johannesburg City Council set up a Commission of Inquiry to look into the matter of black urbanization. The report of the commission made it clear that the native(sic) should only be allowed to enter urban areas when he was willing to fulfil the needs of the white man. It also indicates that he should leave when he ceases to be of any use to the white man.

The Native(sic) (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 tried to control the movement of Africans into the cities and:

- restricted the purchase of land by blacks outside the locations.
- placed the entire cost of black housing on black communities through rents and fines.
- did not provide for middle class blacks.
- allowed for the segregation of black urban communities.
- provided for more control on urban blacks.

Special permits were demanded for tenants and visitors in an attempt to control the influx of blacks more stringently. As more women and children flocked to the cities they lived on municipal land closest to the cities where they constructed "pondokkies" of packing-cases, sheet of galvanized iron, sacking and any other material they could lay their hands on. There was no light or running water, no proper ventilation and heating and these houses were hopelessly over-crowded.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸ Marquard, L., p. 43.

By 1924 the black urban population of the Rand had risen to 103 000 of which 13 000 were women and 25 000 were children.¹⁹ In the thirties, this figure would rise to 230 000.²⁰

A very small portion of the black mine workers were accommodated in married quarters and could live with their wives on mine premises. In 1930 less than 1% lived in such quarters.²¹ This however, did not stop the migration of the females and children into towns. They came in search of work and would reside permanently in towns. Children would be born in the cities and they would try to make a living. Their migration and subsequent transformation would be irreversible.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MIGRANT WORKER

The mining industry has brought together a unique work force. People from different races, cultures and tribes have to work shoulder to shoulder. The black worker has a different attitude towards life, his family, his work and his fellow man. Even if the white man has taught the black his language and how to use a shovel, the black worker still remains rooted in the culture of his place of birth.

The black worker is very superstitious and believes in spirits which surround him every day.²² Workers who are recruited for the mines steal away from their homes without letting family or friends know when they are leaving. They hope that the evil spirits will not see them depart and so they will not suffer the misfortunes that spirits often cause when men are at work, such as rock falls, illness, fights with members of their own tribe and bad relations with supervisors.²³

¹⁹ New Nation, p. 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²¹ Maylam, P., A History of the African People of South Africa, p. 146.

²² Sometimes the influences of these spirits are harmful and sometimes helpful. Sometimes they encourage him to work and is a motivating factor, but sometimes they create fear which hampers his ability to work.

²³ Silberbauer, E.R., Understanding and Motivating the African Worker, p. 20.

Most African people believe that death is caused by the evil spirits. Even when someone has died of natural causes, they want to determine which spirit caused his death. They strongly believe in the spirits of their ancestors. The ancestral spirits are ranked according to importance and in times of crisis they pray to these spirits and hope their prayers would receive the highest priority.

Dr Holloway made the following speech at Oxford University in the 1950's, "Ancestor-worship is therefore a powerful element in the lives of the Bantu. It exerts a far-reaching influence in the social and economic life of the people and the daily activities. It is functional superstition. Its effects on the problem of advancing the Bantu in an orderly march to civilization, are formidable. The colossal task of changing the mental attitudes of the primitive people must be pursued by all the means at the disposal of the European. Much of this is done by daily contact in the labour field, which tends to weaken the fear of the unknown by demonstrating man's control over physical forces."²⁴

F. Rodseth writes, "There is a tremendous gap to be bridged between a modern individual society and a tribal system based upon communal land ownership and dominated by magic and superstition."²⁵

Black workers believe that some spirits control the rain and some lightning. They also believe in witch doctors.²⁶ The witch doctor who practises in the townships and compounds is in fact a doctor and a chemist or herbalist combined.

²⁴ PV 515, Holloway, J.E.

²⁵ Optima, March 1956.

²⁶ According to African culture there are two types of witch doctors, those who work "black magic" and those who help and heal. The "black magic" witch doctors are evil and dangerous. They will kill children in order to get a portion of human flesh with which to brew some diabolical medicine that can bring a spell of illness, madness or death to an innocent person. The victim of such a spell can become so terrified that he will abandon any hope of survival and it will affect his everyday life and of course his work capacity.

His method of diagnosis is to throw the bones and to predict future events.²⁷ He can prescribe "medicines" that will avert disaster and attract good fortune. After throwing the bones, he will give some medicines which should be placed around the man's sleeping place, or in his food.

E.R. Silberbauer writes about how the evil spirits can affect the daily life of a worker, "On a mine an African was brought to surface with a serious injury to his leg. He had failed to wear the regulation leg guard. When reprimanded for his carelessness he was unmoved. The spirits had located him on the mine and had caused the damage. No mere rubber leg guard could keep an evil spirit from doing his harmful work."²⁸ Then the black worker would not obey his white supervisor and continue working without his leg guard. This would lead to serious misunderstanding on the mines and cause turmoil in the relations between black and white.

It is an uphill battle to convince the black workers about western medicines. "Witch doctors continue to this day to exercise a powerful influence over the Bantu(sic), even on those who have become urbanized - and professed Christians. Many Bantu(sic) still regard modern medicine and treatment with grave suspicion. The sub-conscious fear persists that illness is the result of bewitchment and that by consulting a white doctor the spirits of ancestors may be antagonised."²⁹

There are numerous examples to illustrate this belief. A number of men would refuse to enter a particular work place as it was discovered that the witch doctor had cast a spell there. He was asked to put a spell by a man who disliked one of the workers and wished for this man to lose his job.³⁰ It would be difficult for the white

²⁷ His bag of bones consists of pieces of vertebrae, knuckle joints, odd bits of bone, shells and stones. Each one of these represents some force. The spirits are then called upon to enter the bones which are dropped on the ground in front of the witch doctor. They believe that the bones do not just fall, but are placed by the forces, and therefore their pattern tells a picture of people and events.

²⁸ Silberbauer, E.R., p. 24.

²⁹ "The Progress of the Bantu Peoples Towards Nationhood", Union of South Africa, Pretoria, p. 10.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 24.

supervisors and shift bosses to understand why the workers refused to enter the work place. Mathew Matsheke, a training officer, writes, "When one wants people to understand people it is always best to look closely at their background because certain aspects will be found that will help in clarifying dark lines in their behaviour. The background of the Bantu has certain characteristics which will have a strong bearing on his employers and his industrial environment."³¹

A. Tiley supports this belief, "Many of the racial problems now popularly termed multi-national problems, stem from the lack of knowledge of the way of life of the African, as compared to that of the White."³²

Silberbauer mentions an incident where a mine worker was just released from hospital after receiving treatment for a kidney disease. He had been cured and was able to return to work. Instead he asked the Native(sic) Affairs Officer for leave to visit his witch doctor at home. He believed that he had the witch doctor to thank for being cured and said that he had to go and pay him or he would just become ill again.³³ Such little incidents affected the productivity of the mine workers and must have been very frustrating for the white supervisors.

According to Stefan Meyer a shiftboss at Harmony Gold Mine, some of the older black miners do believe that when they are ill, they have to visit the tribal doctors. They will then return to the mines with a necklace and a small bottle of muti around their necks, which they will wear for a few days. Some also wear a band of beads around their heads and believe that they will be cured. He is of the opinion that the younger generation of black miners are more inclined to visit the mine hospitals and use Western medicines.³⁴

The African also regards work in a way that is foreign to the white man. To him his life is a flow of existence. The villager who wants to sow his crops does not get up

³¹ Farrell, J.D., Die Sakesektor se Bydrae tot die Verligting van die Probleem van die Stedelike Swartman, Ongepubliseerde MBA 1974, p. 13.

³² Tiley, A.S., Bridging the Communication Gap between Black and White, p. 37.

³³ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁴ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Stefan Meyer, 4.11.1998.

at five the next morning, but calls his neighbours together for a celebration. They will eat and drink and engage in cultivating the land as they feel inclined, not by the clock, but in a leisurely way. Unlike white workers who know that they have to be at a specific place at a certain time, the African goes about his task with the attitude that tomorrow is another day. "Time waits for no man is a Western saying, but the African says that time can wait as long as he wishes."³⁵ African time has to do with the position of the moon, the passing of seasons, the ripening and falling of fruits and the birth of new cattle - not with shifts and alarm clocks.

Black workers have often been stigmatized as lazy, "Traditionally the Bantu(sic) places a high value on leisure. They are given encouragement to improve their working and living standards but for too many of the Bantu(sic) it is still more important to have leisure than to be constantly striving to improve oneself."³⁶

Birthdays are not recorded by a certain date, but are remembered according to historic events. The personnel officer who, for pension requirements, must find out the age of employees, may have to delve back into the memory of past events such as a great drought, or a disastrous flood or a locust menace. By such events the employee will date his birth.

It also happens frequently that after being given an instruction to perform a certain task, the black worker will say "yes" as if he understands the job. He will then fail to complete the task as instructed. It is because it is the black man's custom to give an answer that is pleasing to his superior. He is not trying to be dishonest, but only wants to be polite.

A common problem in the mining industry is the repeated requests by black workers for leave to attend funerals of mothers, fathers and other close relatives. Many man-hours have been lost because of the black workers' inclination to attend funerals. This is because the black man's family is much wider and more closely-knit than white families. Uncles and aunts take on the same role as mothers

³⁵ Silberbauer, E.R., p. 31.

³⁶ "The Progress of the Bantu Peoples Towards Nationhood", Union of South Africa, Pretoria, p. 24.

and fathers and it is quite common for an African worker to ask to attend the funerals of two or more "fathers".³⁷

When a black miner has been killed in a fatal accident, the corpse is usually escorted back home by two members of the same kraal as the deceased. Workers will sometimes be afraid to work in the place where another worker has been killed and will mention seeing spirits there.³⁸

It is also quite common for a black man to come a few weeks after the funeral and ask for leave again. He will say that he has been touched by the "shadow" of the deceased and has to attend the cleansing ceremony where the bad luck can be washed away. This ceremony is of vital importance to the black man, although it seems unnecessary to the white man.

The closely-knit family of the black man is like an insurance policy. In the event of death of one member of the family, the dependants may be certain that they will be taken care of by the other members of the family. If both parents of a child should die, they may be sure that the child will be absorbed into the wider circle of the family. Should a family member be visiting someone in a nearby town, it is the duty of this relative to provide for his visitor in every way.³⁹

A very important aspect of the social life of the black worker is the coming-of-age, the step into manhood through initiation.⁴⁰ If, for example, someone goes to the mines who has not gone through the initiation process, and becomes a "boss boy", he will find that the others would not take orders from him because he is still a boy in their eyes.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁸ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Stefan Meyer, 4.11.1998.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁰ The initiation process is very tough. The boys have to live naked in the veld and survive of the fruits of the earth. They are taught how to conduct themselves in the presence of their elders.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 42.

The white supervisors often call their men by the name of "boy" which is actually a degrading name for the black man as it implies that the man has not been initiated. During his life time, the black man will be given three names. One is his birth name, another is a boy's name which he is given at the time when he starts looking after the cattle and the third is his family name which he is given after initiation. A black man will pretend not to hear when he is called by the name he was given at birth or as a boy.

It is difficult for the black man to adhere to his moral standards after he has left his place of birth. "The moral fences which restrained him within the bounds of right conduct are no longer present, and he is prone to indulge in excesses that he would not dare do in the tribe."⁴² Prostitution, gambling and beer drinking are some of the demoralizing activities that claim certain tribesmen on the mines. In 1954 the Chamber of Mines was informed by the Mine Managers Association of the large number of shifts of black workers being lost because of liquor abuse and the fighting that broke out in beer halls.⁴³

For the black man the move to a new culture means that he has to give up tribalism, where the entire tribe, the headman, senior men and fathers help to make decisions, in favour of a new individualistic world where he has to make his own decisions. He is on his own now, faced with a number of choices every day.

Silberbauer writes, "He has a variety of new experiences. He travels in new types of transport, he sees new kinds of buildings where the great office blocks and flats form a vast concrete jungle, which is an infinite contrast to the few mud and grass built huts that merge into the African countryside. The roads through the concrete jungle are not in any way such as the paths that wander over hill and valley and across cool streams where he comes from. The paths through the city are massed with hurrying people who do not even greet one another, much less sit down and chat together for hours as he would do on the road back home. In the country he

⁴² Ibid., p. 43.

⁴³ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 68.

went shopping at the trading store. He bought articles one at a time, and paid for each one before he embarked on the slow and careful process of choosing the next article. Purchasing a few items could easily take an entire day and involved a pleasant social event with the other shoppers."⁴⁴

It is difficult for white supervisors to see the black man as an individual, who not only brings his labour to the mines, but also his emotions, attitudes and ideals. The black man cannot be expected to forget his background, once he finds himself in the workplace. During the early years of the mining industry very little, if any, understanding of the culture of the black man existed. He just had to play the game according to the white man's set of rules.

According to Doxey, the black worker has to go through three phases when he enters the economy of the white man. Firstly, there is the process of introduction, secondly, the process of adaptation and thirdly, the process of absorption. "It is to be expected that as the Africans pass into the second and third stages and become increasingly familiar with the more sophisticated society they have entered, they will not only develop their material wants and new patterns of behaviour, but they will also widen their ambitions for advancement, socially, economically and politically."⁴⁵

The black miner was not only transformed as a labourer, but as a person as well. The transformation was not limited to himself, but also to a certain extent affected his family, wife and children.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

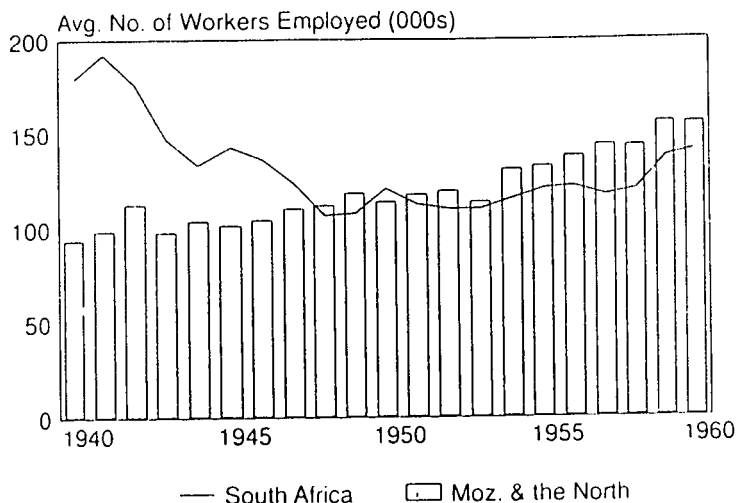
⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

3.3 FOREIGN MIGRANTS

The dependence of the South African economy upon foreign labour is nothing new. Even before the turn of the century the gold mines drew 60% of their labour force from Mozambique. "The most significant feature of the migration of "foreigners" to the mines, farms and to a lesser extent the factories of South Africa is that for the first hundred years of its industrial development the country has been heavily dependent upon workers drawn from an economic area considerably wider than the political boundaries demarcated in the early twenty years of the twentieth century."⁴⁶ For young white South Africans growing up in the seventies and eighties such as myself, it was difficult to understand why there were so many foreign workers involved in our economy and specifically in the mining industry, in view of the high rates of unemployment. I realize now that it was not simply a matter of getting rid of all the foreign workers and replacing them with South African workers. The phenomenon has a long history and many factors have contributed to the situation. Because of the low wages paid by the mining industry and the dangers involved in mining, South African black workers preferred employment in the manufacturing, transport, building and clothing industry to that in the mining industry. The government also ensured that farmers had sufficient black labour and so the mining industry found itself constantly short of labour. As a result the government extended permission for workers to be recruited from outside the country.

⁴⁶ Wilson, F., Migrant Labour in South Africa, p. 109.

The following table is an indication of the black work force on the mines and provides a comparison of South African and foreign labour:



Source: Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire, p. 56.

It is important to note that the presence of foreign workers in the mining industry helped to keep the colour bar in place.⁴⁷ The absence of foreign migrants would have put pressure on the government and the mining industry to relax the colour bar and improve the low wages of their workers. Instead they continued their efforts to recruit workers from outside the borders of South Africa.

In turn the gold mines of South Africa acted as a great magnet on native(sic) tribesmen throughout Southern Africa and added a multi-cultural flavour to the industry "The pull of this golden magnet is felt throughout the length and breadth of the sub-continent - in the wide and lonely bush wastes of the Kalahari, along the

⁴⁷ Natrass, J., The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change, p. 154.

reaches of the Zambesi River, on the shores of lake Nyasa, in the Dragon Mountains of Basutoland, the forested hills of Swaziland and the Mozambique shores of the Indian Ocean, to mention but a few of the areas from which migrant Native(sic) workers come to the mines."⁴⁸

The system allowed workers from outside the border of the country to come to the South African mines, earn some cash and then return to their traditional agricultural lifestyle. It was a symbiotic pattern that benefited both the mines and the migrant.

With the money they earned on the mines they were able to pay their taxes, to add to their sheep, goat and cattle herds, to pay for new farming implements and "through all these economic motives is woven a thread of tradition that a man is not a man until he has visited the gold mines of South Africa."⁴⁹ Not only did it benefit individual families, but also the entire rural area.

"Anthropological field studies in the areas from which the mining industry draws its black workers indicate that the export of labour enables the rural community to feed a larger population, or maintain a higher standard of living than it would otherwise be able to do."⁵⁰ At first the system benefited the mining industry and the people who were attracted to work there. The larger the proportion of workers that arrived, the more detrimental the effects. Muriel Horrell wrote in 1956, "Almost two-thirds of the total labour force is now drawn from beyond the boundaries of the Union, the workers being returned to their homes on completion of their contracts. This arrangement is at present mutually acceptable to the Union and the territories concerned, but as the latter become increasingly industrialized it may be impossible to maintain recruitment for South African mines at the present level. Moreover these territories are becoming more and more conscious of the harmful social effects of migratory labour."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Mining Survey, p. 9; Posel, D., The Making of Apartheid 1948-1961, Conflict and Compromise, p. 31.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁰ Wilson, F., p. 128.

⁵¹ Horrell, M., South Africa's Non-White Workers, p. 66.

The recruiting organizations of the mines, with their various methods of transport and communications systems were instrumental in opening up vast stretches of the African continent to civilization. "Today roads cross the wild bush country to places such as the swamp lands of the Okavango, in Ngamiland, and Mongu, in the Barotsi River Kingdom, and along these roads regular motor services operate, not only carrying Native(sic) workers on their way to the mines and workers returning to their homes, but stores, medical supplies and mail for the doctors and other officials of the Native(sic) labour organizations, for government officials and for the missions that various religious denominations maintain in this "edge-of-the-map" country. Aircraft, too, daily visit several stations that were almost isolated in the past."⁵²

They come to the mines on foot, on horseback, on bicycles, by dug-out canoe, by lake and river steamers, in lorries, by train and some even by aeroplane.⁵³ "They come from all points of the compass - from the peaceful hills of the Transkei, from the lion country of the Bechuanaland bush, down the broad reaches of the Zambesi, from the tropical shores of Lake Nyasa and the mountain vastnesses of Basutoland. They come, too, in their thousands from the hills and valleys of Portuguese East Africa, from the rocky uplands of Sekukuniland, the tangled swamp country of the Okavango Delta and the green fields of Swaziland. From these far corners of Southern Africa men from more than 100 000 tribes are attracted every year to the Witwatersrand by the magnet of the mining industry."⁵⁴

It must also be understood that although the migrants benefited economically, the absence of the able-bodied males had a detrimental effect on community life and agriculture.

The men did try to be home in the agricultural area during the planting and reaping seasons. This explains why labour shortages on the mines were most acute during

⁵² Mining Survey, p. 11.

⁵³ By 1951 there were 32 flights in and out of Francistown in Botswana every week. This meant that 72 000 men were transported this way.

⁵⁴ Mining Survey, Transvaal and OFS Chamber of Mines, June 1951.

these months, as Mr P.H. Anderson, chairman of Harmony Gold Mine, wrote in his annual report in 1956, "Once again there was a strong seasonal influx of non-European labour during the early months of the calendar year, reaching a peak of approximately 339 000 in April with new mines coming into production. However, even this labour force is well below the Industry's requirements, and the usual decline of non-European recruits since April has aggravated the position."⁵⁵

The migratory habit also leads to a redistribution of income "in such a way that some of those left behind are actually worse off than they would have been if there were no migration. For if everybody stayed at home the food which the able-bodied men produced would be used not only to feed themselves, their wives and children but would also be given to the old and crippled. However where migration exists, not only may the worker spend a relatively higher proportion of his earnings on himself than he would in the country, but such money as he does send home may be used to feed and clothe a tighter family circle than previously."⁵⁶

The length of time of the contracts varied from country to country and also depended on the sector of the economy where a worker was employed. The length of the contract for a worker from Lesotho was 7 months (180 shifts), while Mozambican workers stayed for an average of 15 months or 413 shifts. The average contract for a worker from the tropical areas was 14 months or 383 shifts. According to a report in the Financial Mail most blacks came to the mines for the first time when they were 18 years old and did an average of 5 to 7 contracts until a worker is 40 years old.⁵⁷

Over the years, the mines have perfected their recruiting methods of these foreign migrants. Before starting work, all recruits are medically examined three times: once in the area from where they are recruited, once in Johannesburg and again at the mine itself. The migration of foreign workers was also tightly controlled by the

⁵⁵ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1956.

⁵⁶ Wilson, F., p. 131.

⁵⁷ Financial Mail, Supplement: Gold, November 1972, p. 73.

government. On July 1, 1963 passport control was initiated at border posts so that foreign labour could be controlled and the labour used where necessary.

The mines are responsible for the costs of recruiting and have a wide transport network which includes a regular air service from distant areas such as Malawi. F. Wilson remarks, "The system has operated for so long and involved such a large proportion of the economically active population that the economies of the five countries have grown in such a manner that they will, for the foreseeable future, be part and parcel of the single economy of Southern Africa."⁵⁸

The recruitment of these foreign migrants is done on a very large scale, by the South African Chamber of Mines Bureau of Africa (TEBA), the largest agency of its kind in the world. Today it has 150 offices in 10 countries and employs 6 500 people. Furthermore it hires and processes up to 500 000 black migrants every year.⁵⁹

The disadvantages of supporting a migratory labour system in which foreigners are continually recruited, trained and repatriated are numerous. There is a drop in productivity when a large number of natives(sic) leave the mines, being replaced by novices who still have to acquire the necessary skills. At the beginning of their contracts there is also a phase of re-adjustment.

The foreign migrant played a very important role in the mining industry. During times when workers failed to come to the South African mines, their absence was clearly felt by the industry. When they did come, their presence was gladly welcomed. "The acceptability of employment in the gold mining industry in South Africa was once again demonstrated during the year by the return to the mines of many men who reside in countries other than South Africa. The company was especially pleased to welcome back many ex-employees from such foreign countries. These men are experienced workers and are in most instances highly motivated and dedicated to

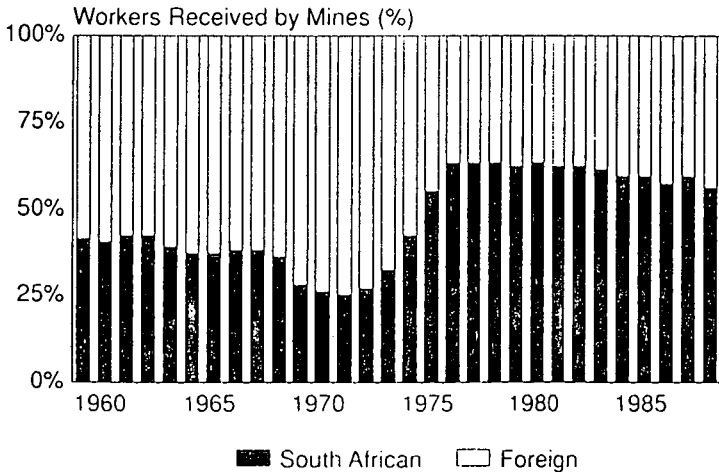
⁵⁸ Wilson, F., p. 117.

⁵⁹ Pallister, D, a.o., South Africa Incorporated: The Oppenheimer Empire, p. 139.

their particular occupations."⁶⁰

The use of foreign labour was not without its problems either. As the countries in Southern Africa gained independence, the sources of labour dried up. Political turmoil and change of government seriously affected the labour supplies from these sources. Regions such as Tanzania and Zambia banned further recruitment, but then migrants from Malawi and Mozambique compensated for it.

In 1966 approximately 65 % of black miners came from outside the Republic, and by 1973 the figure had risen to 79%.⁶¹ It would increase even further over the following few years as the table indicates:



Source: Data from NRC and TEBA, *Annual Reports*, 1960-1989.

as it appeared in Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire, p. 128.

Of the 640 000 black workers employed by the mining industry in 1982, no fewer than 470 00 workers, about 73%, were migratory labourers from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Malawi and the Transkei.⁶²

⁶⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

⁶¹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 159.

⁶² Pamphlet, "The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker".

Foreign workers may remit, through the offices of TEBA, or through the post or by any other possible means, a percentage of their pay to their home country. Some governments such as Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique require their nationals on the mines to send home 60% of their basic earnings. The total amount of money deferred through TEBA offices amounted to R374 million in 1983.⁶³

The following table is an indication of the financial impact the mines have on their labour sources. It shows the amount paid out in rands by TEBA to the various regions in 1992:

REGION	AMOUNT
Bophuthatswana	R27 139 888
Botswana	R14 226 219
Cape	R9 216 848
Ciskei	R1 943 055
Gazankulu	R1 797 697
Kangwane	R691 307
Kwa Zulu and Natal	R18 880 216
Lebowa	R2 996 702
Lesotho	R344 360 768
Malawi	R341 626
Mozambique	R152 578 047
Orange Free State	R1 445 957
Qwa Qwa	R3 917 487
Swaziland	R20 195 106
Transkei	R122 409 117
Transvaal	R8 000 000
Venda	R922 879
TOTAL	R738 582 899

SOURCE: TEBA

3.3.1 LESOTHO

Economically Lesotho is a densely populated, poor agricultural country that is heavily dependent on the gold mines of South Africa. As early as 12 September

⁶³ Ibid.

1912, a branch of the Native(sic) Recruiting Council (NRC), under the supervision of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, was established in Lesotho. Its economic dependence on the South African economy is proven by the fact that the total earnings of Lesotho migrant workers working in South Africa is higher than the country's gross domestic product.⁶⁴ In 1965-66 the gross domestic product was estimated at R40 million while the total earnings of migrants came to R43 million.

Recruiting of Lesotho migrants is a major industry, and in all of Lesotho's district towns there are offices of the major recruiting companies. Of these the blue-roofed buildings of TEBA are usually the most prominent. TEBA has been active in Lesotho since 1911, and in recent years it has recruited more than 80% of all miners.⁶⁵

Of the 381 000 black workers employed by the Chamber of Mines in 1972, 71 000 or 18,5% came from Lesotho.⁶⁶ These high numbers of Lesotho migrants were largely due to the droughts that the country experienced in the 1960s. There were also a large number of Lesotho blacks working in agriculture.⁶⁷

According to the 1966 census, no less than two-fifths of Lesotho's male population between the ages of 16 and 49 were absent as migrants. More than half of the men between the ages of 20 and 35 are absent at any given time.⁶⁸

The United Nations Economic and Social Council has stated that "if South Africa imposed restrictions on migrant labour from Lesotho, it is hard to see how Lesotho could cope economically with the loss of income which would follow or contain the social and cultural crises which would follow the return of thousands of Basothos".⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Wilson, F., p. 111.

⁶⁵ Campbell, A., a.o., The Guide to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. A Comprehensive companion for Visitors and Investors, p. 243.

⁶⁶ Basotho working on the gold and coal mines in South Africa showed a steady rise from 59 000 in 1963 to 129 000 in 1977.

⁶⁷ Wilson, F., p. 110.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

⁶⁹ Williams, J.C., Lesotho: "Economic Implications of Migrant Labour", SAJE, June 1971, p. 170.

A typical scene towards the end of the month would be the relatives of the mine workers gathering around the local trader's store to collect the percentage of the wages of the mine workers. Some would be sitting patiently outside the store, while others would still be on their ponies, exchanging news and gossip of the region. The trader's store would be one of the stopping points for the local representative of the recruiting organizations on his "pay route" through the district to deliver the money and passing on the news of the mineworkers to their relatives. In return the representative would bring back news about rainfall, the state of the crops and the flocks, marriages, sicknesses, deaths and births. As most of the workers and their relatives were illiterate the information would have to be delivered orally. The representative would arrive on horseback in very hilly country, where the terrain allowed it. Money would be paid to the relatives after careful identification of the recipients. Messages could then be sent back to the mine workers.⁷⁰

The mines also undertook to report any sickness or accident suffered by a native(sic) worker, the handling of requests for money, assistance in smoothing out other domestic problems, the payment of compensation for specified diseases or for accidents and the provision of free medical attention and hospital services.

More than 100 000 Basotho were employed in the South African mines in 1983 with deferred pay and remittances totalling R111 477 262.⁷¹ Of these miners 73% were married and 50% of them were unable to read or write. The mines were their only prospect. Statistics show that 50 % of the migrants who left the mines, did not have any agricultural land at all. The mines were their only alternative. That such a high percentage of them were married, makes one think about the effects it had on family life.

Many of these Basothos go straight from herding or remote cattle posts to strenuous mining work at the age of 18. Some of them have not even reached the age of 18 but they manage to convince the agents at the recruiting office that they have.

⁷⁰ Mining Survey, p. 14.

⁷¹ Campbell, A., a.o., p. 733.; Coetzee, C.J., Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland: Politieke Verwikkelinge, p. 208.

Basotho miners are renowned for undertaking some of the most dangerous mining jobs such as shaft-sinking, not for the prestige attached to doing dangerous work on the mines, but out of sheer economic necessity.

Work on the mines is strictly for younger, strong men. Few of the workers are able to endure the strain when they become older. 87% of all miners are under 40 when signing a contract with the recruiting agencies. Contracts usually last for a duration of 26, 45 or 52 weeks, with the option of staying longer for a maximum of 2 years.

In practice the average length of a contract is around 16 months. The length of contracts slowly increased as mining companies attempted to retain experienced miners as long as possible and to provide opportunities for them to return home for short visits.

The introduction of the 11-shift fortnight in April 1977 has enabled workers to leave for home every second weekend.⁷² There are often long lines of buses from the mines parked at border posts over weekends. A. Campbell writes, "In Lesotho, migrants working in the neighbouring OFS Gold fields are now known as "weekenders".⁷³ This came about as mining companies started to prefer to draw their labour from sources closer at hand.

The average length of time a mine worker from Lesotho stays at the mines comprises 35% of his working life or 15 years.⁷⁴

Money earned from migrant workers plays an exceedingly important part in Lesotho's balance of payments. In January 1975 an agreement was reached between the Lesotho government and the mining companies. A minimum of 60% and a maximum of 90% of the miners' basic wage is obligatorily deferred by the employer and deposited in a special account in the Lesotho Bank. This amount excludes the money earned during the first and last month of the contract or any extension to the contract.

⁷² Campbell, A., a.o., p. 735.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 735.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 735.

Harmony Gold Mine in the Free State attracts many workers from Lesotho and the North Eastern Free State. "A significant supply of unskilled labour during the year, even though somewhat more variable than we would have wished, was satisfactory. A significant proportion of the company's labour force is composed of Basothos who originate from both the kingdom of Lesotho and the North Eastern Orange Free State. We consider that we are fortunate in this respect and I can see no reason why this state of affairs should undergo any sudden change in the near future" was the attitude of management.⁷⁵

At the beginning of the 1990s over 50% of Lesotho's national income was derived from migrant miners working in South Africa.

3.3.2 MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique, and more specifically, the area south of the Save River, has had a continuing labour relationship with South Africa. A century ago, Mozambique provided the majority of workers for the mines.

In 1909 the period a worker from Mozambique worked on South African mines was limited to two years. This was changed in July 1914 when the length of the contract could not exceed 18 months. Half of the wages of these workers were payable in the Portuguese territory on the return of the labourer.

According to the Mozambique Convention of 1928, the maximum period of service was 18 months or 313 shifts, and any extended contract could only last for 156 shifts.

Under this convention, the maximum number of Mozambican workers permitted was 100 000 out of a population of 2 million, with a minimum number of workers of 65 000 of whom 12 000 workers had to be employed on the coal mines.⁷⁶ Again it was stipulated that half of the wages earned had to be paid to the contract workers on

⁷⁵ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1976.

⁷⁶ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, p. 93.

their return. In return, South Africa agreed to route a substantial part of its trade through the harbour of Lourenzo Marques.⁷⁷

Biccard Jeppe writes about the workers from Mozambique, "from which territory native(sic) of a good standard of intelligence have been recruited for the Witwatersrand mines."⁷⁸

In 1955 it was estimated that a Mozambican worker could earn twice as much by going to work on the gold mines as he could if he stayed at home to work in any of the agricultural, industrial, or transport jobs offered by the provincial government or by private employers within Mozambique.

In 1956 any South African employer could make use of Mozambican workers, except for domestic labour. Companies were not allowed to do their own recruitment in Mozambique and some Shangaans were taken up by agriculture.

In 1971 it was estimated that 85 000 Mozambican workers were employed on the gold mines, 15 000 on the coal mines and 32 000 elsewhere. The 100 000 men in the mining industry were recruited by the Witwatersrand Native(sic) Labour Association (WENELA), that has been recruiting in the area since the turn of the century.

The reason for the popularity of the South African labour market was an economic one. "Estimates in the mid 1950s that a man could earn twice as much by going to work on the gold mines as he could if he stayed at home to work in any of the agricultural, industrial or transport jobs offered by the provincial government or by private employers within Mozambique."⁷⁹

A Mozambican migrant worker was not allowed to stay in South Africa for more than 18 months. He was however, allowed to return repeatedly.

During the political turmoil in Mozambique in the 1970s, the mines were affected by the shortage of labour. Mr Peterson, chairman of the board at Harmony Gold Mine writes, "There has been no resumption of the supply of labour from Malawi and

⁷⁷ Van der Horst, S. T., Native(sic) Labour in South Africa, p. 211.

⁷⁸ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 93.

⁷⁹ Wilson, F., p. 112.

recent developments in Mozambique led one to be somewhat apprehensive about the continued supply of labour from that source."⁸⁰ South African mines were relying heavily on foreign migrant labour until the 1970s when things were about to change. Mine management realized this, "In order to make up for the loss of labour from these 2 areas (Mozambique and Malawi), attempts are being made on an industry basis to increase the proportion of South African labour employed on the gold mines."⁸¹

3.3.3 MALAWI

The majority of workers from Malawi were recruited by the mines, particularly during the early years of mining. Malawi was always considered the traditional source of labour for South African mines. Because of the high death rate of workers from the tropical areas, recruitment was prohibited in 1913 from any area north of latitudes 22 degrees as they were extremely susceptible to pneumonia.⁸² From 1920 onwards, migrants from Malawi were also allowed to work in other sectors of the South African economy.

The medical breakthrough in controlling pneumonia led to the recruitment of workers from the tropical areas in 1933. By 1936, 1% of all black workers on the mines came from the tropical areas. Ten years later the percentage was eleven and by 1956 it had risen to 18% of the total. Again this relationship is symbiotic and favoured the gold mines as well as the people from Malawi. "But in the short-run at least, it is clear from the writings of anthropologists that the earnings of migrants

⁸⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1976.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² The Chamber of Mines set up the South African Institute of Medical Research to find some way of dealing with pneumonia. During the 1920's the Institute began to develop the Lister Anti-Pneumococcal vaccine which, together with the May and Baker Sulphonamide drug (M and B) which was developed in Europe in the 1930's, proved to be highly effective.

have enabled the home community to enjoy a higher standard of living than they would otherwise have done."⁸³

Dr Margaret Read wrote about the situation in Malawi, "It is evident throughout the villages under investigation that standards of living are changing rapidly, and that emigration on the entire is making them rise rather than fall."⁸⁴

This process was a continuing process. In 1961 Van Velsen wrote, "compared with other tribal areas the Tonga are relatively prosperous, this prosperity is largely due to their export of labour."⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that the Tonga of Malawi never signed on with the WENELA to work on South African gold mines, but they managed to get into South Africa illegally and worked on a short-term basis on the mines.

By 1967 it was estimated that there were 80 000 migrants from Malawi working in South Africa of whom 40 000 worked on the gold mines of South Africa.⁸⁶

It is noteworthy that the mining industry is also sensitive to disruptions of a tribal or political or coincidental nature. In April 1974 a WENELA aircraft, which was transporting migrants back to Malawi, crashed at Francistown, killing 77 Malawian workers. Pres. Banda immediately banned recruitment and Malawian miners returned to their home country in a special VC 10 shuttle at a rate of 1 600 a week. In all, 30 000 workers left South Africa.⁸⁷ Harmony Gold Mine was seriously affected by this incident as the chairman, Mr A.C. Peterson writes in his annual report, "The Mining Industry faces the possibility of a major reduction in the amount of labour available to it. The gold mines in particular are both labour-intensive and have drawn large numbers of workers from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique. Since the beginning of April 1974, no recruits have been permitted to leave Malawi and it is not known whether this prohibition will continue

⁸³ Wilson, F., p. 114.

⁸⁴ Read, M., Migrant Labour in Africa and its effects on Tribal life, International Labour Review, XLV, 1942.

⁸⁵ Southall, A., (ed), Social Change in Modern Africa, p. 230.

⁸⁶ Breytenbach, W.J., "Vreemde Bantoeerokers in Suid-Afrika en Rhodesië", p. 27.

⁸⁷ Financial Mail, 13.12.1974.

indefinitely or not. The disturbed conditions in Mozambique have not as yet affected the supply of labour from that country, but the future is uncertain and the attitude of any future government is unknown. It is therefore possible that the gold mining industry might have to operate on about 75 % or less of its present labour requirements from 1975 onwards."⁸⁸

The shortage of workers from Malawi continued in 1975 as Mr Peterson writes, "This shortage affected production particularly in the first half of the year before measures for improving productivity could be introduced."⁸⁹ It had a serious effect on production figures which higher wages and recruiting efforts in Rhodesia and within the borders of South Africa could only partially counteract. Pres. Banda explained the ban as not just an outcry against the low safety standards of the mines, but also as a wish to reduce his country's dependence on South Africa in the light of Mozambique's independence. The ban did not last long and was lifted in November 1975. An immediate crisis in labour supplies was averted, but the mines dependency on foreign labour remained.

For Malawi the flock of migrants to South Africa had two benefits. Firstly it solved their problems of unemployment and secondly the financial implications were considerable. Pres. Banda lifted the ban on Malawian workers in November 1975 and the workers began to return to work on the mines. "The fundamental dependence on foreign miners remained," is the argument of Lanning.⁹⁰

3.3.4 BOTSWANA

During the early years of mining, before the turn of the century, Botswana provided 2 000 of the 54 000 black workers on the mines. By 1935 this number had risen to

⁸⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

⁸⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1975.

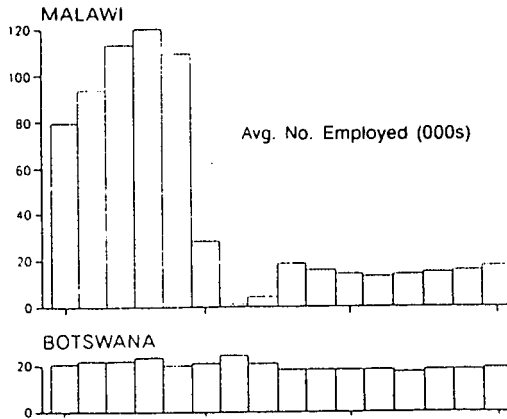
⁹⁰ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 159.

10 000 and by 1970, 55 000 workers were being employed by the mines and other sectors of the economy.⁹¹

Why do workers from Botswana come to the South African mines? Mostly for the cash earnings that they are unable to earn within the borders of their own country. A. Campbell writes, "There are insufficient job opportunities and few which exist for the poor or uneducated pay as well as do the mines."⁹² This is also true of Swaziland.⁹³

To a lesser extent, migrants go abroad to earn a certain social prestige from having lived in the outside world. They also leave their country of birth to escape boredom and also because, "the agricultural ground in a thinly populated country with inconsistent rain, is often tedious and depressing."⁹⁴

The following table gives a clear picture of the way foreign labour has risen and declined in some of the Southern African countries:

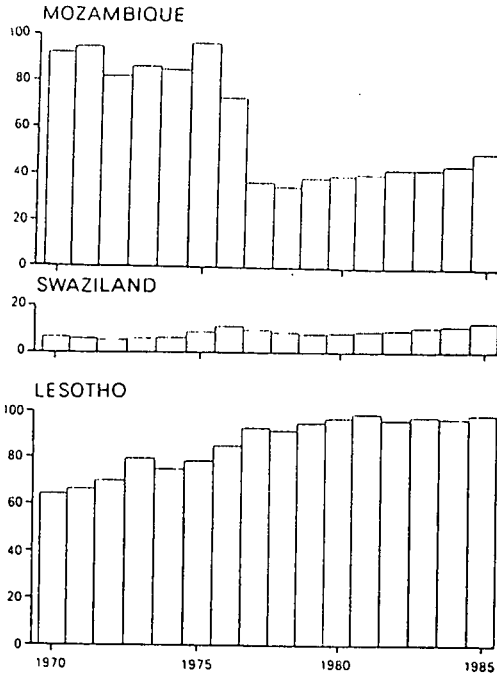


⁹¹ Smit, P., Botswana and Development, p. 75.

⁹² Campbell, A., a.o., p. 243.

⁹³ In the Kingdom of Swaziland, where the Native(sic) Recruiting Corporation has long had a dozen or more recruiting stations the number of migrants have never been large. In 1916 it was estimated that just over 4 000 Swazi's worked in the mines. By 1936 it was 7 000 and by 1972 the figure was down to 5 400. (Source: Native(sic) Recruiting Corporation - Annual Report)

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 243.



Source: Data from NRC and TEBA. *Annual Reports, 1970-1985*

The following table provides an indication of the work force at Harmony Gold Mine, from 1988 to 1995:

ETHNIC GROUP	1988	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Free State	15.57	12.78	14.55	16.05	16.37	18.17	20
Lebowa	0.16	0.16	0.24	0.38	0.37	0.31	0.23
Qwa Qwa	4.66	4.73	4.85	4.2	4.42	3.81	2.06
Bophuthatswana	0.44	0.52	0.64	0.78	0.71	0.43	0.17
Botswana	0.29	0.31	0.3	0.46	0.35	0.31	0.33
Transkei	15.37	15.1	15.04	16.05	14.77	14.57	2.32
Ciskei	2	1.9	2.31	2.01	2.18	1.95	0.62
Cape	1.8	1.66	1.86	2.36	2.39	2.09	15.55
Lesotho	43.38	49.68	48.4	45.01	44.9	44.27	45.35
Mozambique	9.83	10.36	10.09	10.34	10.81	11.79	10.23
Malawi	3.74	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rest	2.76	2.8	2	2.3	2.72	2.29	3.14

SOURCE: STATISTICS FROM THE MANPOWER DEPARTMENT OF HARMONY GOLD MINE

3.3.5 SOUTH AFRICAN RESERVES OR HOMELANDS

There is no doubt that it is economic necessity which drove men from the reserves to work on the mines. That is also true of the South African homelands.⁹⁵ The absence of the men in turn led to low agricultural production. F. Wilson writes, "Even while the responsible male times his visit home to coincide with the ploughing and seeding season, agriculture suffers. It allows of no preparatory cultivation, nor does it enable him to take advantage of favourable rainfalls. It necessitates leaving to the women and to juniors the major part of the work."⁹⁶ Low agricultural production leads to poverty. Poverty leads to an exodus of male workers to the mines and other industries in search of employment.

It is an indication of the unpopularity of mining with the black worker that in 1973 only 21% of the black work force of the mines came from inside the borders of South Africa and the Transkei.⁹⁷ By 1977 the figure had risen to 53%, because of drastic increases in the wages of black workers.⁹⁸ There was also a trend in the mining industry in the 1980s, to employ more South African black workers.

The following table is a territorial analysis of the average number of migrant employees in service on the gold mines of South Africa from the homelands and

⁹⁵ The South African Reserves or Homelands were established under the apartheid government of the National Party. The government divided the different ethnic groups into 8, each with a homeland where they could govern themselves. These homelands included Transkei (1976), Ciskei (1981), Bophuthatswana (1977) and Venda (1979) which became independent. The following reserves were self-governing: Gazankulu, Kangwane, KwaNdebele, Kwazulu, Lebowa and Qwaqwa. It was part of the policy of the National Party government to establish factories and business opportunities for the black people in these regions so that they would remain there and develop their potential.

⁹⁶ Wilson, F., p. 130.

⁹⁷ Stultz, N.M., Transkei's Half Loaf: Race Separatism in South Africa, p. 20.

⁹⁸ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 165.

neighbouring countries which are members of the Chamber of Mines for the period 1981-1991:

COUNTRY	1981	1986	1991
South Africa	104 320	101 470	89 703
Transkei	120 873	133 965	86 790
Bophuthatswana	12 804	15 172	9 470
Venda	2 175	2 427	1 524
Ciskei	0	13 116	7 713
Lesotho	98 228	103 742	88 281
Botswana	17 539	19 106	13 388
Swaziland	8 872	14 239	15 623
Mozambique	40 094	56 237	41 956
Malawi	12 937	17 923	5
Zimbabwe	2 968	0	0
Other areas	1 337	1	0
TOTAL	422 057	477 398	354 453

SOURCE: TEBA

3.4 HOW MIGRANCY UNDERMINED AND AFFECTED THE BLACK GOLD MINE WORKER

The migratory labour pattern had much to contribute in the transformation of the black gold mine worker. Contribute is not actually a good choice of a word, as the system undermined the black worker and deprived him of many opportunities. It changed the role he played in his family, the responsibilities that came his way, his economic and political outlook and even his morals. H.J. Simons puts it quite

harshly when he says, "The companies employ indentured migrant peasants, pay them less than a living wage, house them in compounds, repatriate the diseased and crippled and enfeebled to their villages; and renew the supply to able-bodied men drawing on rural communities throughout the continent."⁹⁹

Yet, the mining companies have always defended the system. They have argued that the oscillating migration of workers to and from the mines has enabled men to maintain their tribal bonds and their values, while at the same time they benefit from earning cash wages. They often felt that it was less disruptive to have only the male member of the family move to the urban centres, rather than removing an entire family. Of course it was less expensive to house and feed only the male members of families, but it was also confusing for the black worker, as one week he would be sitting in his hut discussing cattle and rainfall and the next week he would be 2 000 metres underground. It did transform the traditional black African into an urbanite whose tribal bonds became less important to him and who adopted the Western way of life. It also transformed his family, into a fatherless family which had to cope without the presence and authority of the father.

Most migrants, it is argued, would say that they preferred to come to the cities without their families as they felt that the cities were no place to raise children. "Even people who live in towns with their families often send their children back to the country to be educated."¹⁰⁰ They did not want their children to grow up in unfamiliar surroundings. It was difficult when a member of a black family became westernized while the other members had not even seen the city lights. The communication gap between husband and wife became bigger and marital problems often emerged. The continued absence of the father also created disciplinary problems for the mother and grandmother who had to try to be the head of the household. It was difficult for the women and grandmothers to bring up their children without the authority of the father. Women in the homelands had to cope

⁹⁹ Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., Class and Colour in South Africa, p. 169.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson, F., p. 170.

single-handedly with their growing sons and daughters. In later years the women often saw their children running wild in the townships, mixing with gangs and taking part in crime. Migration destroyed the closeness of the tribal family and replaced it with a system where the father was only an occasional visitor to the family home and the mother has to deal with the every-day problems alone. One has only to look at gangsterism in South Africa to realize that several generations of black children have grown up without the authority of the father.

As the migrants are housed in compounds and hostels, no permanent housing has to be provided for them or their families in cities, enabling the mining companies to save hundreds of thousands of rands. In the beginning the family stayed behind in the rural area, so it did prevent urban slums to a certain extent. Later on wives and children would follow and with the lack of housing facilities, urban slums were created rather than prevented. After the Second World War the movement to cities was a spontaneous one that could not be reversed. It made recruiting more economical for the mining companies, but in the end the government was faced with tremendous housing shortages which in turn gave impetus to the political violence of the second half of the century. Black workers squatted on any available land near the vicinity of cities which also led to health problems.

The fact that the wages of black migrants were kept so low led to a profitable mining industry in South Africa. "It is sometimes said that the gold mines and others should be left in private hands because their high efficiency and profitability would be destroyed by public ownership. But their high profitability has resulted from their apartheid roots. Features such as the migrant labour system, compound living, racially-based wage differentials and job reservation have all contributed to high profits."¹⁰¹ The black labourer was sacrificed to improve profit margins.

Money-wise the black worker's status was so low he could barely provide for himself and certainly not for a family as well - all for a profitable gold mining industry. The gold price was fixed and any increase in production costs were absorbed by

¹⁰¹ Have, G., Le Roux, P., Transforming the Economy. Policy Options for SA, p. 41.

keeping the wages of the black workers low. This led to economic prosperity for many other sectors of the economy and economic growth for the country. It also indirectly, contributed to the wealth of neighbouring African states which depended on the income of their migrant labourers. It proved to be a very high price to pay socially and politically and to a large extent would contribute to the violence and discontent of the years to come. In the 1970s the black was no longer satisfied to be sacrificed for the sake of a profitable industry and mining authorities found that it was no longer possible simply to dismiss him after he had finished serving his purpose.

If a migrant worker had to bring his family, the employer would have to provide housing, schooling for their children and medical care for the elderly. It suited the employer when the family remained in the rural areas. When a worker became sick, or had an accident, or was past working age, he was simply returned to the rural area. In this way the rural area represented the medical and pension fund of the black mine worker. This was very convenient for the employer. "From an employer's point of view, migrant labour is cheaper than settled labour."¹⁰²

But it was only a temporary solution that would show its shortcomings once the black workers began to settle more permanently in towns. Migrancy did have short-term benefits, but in the long run, South Africa could reap no benefits from the system.

When a migrant returned to his rural area after his contract expired, the municipal authorities did not have to provide for him. The authorities saved on housing, water, sewerage and electricity supply. Migrancy did impose a heavy burden on transport as the workers had to be moved to and from the supply area. Again this only provided a short-term solution to continued, spontaneous urbanization and postponed South Africa's regional and town planning.

Working in the mines poses a severe health threat to migrant workers. The amount of dust causes lung disease and the working conditions are hazardous. It may be

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 171.

argued that this makes it a good practice to have the migrant return home to escape these conditions periodically. However, this factor did not promote a proper health programme on the mines as the latter did not want to assume all the responsibility for the diseases of the African workers and workers who were often sent home when they had contracted an illness. Mining companies argued that the worker arrived with diseases such as TB on account of malnutrition and poverty in the rural areas, and that medical aid to the black worker was not their responsibility. Whose responsibility was it then?

It has been argued that migrancy not only benefitted the worker, but also the area from which he came and a large family circle. F. Wilson writes, "In other words, by spreading money far afield, the migrant system has the effect of widening the cash economy to include areas that would otherwise remain isolated for longer."¹⁰³ More people from various areas were getting a slice of the cake. The government and the mines upheld the attitude that the best way to help the poor in less prosperous regions was to subsidize their out-migration.¹⁰⁴ The benefits of the gold mining industry was thus not only felt in the areas immediately surrounding it, but by a large variety of races and tribes. This led to a dependence of neighbouring states on the mining industry of South Africa. All this happened at the expense of rural development.

The labour recruiting system on South African gold mines, directed the labour where it was needed the most and where work was available. It may be argued that it is better for the workers not to uproot their family, so that when the mines run out, the workers will not be left high and dry in ghost towns without an economic future. The migrant labour system was flexible, but its temporary status provided no security to the workers or their families. Because of the tight control over migrant workers, it was possible to ensure that workers were directed to areas where there was work for them. It did prevent regional unemployment.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁰⁴ Richardson, H.W., *Regional and Urban Economics*, p. 233.

From the employer's viewpoint it is easier to control a migrant labour force. Firstly the employer decides where the worker will work and for how long. Secondly, the compound system enables the employer to exercise tight control over the movement of workers and their activities, particularly in times of labour unrest. During strike activity on the mines, management employed the tactic of sending workers back to the rural areas immediately, which would leave the striking workers without their leaders. Controls and restrictions would become one of the principal grievances of the mineworkers during the turmoil of the 1970s. "Furthermore, the maze of legal restrictions which regulate the African's life in urban areas is not conducive to the development of a sense of social and economic responsibility, or a liking of the urban environment."¹⁰⁵ The tight control in the workplace and after hours would lead to frustration and hostility on the part of the black worker towards the institutions which controlled him. That hostility was clearly visible during the last three decades of the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker.

The history of gold mining in South Africa is, moreover, a history of keeping the white man in his secure position of doing the skilled, highly-paid job and protecting him against the competition of the black labourer. It is a history of using the black man's labour, while denying him any social, economic or political rights. It is argued that the black man is only a temporary visitor and has to practise his political rights in his country of origin. The economic and political aspirations of the black man should not be aroused and migrancy helped to get the message through to him - he was only a visitor. The fact that the black mine worker was unskilled, unionless and homeless only served to strengthen the white workers' superiority. Doxey writes, "The understandable clumsiness with which Africans have often faced these problems, has served to encourage white prejudice and feelings of superiority, while their reluctance to leave their primitive environment and eagerness to return to it tend to reduce their usefulness as industrial workers."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Doxey, G.V., p. 87.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 87.

Admittedly, migrancy is not unique to South Africa. It has been successfully organized in Western Europe and Turkey.¹⁰⁷ In South Africa, however, it is done on a very large scale and over an extended period of time, so that a large percentage of people are affected by it. It has also been practised for more than a century and as such has become a part of daily living in South Africa. What complicated matters in South Africa, is the fact that only one race was affected by it and was called upon to make the sacrifice. This would intensify the feelings of hate and revenge in years to come.

Wilson is of the opinion that, "However, even from a narrow economic point of view, men are not simple units of production which - like tractors - can be interchanged without difficulty. Even in the simplest jobs, men need a little time to find their feet and to gain practice in doing what is required of them."¹⁰⁸ By the time the migrant was settled and ready to start working, much time had been lost and many workers had to be trained all over again. Doxey agrees, "No one can give his best in a society which he feels he has been driven to enter, or in which he feels he is not wanted, other than as a provider of basic labour."¹⁰⁹

The organization of the recruitment of migrants, their transportation, medical examinations and re-training affected turnover on the mines. It also affected productivity as the workers just became use to a certain job or skill, when it was time to go home. From the viewpoint of the black worker, this deprived him from attaining any skills which might have enabled him to compete on an equal footing with the white labourer. The entire system is also inefficient when one considers the loss of manpower in transit, and during periods of rest and unemployment, while the relatively unproductive time spent in the reserves, is quite substantial. Doxey agrees, "Not only is there a considerable loss of production through this non-wage

¹⁰⁷ Kowet, D.K., Land, Labour and Migration Politics in Southern Africa, p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Wilson, F., p. 174.

¹⁰⁹ Doxey, G.V., p. 87.

earning existence, but a great deal of productive energy and time dissipated in the process of moving between the two sectors of the economy."¹¹⁰

It was not worth while for the company to invest any time, money or effort into a migrant worker. According to Francis Wilson, the average length of service in the gold mining industry for a black worker was 4 years while it was 14 years for a white worker.¹¹¹ Migration definitely had a dampening effect on the black man's plea of performing more skilled work. Hobart- Houghton agrees, "the very nature of the migrant system tends to inhibit the acquisition of skills and tends to condemn the workers to being in perpetuity merely undifferentiated units of unskilled labour. The intermittent character of their employment means that just when they are becoming proficient at a particular job and of real value to their employer they leave to return home. They tend to become jacks of all trades and masters of none."¹¹²

There are many arguments about whether or not migration is economically good or bad for an area. One thing is clear, migrants would not go to work elsewhere if they were able to earn the same amount or more by staying at home. The cash earning of the migrants is essential to their families and the area from which they are recruited. Their cash earnings often comprise the only earnings for a family.

On the other hand, migrancy hampers the development of the rural area, not only because it claims all its economically active men, but also because the area consequently becomes densely populated with women, children and old people. On account of poor farming methods the land becomes less fertile and agriculture declines. The rural areas lose their agricultural nature and become no better than labour reservoirs for the mines and other industries. In South Africa the problem of the poor-whites was partly diminished when the women went to work in factories and earned some money. This was out of the question for the black women or young girls as they were not allowed to go to town. Just like the black worker in the beginning, they had few skills beyond farming and raising children.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 175.

¹¹² Hobart-Houghton, D., The South African Economy, p. 92.

The migrant labour system also required an effective administration system, which had to provide every worker with documents, keeping records and controlling movements of workers. At one stage the TEBA recruiting agency had 6 500 employees. It was costly to transport and administer the migrant labour system, yet the mining industry and the government preferred it. It was the most economical, politically acceptable way of running the economy.

Effective management requires some form of relationship between a worker and his shift boss. For example, trust, admiration and respect are built up over time and do not develop after a short period of time. The large turnover of workers makes this very difficult, as workers would sometimes return to another mine for a new contract. Mine management upheld the attitude that when one worker left, there would be another to replace him. Workers were coming and going anyway, so why take notice of the problem? The workers were not regarded as individuals, but as part of a large labour reservoir. No relationship tended to develop across racial barriers.

There is little doubt that migratory labour patterns has an effect on children being born out of wedlock. "Not only are wives, left alone in the rural areas for a year or more at a time, liable to fall into temptation, but in town - with far less social restraint men form intimate relationships with women who are not their wives. In many cases such relationships are stable and loving, but the net result is that the men under the pressures of the system, become bigamists with two families."¹¹³

Often children are born out of these relationships and a worker finds himself in the position of trying to support two families. "The feelings of loneliness and helplessness combined with the poverty which so many women experience when their men are in town are bitter. Little imagination is needed to understand the position of a lonely mother waiting anxiously for a letter, and, hopefully, some money, from her husband in town. The anxiety not only concerns the desperate need for money to feed the children, but also the awful doubt that arises from wondering whether or not he is going to remain faithful to those whom he has left

¹¹³ Wilson, F., p. 178.

behind. A woman may be certain that her husband will remain faithful and yet so many men, good men, have fallen when in town for long periods of time away from their families. So many men have developed new relationships, new commitments, and found it increasingly difficult to save the money to send home. Moreover, the women are helpless, for as the pass laws have become more stringent - particularly in their application to women - it is increasingly difficult for women to get to town to find her man."¹¹⁴

Sometimes male workers do not form a lasting relationship with only one women in the city, but resort to prostitution. Often they will spend a large amount of money on liquor and prostitution. "Once again it is impossible to provide statistical data relating to this phenomenon, but there is no doubting the evidence of those - priests and others - who know the compounds, that the system encourages homosexuality."¹¹⁵ As the young men are absent from their wives for a long period of time, some easily fall prey to homosexuality.

Mr F.R. Mohlabe, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church spoke frankly about the problem, "In their plight to satisfy their sexual needs, (migrants) indulge in terrible practices such as homosexuality which is a foreign practice and is now beginning to reach broader extents. Young men reaching the mines get involved in this practice. There are even men, (I am not exaggerating), who move around the compounds and their sole business is to entice men in the compound to sleep with them. Some men would even divorce their wives afterwards because of this practice that has become important in their lives. All kinds of atrocious vices take place in these hostels such as sodomy and the like. A close investigation of this problem would unearth quite a number of vices which are unknown to the public but common talk to the inmates of a hostel."¹¹⁶ In some cases there are even cases where men are prepared to pay "lobola" in order to marry other men.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 183.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 179.

In the black townships liquor is readily available and some mines even have their own beer gardens for black employees. This, combined with the fact that men live in bleak hostels, leaves little scope for recreation on weekends except drink. With the liquor consumption and the fact that men are far away from the restraining influence of their families, it is not surprising to find that some men resort to violence, rape, assault and murder. It is difficult to fight crime in a community where there is no stability and no loyalty towards each other and the area in which they are living. Tribal violence also occurred, where men of different tribes became involved in fights.

Respect for the law and officers is essential in any society. The migrant worker already had a negative association with the police as they were woken up at night by the police demanding to see their passes. They were sometimes refused to enter towns or arrested for minor offenses. "Such experiences endured by hundreds and thousands of people, day in and day out, for many years on end, cannot but reduce confidence in the police force and cause people to lose respect for the law."¹⁷

Most black men tend to find the migratory system degrading. The men often feel powerless as there is not much they can do about their situation. They have to retain their integrity and self-respect in a situation where they are living far away from his wife for almost a year. They are unable to watch their children grow or have any influence on them whatsoever. They are struggling to earn money to send home, tempted by the beer hall and the women. When they arrive home to visit, their children regard them as strangers.

Already in 1942 a special inter-departmental committee was set up to examine the social, health and economic conditions of urban Africans. It pointed out that that venereal disease was spreading among urban native(sic) and through them to the

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

rural areas. Early in November 1972, the Minister of Health warned that venereal diseases such as syphilis were becoming a serious health threat in South Africa.¹¹⁸ Tuberculosis was a serious threat to black people in rural areas. According to doctors in mission hospitals in rural areas, TB was reaching epidemic proportions in some areas. TB was also a serious threat to migrant workers on the mines. The unhealthy living conditions, lack of sufficient sleep and malnutrition also weakened their resistance, which increased their susceptibility to the disease. F. Wilson comments, "There is some evidence that the expectation of life falls when men become migrant labourers."¹¹⁹ All these difficulties and hazards involved in migration and working on the mines, were sometimes seen as a proof of manhood. If a man could survive those, he would be a man.

Because the homelands are far away from the city centres, many South Africans were ignorant of the poverty and living conditions in these areas. They did not think, nor did they want to think, about the black workers' families at home. Instead of dealing with these social problems, South Africans preferred to turn a blind eye and failed to provide proposals to deal with them in time. "The first of the political arguments against migrant labour is that by keeping the unemployed and the homeless out of the cities, the system has the effect of hiding, behind some mountain in the rural areas, the misery which most of the rich and powerful people in society do not see."¹²⁰ Dealing with the problem was postponed until the 1980s when, because of the increase in violence, it could no longer be ignored.

Migration also led to a certain amount of hatred against the white man, the mining management, which is also white, the government and the police force. Black workers felt that they were being treated unjustly when trying to find work to feed their families. They found themselves chased away like dogs and sometimes arrested, while their women were prevented from joining them in the cities by numerous laws and restrictions.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Away from his family the male workers easily fall prey to political influences. The black worker experiences a sense of insecurity and rootlessness which increases his susceptibility to violent practices as he has nothing to lose in the form of house or land.

Over the years black workers have complained about the restrictions and controls they have been exposed to. The pass laws, introduced to gain further control over the migrant workers were one of the consistent complaints of black people in general. Our history is filled with sporadic cases of unrest and violence. The tighter the control, the more frequent the unrest. Although mining falls under the category of the economy, economic dissatisfaction and political ambition run hand in hand in South Africa.

"The migrant labour system is based upon the premise that a human being can be broken into two parts - a "labour unit" working in town, separated from the other part: a man with parents, wife and children, with hopes and aspirations."¹²¹ A human being, and not only a statistic, who is sometimes in surplus and sometimes a shortage, a man who is regarded as a "visitor" in his country of birth. It is obvious from photographs of the early years of mining that the black worker was not regarded as an individual, not important enough to feature on the list of names underneath the photograph. He was merely a figure in the background, barely recognizable, holding tools in his hands.

For many years white South Africans did not tackle the problem of integrating the black man in the economy and dealing with problems such as housing and shortage of land. When they were finally forced to face the problem, in the more militant seventies, the problem was far worse than imagined and completely out of hand.

D. Hobart-Houghton writes about migration, "The migrant labour system can be seen as both a symptom and a cause of most of the economic, social and political problems which beset our community: and this perpetual mass movement of people

¹²¹ Wilson, F., p. 188.

is a dramatic illustration of our failure over the past century to create a unified and coherent economy."¹²²

The cultural shock to the black man was tremendous. He was commuting between his place of birth and city, with its Western values and Christian churches. He had to deal with his tribal customs, Christian values, tribal muti, modern hospitals and a work day that was scheduled not by the sun, but by the watch on the white man's arm. "Many African families in the towns are recent arrivals, bewildered by the ways of Western Civilization and the rules imposed by the white man, having abandoned the sanctions of tribal life without yet fully grasping those accepted in Western democratic life," argues Muriel Horrell.¹²³

At some time the migrant labour system benefited the mines and the migrants. Van der Horst agrees, "At one time the system represented a reasonable compromise for both African and employer. The African was able to increase his income by intermittent periods of work and so obtain some of the fruits of modern productive processes without permanently severing his ties with home and kinsmen, while the employer (at first chiefly the mining industry) was able to obtain manual labour. The system has largely outlived its usefulness."¹²⁴

Once the reserves lost their economic potential, the black man had nothing to keep him there. He wanted to come and live in the towns and cities permanently. The black worker was not an isolated individual, but a man who was part of a family, and the wives and children tended to follow their husbands to the cities, even if it was only to live in a shack near his place of work. The system was no longer benefiting all the role players. Although it was socially and politically acceptable it was artificially maintaining the rural areas and neighbouring states which sent migrants to South Africa. In the long run it did much to aggravate racism, urban slums and political discontent. It also postponed South Africa's economical and political integration for many years.

¹²² Hobart-Houghton, D., p. 83.

¹²³ Horrell, M., South Africa's Non-White Workers, p. 67.

¹²⁴ Holloway, J.E., Privaat Versameling, PV 515.

CHAPTER 4 - THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN THE FREE STATE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE OF THE LARGEST GOLD MINES IN THE WORLD, HARMONY GOLD MINE

4.1 THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN THE OFS

When gold was discovered in the Witwatersrand in 1886, the reefs were visible above the ground and could be followed easily. In the Free State, however, the reefs are as deep as 300ft down in the St Helena area and as deep as 7 000 ft in the Odendaalsrus area. This geological phenomenon delayed the discovery of gold in the Free State by almost 50 years. The gold of the Rand and that of the Free State belong to the same geological age and are part of the same geological system.

Before the discovery of gold, the area was mainly an agricultural one. "The land is flat and featureless, the soil dry. Hot and dusty in summer with vast mealie fields wilting under a pitiless sun and stretching as far as the eye can see; in winter, bitterly cold. A land where prosperity depends on rain, drought and the spectre of failing crops are constant companions."¹

The discovery of gold in the Free State may be contrasted with the gold discovery in California in the 1840s. The latter was a chance discovery, while the former was the result of careful geological investigation and considerable outlay on prospecting for many years before the discovery.² Even though the discovery of gold in the Free State was not a chance discovery and came after decades of prospecting, it was not without its setbacks and disappointments as T. Gregory comments, "The successful opening up of the Orange Free State gold field was a triumph of systematic exploration, but it was not a story devoid of setbacks and

¹ Jessup, E., Ernest Oppenheimer - a Study in Power, p. 269.

² Katzen, L., Gold and the South African Economy, p. 10.

disappointments."³

The discovery came at a time when the mining industry was faced with rising costs and a decrease in the profitability of the mines on the Rand. Fortunately for the Free State mines, the ore carried a high percentage of gold per ton and T. Green is of the opinion that, "had the OFS discoveries revealed an average grade of ore similar to that of the old Rand, it is certain it would not have paid to exploit it in the postwar period."⁴

As early as in 1855, the discovery of gold near Smithfield caused great excitement. In 1887 a gold field was even declared and diggings continued until 1892. The first activity in the Northern Free State occurred in the beginning of the twentieth century when a small-scale development took place in Odendaalsrus. "Sporadic prospecting was carried on, but general interest waned and prospects did not appear encouraging."⁵

There were however three men, A.R. Sawyer, dr Carrick and Archibald Megson, who strongly believed that there was payable gold beneath the soil of the Free State.

A.R. Sawyer, a mining engineer with a good knowledge of geology and he started New Rand Limited in 1905. He began by exploring the Vredefort district, but failed to draw the attention of the mining magnates as they were more interested in the far East Rand basin. In 1919 the assets of the company, which included options on farms in the Heilbron and Frankfort district, were acquired by New Rand Consolidated and 26 boreholes were sunk in the Free State at a cost of 100 000 pounds. No payable gold was discovered and after devoting more than 30 years of his life in trying to prove that there was gold in the Free State, Sawyer abandoned his search in 1931 on account of ill health.

Another geologist, dr Carrick, concentrated his activities on the farm, Lindequesfontein, while Archibald Megson traced the Rand goldfields across the

³ Gregory, T., Ernest Oppenheimer and the Economic Development of South Africa, p. 533.

⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵ Ibid., p. 270.

Vaal River to the farm, "Aandenk" in the Odendaalsrus district. Close to a shaft full of water on the farm, he noticed an outcrop of rock which contained conglomerate. He panned some of the rock to find that it contained gold to the value of four dwts.⁶

The shaft was originally sunk by a Bloemfontein syndicate in 1891.⁷ Megson asked the owner for an option on the land and he agreed, provided that Megson did not interfere with the shaft which he used as a water storage tank. At 100 ft Megson struck a reef and took the necessary samples. He hoped to show them to Sir George Farrar, a well-known mining magnate, but the latter was away, so Megson discussed it with his consulting engineer, Mr Gau, who was very interested in the discovery and requested Megson to return in August. The First World War broke out and Farrar joined the army, while Megson enlisted too. It was only in the early 1930s that he returned to South Africa, to find the shaft on "Aandenk" in the same condition as in 1914. Again he obtained an option on the site of his original activities and took additional ones on adjoining farms.⁸

In the meantime, the West Wit Line Reef was discovered near Johannesburg, and Anglo American established the Western Reefs Mine in April 1933 on the Vaal River, south of Klerksdorp. As this was further south, the interest in the Free State was re-awakened and Sir Ernest Oppenheimer introduced a systematic exploration programme of drilling.⁹

In 1932, two men with a passion for mining, Emmanuel Jacobson (solicitor) and Allan Roberts (dental mechanic) listened to the story told by Archibald Megson. They came to an agreement with Megson and set off to inspect the shaft. It was not the old shaft that interested Roberts so much as the outcrop, which could be traced

⁶ Jessup, E., p. 270; Dwts means pennyweights, which in today's decimal system indicates the centimetres of gold per gram present in one ton of gold (cmg/t).

⁷ The members of the syndicate was very excited about the results, but when two members tried to go and raise enough capital in England, their ship the "Drummond Castle" sank. Another syndicate of Johannesburg men, took an option on the land in 1909, but did not do any further prospecting.

⁸ Jessup, E., p. 270.

⁹ Ibid., p. 270.

for miles on the surface of the farm "Aandenk" and neighbouring farms.¹⁰ He was sure it was a conglomerate and that it was part of the Upper Witwatersrand series. The men formed a syndicate with F.L. Marks, dr E.B. Woolf, S.R. Potte and, Joseph Freedman and took out options over 31 farms. Next they floated a company, Wit Extensions LTD and finally obtained the prospecting rights over 60 000 morgen of land, stretching from north of Odendaalsrus to Hennenman, 30 miles away.¹¹

The company's first consulting engineer was A.F. Bovell, who visited "Aandenk" in August 1933 and sampled the shaft. He recommended putting down pilot boreholes on either "Aandenk" or on the neighbouring farm, "Kromdraai". Bovell was succeeded by H. Radcliffe-Browne, who decided that the site for the hole should be 80 yards to the north of the first shaft. The men used a steam-driven drill for which coal had to be hauled from Kroonstad, 45 miles away. It was this shaft that in years to come would hit the Basal Reef.

In October 1933 the drill bored its way into the hard, green crystalline formation known as the Ventersdorp lavas, but seven months later the engineer advised them to give up. They refused and at last in August 1934, the drill broke through the lava at a depth of 2 721 feet. Two consulting geologists who were called in to inspect the shaft, identified it as conglomerate belonging to the upper Witwatersrand series. They advised them to continue drilling, but the company was running into financial difficulty as the drilling was more expensive than expected. In February 1935 it reached a depth of 4 064 feet, but the company was facing bankruptcy. Had the drill gone down another 400 feet they would have hit the Basal Reef.¹²

¹⁰ The farm "Aandenk" belonged to a mr van Niekerk who tested the rock on the farm and found that it had a very low percentage of gold, so he did not investigate the matter further. Before the First World War, Sir George Farrar further investigated the reefs on the farm, but it was not until 1932 that further progress was made.

¹¹ The company was started with 50 000 pounds of which half was to be used for working capital. 100 000 shares were also offered to the public.

¹² Long, J., Bullion Johannesburg, p. 361.

Early in 1936, dr Hans Merensky studied the results from the borehole and from then on took a lively interest in the area. He had a geophysical survey carried out and sank some boreholes without any results. The Anglo American Corporation then became interested in the Free State Goldfields.

The company was drilling in the vicinity of Klerksdorp at the time, about a mile or two from the Vaal River, where the town of Orkney was developed in years to come. Sir Ernest Oppenheimer wrote to dr Merensky in London and suggested that the company takes over his interests in Wit Extension Ltd. On February 1, 1937 the West Rand Investment Trust started a new drilling programme.¹³ The news that Anglo American had started drilling in the Free State, had quite an effect on the mining industry.¹⁴ It would not be long before every mining house in Johannesburg, would become involved. In the same year, Western Holdings was formed and the African and European Investment Company and Union Corporation began exploration. The race for mineral options in the Free State was in full swing and Western Holdings was quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

It was the patient plotting of the density of lava beds by, O. Weiss, an employee of Western Holdings, that led him to the farm St Helena, 10 miles south of Odendaalsrus. He advised the company to put down boreholes on the farm, but even he was surprised when a drill intersected a reef at 2 147 feet. Drilling continued and in April 1939 came the first intersection of the Basal Reef.¹⁵ It was now becoming clear that a potential goldfield existed.

The holes drilled by Anglo American were unsuccessful, as were many others. Only in April 1939 did a borehole drilled by Western Holdings on the farm

¹³ Cartwright, A.P., Golden Age, p. 276.

¹⁴ Anglo American established a geological department at Bothaville and under the experienced guidance of Joe Bancroft, fresh from his success in Rhodesia, made a complete survey of the area.

¹⁵ The borehole showed the spectacular return of 2 335 inch dwt, almost 16 times the 150 inch dwt regarded in those days as the limit of payability. A year later, after more boreholes had been sunk, results proved that there was enough gold in the area to justify the establishment of a gold mine.

St. Helena, strike the Basal Reef at a shallow depth of 1 143 feet. This was almost on the same spot, where, years before, the first drill had pierced the soil of the Free State. "This discovery created a sensation in the mining world and gave new impetus to exploration."¹⁶

After the death of Sir Abe Bailey in 1940, Anglo American bought the controlling interests in Western Holdings and continued its drilling in the area south of Odendaalsrus. Neither Hans Merensky, nor Anglo American had thought to deepen the borehole on Aandenk as the strike at St Helena was a shallow one. Only after the war was the shaft deepened and they had to go down a further 400 feet only before they struck the Basal Reef.¹⁷

There was some consolation for Allan Roberts, as Allanridge, the town that today serves Lorraine Gold Mine, was named after him. In the meantime, the African and European Investment Company was making progress. By the end of 1942, twelve boreholes had been sunk, of which 9 gave a basal reef intersection. Five of the nine boreholes disclosed payable gold, but the Second World War brought a 7 year delay in the development of the area.

All drilling had to be suspended as South Africa was involved in the Second World War.¹⁸ In 1941 a mining lease was granted by the government, but it was to be a few years before the company could begin its first shaft. St Helena was the first established mine in the Free State.¹⁹

The dilemma for the mining companies during the Second World War was almost

¹⁶ Our First Half Century, p. 345.

¹⁷ If the Wit Extension Ltd could have raised another 2 000 pounds and drilled another 400 feet, they would have made a fortune. Allan Roberts died penniless and his friends had to all help to pay for his funeral.

¹⁸ After the Second World War costs had risen to such an extent that it was estimated that the delay had cost the mines approximately R250 million in increased capital expenditure.

¹⁹ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 158.

the same as during the First World War. The young, skilled employees wanted to go to war, but gold production could not stop completely. Gold had to pay for fuel and other vital supplies during the war. The Chamber of Mines suggested that some mines become ammunition manufacturers in a bid to keep their skilled artisans at home. Despite shortages of manpower and supplies, new records were established.

The mining houses of Johannesburg were prepared to spend vast sums of money to develop the Northern Free State after the war. It would take in the region of 250 million pounds to change the maize fields of the Free State into a gold producing area. The mining industry had never seen anything like the prospecting that went on in the Free State after the war. In the first 6 years after the war, 480 boreholes were sunk in the 90 mile belt between the Vaal River and the little railway station called Virginia on the Sand River.

Every mining company on the Rand had an interest in some corner of the Free State, every farm in the area was under option of one mining group or another. In the lead was Anglo American, which had acquired the controlling interest in Western Holdings, the company that had found gold on the farm St Helena. To make absolutely sure that it did not miss a piece of the action, Anglo also became the biggest shareholder in the African and European Investment Company.

One by one, the results of the boreholes south of Odendaalsrus came in with satisfactory results. At least 120 boreholes produced gold with values above 150 dwt. A new goldfield had been found or, as Mr Ernest Oppenheimer admitted so modestly at the annual meeting of Anglo American in 1946, "We are naturally not justified in attaching too much importance to any one borehole result - and in this case the astounding value encountered must be looked upon as in the nature of a freak - but such a result, when considered in conjunction with the excellent boreholes to the north on the Free State Exploration and Development Corporation's ground to the east and south-east in the African and European Block

Seven Area, and to the south on the St Helena lease area, seem to me to admit of only one reasonable interpretation."²⁰

The best was yet to come. On the farm "Geduld", 5 miles south-east of Odendaalsrus, the Basal Reef was intersected with amazing results. The reef core of this borehole carried visible gold. When the result of 23 037 dwt was received in the offices of the financial editors of the newspapers, they refused to believe it. It was the most spectacular result ever and meant that for a ton of rock, one would be able to get 168.875 ounces of gold.²¹ The ounces had the value of 1 600 pounds, which was 500 times more than the payable limit of the mines on the Rand. In those days a value of 3 pounds extracted from a ton was regarded as profitable. This was the result for which investors had been waiting. In London, New York, Paris and Johannesburg, men rushed to buy what they called "Free State" shares. The result of the strike on the stock market was immediate and electrifying.²² The shares of Western Holdings, which had closed the previous afternoon on 72s 3d opened at 78s and shot up to 97s the next day. Brokers were inundated with orders and had to queue up in the section of the London Stock Exchange that dealt with South African mines. In Paris and New York the effect was the same. In New York the telephones of the South African consulate kept ringing, people wanted to know more about the Free State and Odendaalsrus. Few of them realized it would take at least 6 years before mining could begin. In the course of a few days, the value of Free State shares reached 30 million pounds and still the orders poured in "April 16, 1946, will always be a red-letter day in the remarkable history of South African gold-mining industry for it was on that day that the announcement was made of a fabulous gold-strike in the peaceful maize-growing area of the Free State."²³

To mr Gottfried Rheeder, the young owner of the farm, the discovery would bring riches secured under the terms of the prospecting contracts. In the next four years

²⁰ Jacobson, D., Maize turns to Gold, p. 19.

²¹ Cartwright, A.P., p. 299.

²² Jacobson, D., p. 26.

²³ Welkom: Treasure House of the Orange Free State, p. 5.

Anglo American raised 48,3 million pounds in loans from British and European banks and De Beers ploughed 16 million pounds into the Free State gold mines.²⁴ Again the South African mining industry was not exclusively for South Africans.

On 5 February 1947, a second borehole on the farm "Geduld" intersected the reef at 4 886 feet and showed a result of 12 528 dwt.²⁵ This came after years of disappointment and struggle, when the prospectors in the Free State were a lonely race, who stayed in shacks next to the thudding drills. They worked night and day and succeeded in drilling 10 meters a day.²⁶ "Only those who had toiled for years behind the scenes knew how desperately hard this had been and how often they had been within an inch of giving up. Indeed many had."²⁷ This was the thirteenth borehole to be sunk by the charge-hand driller Lucky Hewetson. He was also in charge of sinking the shaft at Geduld no 2 to the east of the first borehole. At least 3 million pounds was spent in diamond drill boreholes to prove the new gold field. About 500 different boreholes have been drilled at more than 2 million feet.²⁸

After the strike on the farm "Geduld", the town of Odendaalsrus would never be the same.²⁹ For the farmers in the area it was a time of rich harvests. "Reaping where they had not sown, gathering into banks in preference to barns, or of great expectations, based on hopes that beneath their mealie fields would be found fields

²⁴ Pallister, D., a.o., South Africa Inc., p. 41.

²⁵ It means pennyweights.

²⁶ Brown, J.A., So Rich an Inheritance, p. 122.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁸ The Golden Free State, 1854-1954, p. 16.

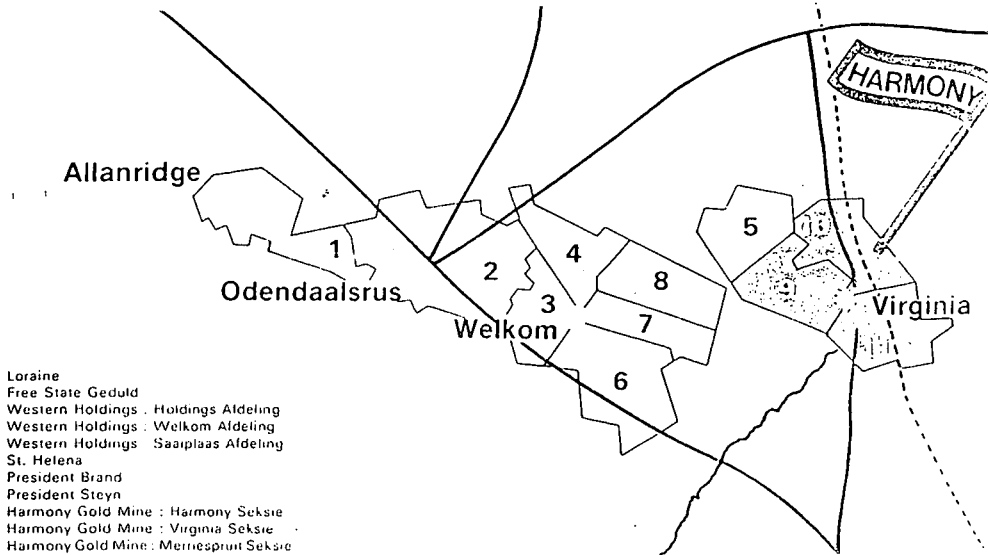
²⁹ Odendaalsrus was a dusty, one-street town of wood and iron, that was established in 1913. For many years it was one of the most backward areas in the Free State and had difficulty in balancing its books. All of this was about to change. The value of farm land went up from 30s a morgen to between 8 and 10 pounds. The telephone exchange had to take calls from America and Europe. Land exchanged hands as everyone wanted to get a piece of the action. The mayor was called by telephone from London and New York, night and day and telegrams were addressed to "The Lord Mayor". The hotel bar became the local stock exchange with important deals being done at the bar counter. Within two weeks, share dealing worth 20 million pounds had exchanged hands.

of gold."³⁰ A programme of drilling, unprecedented in scale, was in progress. The drills could now be placed with more hopeful expectation, based on the meticulous work of the pre-war prospectors.

Odendaalsrus was engaged in a new battle to become the centre of the newly found goldfield. This was one they would not win, as Welkom, with its strong financial backing, only 8 miles to the south, was chosen as the focal point of the new Free State Goldfields.

The Orange Free State Goldfields extend over an area which is approximately 30 miles in length and seven miles wide. The Basal Reef, in the Upper Witwatersrand System, is found in two wedges. The mines in the Allanridge, Odendaalsrus and Welkom region are situated within the northern wedge, while mines in the area of Virginia are in the southern wedge.

Here follows a map to indicate the different mines that were developed in the Free State Goldfields:



The financial implications of the development of the Northern Free State Goldfields were tremendous. It was estimated that it would cost 12 million pounds to bring a new mine into production. At one particular point there were more than 13 in different stages of production in the 160 square miles of the gold field.³¹

Further south, the Anglo-Transvaal Consolidated Investment Company had established two mines, Virginia and Merriespruit. Rand Mines Ltd had administrative rights over a property that was named "Harmony", after the farm on which it was situated.

Mining companies endured every imaginable difficulty in developing the Free State gold mines. There was no proper railway line, no water and no power. It would take a long time to establish these services, but the lack of them had the advantage that careful planning could go into the new towns. There was much activity in the Free State Goldfields with new shafts being sunk after every few months. The government handed the task of planning the future of the OFS to the Social and Economical Planning Council. The council recommended that statutory authority should be established similar to that of the Tennessee Valley Authority, with the right to acquire land and lay out new towns.

The government appointed a Natural Resources Development Council to act as an advisory body and to work in association with the mining companies.³²

Anglo American's plan for the area was quite clear. Five new mines would be developed near Odendaalsrus, with another further south.³³ That meant a group of 6 mines and a probable population of some 30 000 whites and even more blacks. The question arose whether they should all reside in Odendaalsrus and travel to the

³¹ The Golden Free State, p. 18.

³² The government insisted on a standstill in all development in the Northern Free State while the Resource Council made its decision. Land could change hands, but no development could take place.

³³ Within a framework of 19 km in length and 11 km wide, 5 mines were in production. Their power had to come from Vereeniging, 160km further north and their water came from the Vaal River, 64 km away.

mines from there. Town planners were called in and it was decided that the southern most portion of the farm, "Welkom" was the strategic centre of the district. Anglo American presented to the Free State Township Board a plan for a new town, planned to the final detail, from the airfield to the shopping centers, and this town would be called Welkom. The Natural Resources Development Council preferred several small towns instead of one large central town and so Odendaalsrus, Allanridge, Welkom and Virginia came into existence.³⁴

Welkom was developed at an initial cost of 935 000 pounds and Anglo American built the most modern hospital in Africa for the treatment of its black workers in the newly discovered gold field, the Ernest Oppenheimer Hospital. Speaking at the Anglo American Corporation shareholders meeting on 22 June 1951, Ernest Oppenheimer remarked, "Both from the humanitarian viewpoint and from the standpoint of the practical interests of the industry, it is important that the closest attention be given to the health and well-being of our Native employees. The industry already has a well-deserved reputation for the care it devotes to the health of Native(sic) mine workers. It is well established that Natives(sic) return to their kraals generally in far better physical condition after their periods of service with the mining industry. But I believe there is still great scope for the development of health services among our Native(sic) employees. Especially is this the case in the sphere of what is called preventive medicine. There is also a real need for a more active and positive attack on the prevalent and frequently disabling diseases among the Natives offering themselves for employment in the industry. An advance in this direction is being made on the new mines of the group in the Orange Free State. We have introduced a system of mass miniature radiography as standard practice for all Native(sic) employees on our mines: we have set up clinics at the mine hostels for the day-to-day treatment of diseases which, owing to earlier neglect, have hitherto frequently developed so as to require hospitalization and consequent loss of manpower and in some cases irreparable damage to the individuals

³⁴ The Golden Orange Free State, p. 18.

concerned, and we have established a system of routine health inspection at all mine hostels under the control of trained and qualified sanitarians. We are also building a very large hospital at Welkom for our Native(sic) employees and their dependents, which will incorporate the most modern equipment for the treatment of all forms of disease and accident, and which will be staffed by specialists in the various branches of medicine and surgery."³⁵

E. Jessup writes about Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, "The third column of his mining empire was complete. Oppenheimer proudly wore the golden helmet as the invested crown prince of the new gold state he had assiduously planned, schemed and conquered."³⁶ The Chamber of Mines also paid for hospitals in Welkom, Virginia and Odendaalsrus to assist the Provincial Government. It was the mines' gift to the people.

4.2 VIRGINIA - A TOWN IN THE MAKING

Virginia is the southernmost town of the Free State Goldfields, was developed on the banks of the Sand River. By 1950 the town had a population of 12 000 whites and 25 000 blacks. The town developed into the fourth-largest town in the Free State. Gold brings development. Millions of pounds exchanged hands, other industries are stimulated, markets for other products are established and jobs are created.

This is the magic of the mining industry. It can bring a whole new town into existence.

The town of Virginia chiefly came into being in order to provide labour and services to the gold mines in the immediate vicinity.³⁷ The town was established in 1949 by

³⁵ Gregory, T., p. 582.

³⁶ Jessup, E., Ernest Oppenheimer - a study in Power, p. 308.

³⁷ Davies, K.R., Towns in the OFS Goldfields: A study of Past Development and Future Growth Potential, p. 36.

the Virginia Land and Estate Company Limited, and officially proclaimed on 21 January 1954. The town covers 32 square miles, divided into a civic centre, four residential areas, each serving a mine, an industrial area and a native township.³⁸ In its planning phase it was decided that the town should provide for a black work force of approximately 60 000. The name of the black township just out of the town is Meloding.³⁹ The black township Meloding was proclaimed in the Government Gazette on 27 April 1956.⁴⁰ This township was proclaimed by the government and the layout plan approved by the Housing Commission in December 1954. It is a self-contained town, although within the municipal area of Virginia. By 1960 more than 300 houses had already been built to standards of the National Housing Scheme, and hostels that could accommodate 1 000 single blacks were constructed. Black people were also encouraged to build their own houses under supervision. In the local newspaper in 1958 it was reported that blacks could build their own houses. At the time there were more than 250 blacks who had completed or nearly completed their own houses. There were also 113 applications for sites in the new extensions. Rent in these extensions was 10s a month. Here blacks could build temporary shacks. They were provided with 35 pounds worth of wood and

³⁸ The town planners, in laying out Virginia, made the maximum use of the natural features. The civic centre is sited on a crescent-shaped ridge overlooking the Sand River Valley, and on the high ground are the public buildings, churches, a magistrate's court, departmental stores, a cinema and blocks of offices and shops. Three of Virginia's residential areas are on the north bank and are linked to the central area by a bridge across the river and wide arterial roads. Virginia Gardens is in the heart of town and serves as a street-park combination. The layout of the town goes to show that the mining companies were serious in their efforts, that the new mining towns were not going to be the bleak towns of the past.

³⁹ This township is situated 3 miles out of town and in its planning provision was made for churches, shops, ablution blocks, parks, recreation facilities and streets. The actual building of the township started on 25 January 1955 when 55 economic houses were built. The township obtained its first Native Advisory Board on 11 April 1955.

⁴⁰ Government Gazette, 1956.04.27. The name of the township implies the place where the birds sing or the trains whistle.

iron. Tenants could pay back the 35 pounds over 5 years.⁴¹ Blacks were also encouraged to start their own businesses in the new township.

The mining companies kept their promise of providing housing and accommodation and in 1954 it had completed 600 houses. By 1957 a further 2 300 houses had been built.⁴² Harmony Mine alone supplied 752 houses by 1958.⁴³

Before the discovery of gold in the region, the community was very small and in 1935 only 118 were recorded. Five years later the statistics show that this figure had risen to 139.⁴⁴ By 1946 there were approximately 4 000 white residents in the whole area of the Free State Goldfields of which only 171 came from Virginia.⁴⁵ By 1952 the population had grown to 26 000, of which 11 500 were white.⁴⁶

By September 1954 there were approximately 6 808 whites and 3 474 black people in the Virginia region. Some of the mine-workers also found accommodation in nearby towns such as Hennenman, because of a lack of housing. By 1958 the population of Virginia had risen to 39 000. Not all the mining companies had started production as yet. The population growth of the town was as follows:

1959	43 000
1960	47 038
1970	53 587
1980	74 344

⁴¹ Virginia Nuus, August 1958.

⁴² Totus Tuus, 1957.10.04, p. 16.

⁴³ These houses were for white employees and consisted of three bedrooms, a dining room, sitting room, kitchen with an electric stove and warm water.

⁴⁴ Kemp, S. W., 'n Beplanningstudie van die Verstedeliking van die Oranje Vrystaat, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Virginia Nuus, September 1959, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Fleischer, M., Welkom, p. 18.

The black population in the township of Meloding consisted of 71% South Sothos, 17,2% Xhosas, 11,8% Tswana, North Sothos, Zulu, Ndebeles, Swazis and Tsongas. The population in Meloding totalled 9 300 people.⁴⁷ This did not include the mine workers in the mining compounds.

The operations of the gold mining industry opened up the Goldfields to the black population. The conditions in which they lived were so poor that the Department of Native Affairs appointed P.W. Weyers to look into matters. By 1958 the personnel of the local Department of Native Affairs grew to 13 which included a manager, typist, a registration official, inspectors, a town inspector, a location superintendent and other personnel who was stationed in temporary offices in Meloding.⁴⁸

The Provincial Hospital in the town of Virginia was built by the mines and then handed over to the Provincial Administration. It was opened in April 1954 with 50 beds for white patients and 12 beds for non-whites.⁴⁹ The hospital contained two operation theatres and X-ray apparatus. Before the mines had established their own hospitals, mine casualties with serious injuries were sent to the Provincial Hospital in Kroonstad or the mining hospital of the Chamber of Mines in Cottesloe.⁵⁰ The Harmony Mine Hospital was built in 1957 with beds for 148 patients.⁵¹ The hospital could handle 100 patients a day of the 8 700 black employees of Harmony. The hospital staff consisted of two medical officers, with dr J.H. Marks as the Senior Medical officer. The matron was miss M.C. Young. There were also three sisters, a trained male nurse and a physiotherapist. The hospital was equipped with a modern maternity ward and a theatre to cope with illnesses of wives of married black employees on the mine. Every black worker on the mine was X-rayed at least once every 6 months, as well as on engagement and discharge. Apart from the European sisters there were 28 black nurses who were being trained for the Rand

⁴⁷ Goodyear, S.P., Mondigwordingsfees van Meloding, 1975.10.18.

⁴⁸ Virginia Munisipaliteit, 1958.02.19, Finansies en Algemene Dienste Komitee.

⁴⁹ Virginia Munisipaliteit, Gesondheidsverslag Januarie 1959-Desember 1959.

⁵⁰ Fleischer, M., Welkom, p. 55.

⁵¹ Virginia Nuus, April 1957.

Mines Certificate. After obtaining this certificate, they were able to advance even further and take the General Certificate. The nurses were well-paid and received accommodation, food and uniforms as part of their package. They were housed in a home adjoining the hospital where every nurse had her own room. They also had their own kitchen and dining room. In their lounge they had a radiogram and records, games were supplied and they had access to the tennis courts. Nurses also attended the weekly film show held for patients in the surgery ward. A newspaper article concludes with the following, "In all, Harmony Mine Native Hospital, with all its facilities and the outstanding services given to patients, is a shining example of what is done for Native employees on South African gold mines."⁵² In 1970, this hospital which catered for the needs of the mine worker and his family, was upgraded at a cost of R336 000.

4.3 A NEW ERA DAWNS IN THE GOLD MINING INDUSTRY

Although the discovery of the gold in the Free State was a spectacular event, there were still many difficulties to overcome. Some of them were physical problems; and others were social and economical. T. Gregory writes, "It also presented great opportunities for solving those problems in such a way as to promote human happiness and well-being."⁵³ Ernest Oppenheimer was very well aware of the opportunity for improvement and indeed placed social advancement in the very forefront of his hopes and aspirations for the new venture.

On 16 May 1947 Ernest Oppenheimer took the opportunity of saying, "the Anglo American Corporation will play a leading part in the opening of the new gold field, and I feel that this imposes very special responsibilities on us to see that the opening up is done in the most efficient manner. When I speak of "efficient" I do not just mean the lowest possible working costs or the best possible tonnage, but also

⁵² Virginia News, April 1959.

⁵³ Gregory, T., p. 572.

that we pay special attention to the welfare of our employees and to the development of the region as a whole. Never before has the corporation had the opportunity of developing so large an area from the beginning, and it is our duty to take full advantage of knowledge we have gained in our other mining enterprises."⁵⁴ In Northern Rhodesia, Anglo had already gained experience of what it meant to provide for the amenities of civilization in an undeveloped area. When new mines are set up, it is not only a question of communications, of the provision of power supply and of water supply for the miners themselves. Human beings have to be housed and fed, children must be educated, public health conditions must be safeguarded by adequate sanitary equipment and by the provision of hospitals. In South Africa these matters cannot be thought of merely in terms of one race, it is more complex in a multi-racial society. The welfare of blacks as well as whites has to be taken into account, and this involves winning the assent of government to new ideas."

The mining industry came to a crossroad in the mealie fields of the Free State. It could either continue on the same road that had been followed for six decades or it could transform and create a more permanent, more integrated work force. It now had the opportunity to start right from the drawing board and create new mines, new lodging facilities and labour structures.

Some of the immediate difficulties the industry experienced in the Free State was that the gold field had to be built up in an area of mealie lands with a very sparse population, with poor or non-existent roads, no railways, remote from large cities and with neither a white nor a black labour source available.

The lack of basic public services, like water, power and transportation presented problems. When gold was discovered in the Free State, the nearest tarred road was 30 miles away. Other problems were water-bearing rock and heat, as the mines

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 573.

would be developed very deep underground.⁵⁵

The planners of the Free State Goldfields were determined not to repeat the Johannesburg layout of a temporary tin town with monotonous houses and shanty sized plots. In contrast with the Witwatersrand, the development of the Free State included the planting of trees by the million, recreational lakes, houses with gardens, flowers and shrubs. Never before had mining communities been so well-designed, or been provided with every civilized commodity. Every town was given its own character.⁵⁶

The government gave authorization for a new railway line to Odendaalsrus. While mining operations began in the area in 1946, no railway lines were available until 1948. The Railway Administration was guaranteed against loss on this branch line by the mining companies.

The development of the Free State Goldfields emphasized one factor very clearly. This was the important part the labour of the black man still played in the South African economy. It would be impossible to develop the new gold mines, without the muscle power of the black man.

On the labour front there were two possible sources of labour for the new mines. Firstly, local labour could be used and secondly, migrant labour could be implemented. Local labour was not sufficient at all as the Virginia area was a farming community and scarcely populated and migrant labour was the only option.

The development of the Free State Goldfields after the Second World War, provided the mining houses with the opportunity to initiate a new model of labour organization and living standards. The fact that the Free State mining operations started from scratch, enabled great advances to be made in the internal and external design of the hostels with regard to sanitary facilities, living quarters,

⁵⁵ Water which accumulated under pressure for countless thousands of years, was released when shafts penetrated fissured ground and extensive cementation was necessary to overcome heavy inrushes of water and flooding.

⁵⁶ Virginia became the first mining town which did not have tin roofing, but much more attractive and expensive tile roofing.

kitchens and access to and from the mines. The mining companies hoped to accommodate 10% of their workers in native villages. Unfortunately this ambition was not materialized.

As the new mines opened, the mining companies simply duplicated the old system of housing, particularly the single-sex compounds in which black workers were housed. The victory of the National Party in 1948 ensured that there would be no major changes in the way labour was mobilized. If anything it would be controlled more strictly in the future.⁵⁷ This was done in spite of the fact that the Native Laws Commission under the chairmanship of Judge Henry Fagan rejected segregation as totally impractical.⁵⁸ According to the Fagan Commission, African urbanization was a natural and inevitable economic phenomenon and migrant labour could not endure forever. The Commission also argued that the permanent settlement of an increasing number of urban Africans would actually be to the advantage of industrial demands for labour. The government was afraid that it would lead to integration. The government also felt that detribalization had to be stopped and that workers should be permitted into cities only as temporary workers who would return to their homes once their contracts had expired. The government feared the competition of the black worker, the loss of black farm labour, the increase in black trade unionism and the growing political demands of the black people.

Anglo American did develop plans to settle the more skilled black workers permanently on mine property, probably because the company was not as conservative as companies such as Rand Mines Ltd. Ernest Oppenheimer suggested that at least a small portion of the black labour force should become

⁵⁷ When the National Party took over in 1948 it focussed on the phenomenon of black urbanisation and the dangerous effects it had for the white population. The National Party wanted to increase segregation between black and white.

⁵⁸ The Fagan Commission was appointed in August 1946 by the government to investigate the socio-economic conditions of migrant workers, laws for urban blacks and the pass laws. The chairman was Judge Henry Fagan and he was assisted by A.S. Welsh, A.L. Barrett, E.E. von Maltitz and S.J. Parsons. UG 28/1948: Verslag van die Naturellewette-kommissie, p. 20.

permanent workers.⁵⁹ The company was prepared for the higher costs involved in building family housing and for the higher running costs of this form of housing.⁶⁰ A small percentage of boss boys, black mine clerks and indunas were already housed in family housing on mine premises. Oppenheimer wanted to expand these facilities further by opening them to the blacks who worked in the more skilled categories underground.

In a study prepared by the Chamber of Mines for the Tomlinson Commission, the cost of family housing was set at 803 pounds, compared to the 192 pounds it costs to house a bachelor migrant. Family housing included a 3-bedroomed house, with electricity, running water and sewage. For a new mine with a work force of 6 000 men, family housing would add 5.4 million pounds to the development costs, compared with only 1.2 million for compound housing.⁶¹

"The mine labour organizations never seriously considered adopting the alternative strategy of partial labour organization that Ernest Oppenheimer proposed for the Free State mines in the early 1950s. In 1947 the Chamber of Mines declared that stabilizing the work force would be disastrous to the industry and to the country.⁶² When Harry Oppenheimer, then the Member of Parliament for Kimberley, asked the Minister of Native(sic) Affairs, Senator Verwoerd, in a parliamentary discussion what he thought about the idea of establishing villages on the mines for married Native(sic) employees, he replied, "In regard to married quarters at the mines on the Free State Goldfields I want to state quite unequivocally that I am opposed to that development. I, too, have objections, and my department has been instructed to

⁵⁹ Reinhalt Jones, R.D., Industrial Relations in South Africa, p. 50.

⁶⁰ In a study prepared by the Chamber of Mines for the Tomlinson Commission it stated that the cost of bachelor housing was estimated at 192 pounds, while for a family unit it was estimated at 803 pounds. For a new mine with a work force of 6 000 workers it would cost 5.4 million pounds to establish a permanent work force, in contrast with 1.2 million for single quarter housing. To stabilize the work force it would thus add 36% to the costs of developing a new mine.

⁶¹ Commission of the Socio-Economic Development of the Native Areas within the Union of South Africa, 20 May 1952.

⁶² Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1947.

investigate the position very thoroughly and to stop the development of such villages as far as possible. Let me give my reasons for this. Within that Free State gold-mining area every mine can then establish its own Native(sic) town with married quarters. That will mean a series of Native(sic) towns. While we are already establishing Native(sic) towns in the vicinity of the big cities to provide housing for the Natives(sic), it will mean that in addition a large number of black spots will be spread out throughout the whole Free State mining area. Now we must bear in mind that when the mines stop working one day that a large number of towns will remain spread out over that area. They may amount to 20 or 30 or 40 within that area. They do not fall under our control either. The Department of Native(sic) Affairs has no jurisdiction over those Native(sic) towns on mining land. We do realize that the mines need a certain limited number of experienced married Natives(sic) such as boss boys, but our view is that there should be married quarters only for those who are needed on the mines for night duties or for emergency duties. In addition it is our view that it must be borne in mind that the Natives(sic) who work in the mines are not the sophisticated Natives(sic). They are usually Natives(sic) who have been recruited by agents in the reserves, but usually their children who grow up in those mining towns do not want to work on the mines. So when the married quarters have been created the Native(sic) fathers will use them and the children will be pushed on to the neighbouring general community. They will disappear from those mining towns in the course of time and they will have to be accommodated in the locations. They will be pushed off on to others. If such a mine-worker Native(sic) himself contracts tuberculosis or silicosis the mines will not keep him there in their housing scheme. He is paid compensation, but he is also pushed off on to another housing scheme because they need his house for the new mine worker. So it means that those married quarters become a channel through which the rest of the non-European(sic) population in the cities becomes greater and greater. It is an unhealthy development if it occurs without control for the sake of the non-European(sic) labour of one industry. We feel that this industry

must be treated like other industries and that its married Native Labourers must be accommodated as in the case of the other industries."⁶³

There would be no changes in the modus operandi of the gold mines with regard to housing a more permanent work force. The mining industry did show its intentions of changing the labour force on the mines.⁶⁴ It showed that it realized that changes would have to be made to create a more competent, more content work force. This was, however, politically unacceptable. Instead, the system of migration, that they had laboriously developed and defended over the previous 50 years, was improved and adopted.⁶⁵ The government was accustomed to the labour mobilization, it owed its livelihood to it and did not have an effective alternative.

The National Party put an end to any aspirations of Anglo American to have a more permanent work force. The government of D.F. Malan restricted the number of black workers in family housing to 3%.⁶⁶ It would take the severe financial and labour pressures of the 1970s to transform the existing system.

Under the National Government, control over the movement of blacks was tightened. African women were also forced to carry passes and blacks who did not qualify for a pass could only remain in an urban area for 72 hours. The government had the authority to remove idle or undesirable blacks, with no regard as to how it would affect their family life. In 1951 the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act was adopted which prevented Africans from occupying any private or public land without the permission of the authorities or if their shelters constituted a health hazard.

A network of labour bureaus was also established in 1951. This further restricted the movement of black people. The main purpose of these bureaus was to distribute black labour to white farms. Any black worker who wished to leave a rural area had to apply at his local bureau for permission, which would be granted if

⁶³ Hansard, vol 80, cols. 8030-1. 1947.

⁶⁴ Anglo did experiment with small villages of 150 houses for semi-skilled black workers who were not previously eligible for houses. Wilson, W.D., p. 637.

⁶⁵ Crush, J., o.a., South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy and the Gold Mines, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

officials were satisfied that there was a demand for labour in the district. Since 1952, blacks had been forced to carry reference books.

In 1956 influx control was taken a step further when it abolished the right of blacks to appeal to the courts against removal from an urban area. As from 1958 the police and local authorities could raid any dwelling without a search warrant, in search of illegal urban dwellers. Over the next 30 years, none of the mining companies even came close to the allowed 3% of family housing.⁶⁷

Although the mining companies could not change the labour structures as a whole, they did, improve the housing and facilities for the black worker. Each of the new hostels for blacks at Harmony Gold Mine comprised of 4 double-storey blocks of rooms, arranged around a large central dining and kitchen block. The double-storey hostels were built in the form of a hollow square so that each had a courtyard where men could get together. Each block had 64 rooms with 10 workers in each room.⁶⁸ There were 2 560 black workers in every hostel. The hostels were ventilated and centrally heated. Electric light was provided and tables and benches were part of the furniture. There were 5 sets of double-decker beds in every room. The kitchens with their stainless steel equipment were very modern.⁶⁹

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer was of the opinion, "Higher standards of comfort and hygiene in Native(sic) housing and accommodation, better feeding and nutrition and better health and medical services will all combine to make employment in our gold-mining industry increasingly attractive to Natives(sic) themselves and to those authorities in other territories outside the Union who have the welfare of their Native(sic) population at heart."⁷⁰ The mine owners had to make the conditions more attractive as they were chronically short of labour.

⁶⁷ It was usually a small percentage of married clerks(mabalans) and indunas who were housed in family housing. They would also receive food provisions.

⁶⁸ The room was 15 ft by 20 ft.

⁶⁹ The Golden Free State, p. 20.

⁷⁰ Sir Ernest Oppenheimer said this at the Anglo American Shareholders meeting held on June 22, 1951.

Recreation was another concern for the mining companies. Removed from the kraal, the wide open spaces, mountains and rivers, other forms of recreation and relaxation had to be found for the black workers.⁷¹ "Menfolk, covered in their brightly coloured blankets prefer to bask in the sun or to gather round a beerpot or at meetings, where tribal affairs are discussed with considerable eloquence and a remarkable knowledge of ancient customs and tradition."⁷²

The Free State gold mines also brought a greater mechanization when compared to the mines on the Rand.⁷³ Mechanization provided the most effective way of coping with the problems of labour shortages and harsh geological conditions.

New techniques were used underground with regard to stoping, shaft-sinking, rock-drilling, ventilation and tunneling. Diesel locomotives were used underground, while steam power was replaced by electric power. Cleaning devices and shovel loaders were brought in to replace hand tools. There was a tremendous increase in the amount of machinery used, particularly underground. This had a dualistic impact of the labour front as it initially brought about a demand for semi-skilled labour. D. Innes comments, "As hand tools gave way to larger ones and as simple systems were replaced by more complex ones, so the demand for semi-skilled forms of labour increased."⁷⁴ Secondly it brought about substantial labour saving. In 1961 the average number of workers employed per gold mine was 12,3% lower than in 1936. The labour saving was mostly on the black labour front. D. Innes writes, "Although white labour became relatively more expensive than black labour

⁷¹ Some of the men took to handicrafts such as basket weaving, while others would sit down to do needlework and patchwork. The men would embroider pillowcases and other articles with love messages to their sweethearts at home. The native is socially inclined. He loves conversation and gatherings, he enjoys gaiety and fun, concerts and dances, singing, sports and boxing.

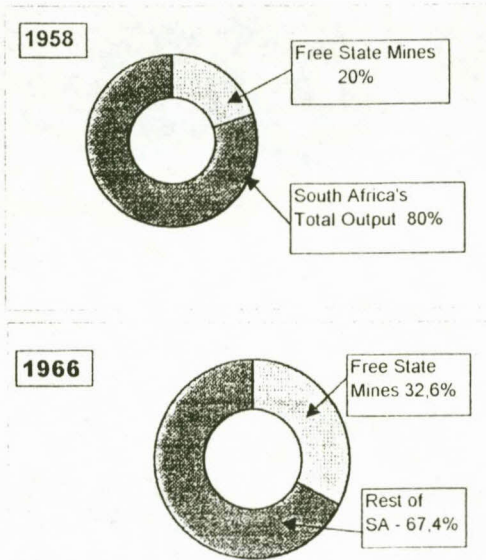
⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁷³ As early as 1905 hammers were replaced with mechanic drills with which two men could produce as much as 12. In 1930 locomotives were used instead of rope haulages. Mechanical scrapers, loaders and cactus grabbers were largely responsible for production increases in the 1950's.

⁷⁴ Innes, D., Anglo: Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa, p. 151.

as time went on, the machinery introduced tended to be biased towards saving black labour more than white."⁷⁵ Black mine workers were now introduced to more skilled work, without being compensated by an increase in wages.

On the production front this had certain implications. More tons of ore could be produced on a daily basis. In 1969, whereas a gold mine employed on average 14% fewer black workers than in 1936, it produced an average of 109% more.⁷⁶ By 1966 the Free State produced 32,6% of the country's gold as the following table indicates:



SOURCE: WELKOM, THE TREASURE HOUSE OF THE FREE STATE

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Financially, mechanization also had an effect as it increased expenditure. Between 1945 and 1960, costs rose by 12.3%.⁷⁷

Further improvements were the use of longer drill bits and 2 decades later the change from drilling at right angles to drilling at an angle of 70 degrees combined with the sequential blasting of the different charges so that they reinforced each other and broke more ground.

The Free State Goldfields soon paid dividends. In 1954 the production figures for South Africa were:

- 11 920 919 ounces of gold from the Witwatersrand
- 184 586 ounces from the other mines in the Transvaal
- 1 122 606 ounces from the Free State goldfields

In 1958 the figures for the Free State goldfields had risen to 4 432 773 ounces of a total South African production of 17 656 447 ounces.⁷⁸

By 1957 there were 6 gold mines in operation around Welkom employing 4 400 Europeans and 34 000 natives. No fewer than 27 shafts had been sunk to a depth of over 22 miles. Many records were established in the process and over 430 miles of underground tunnelling was done. "In this way the magic that is gold has transformed a former marginal agricultural region with a small population into a modern mining district of pulsating activity."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 152.

⁷⁸ Jessup, E., p. 308.

⁷⁹ Welkom: Treasure House of the Free State, p. 52.

4.4 THE COMPOSITION OF THE WORK FORCE ON THE FREE STATE MINES, THEIR RECRUITMENT AND GENERAL WAY OF LIFE.

The manpower to develop the new mines of the Free State came from all over Southern Africa, they came voluntarily, travelling by aeroplane, train or bus to come to the mines. On arrival many were under-nourished from lack of a proper diet due to ignorance and poverty. Some of them had not had the common childhood diseases and second to respiratory disease, the largest loss of shifts was at times attributed to mumps, measles and chicken pox.⁸⁰ The men knew little about what they should do and what was expected from them, while their employers wanted them to become efficient as soon as possible. Production had to start with the minimum delay, and as in the early mines, "Production" was the motto of the mines. All new arrivals underwent a medical examination at the recruitment centre where they lived and were recruited. For this examination they had to strip naked. The humiliation of standing naked in front of other men is questioned by historians such as D.M. Moodie, as only the heartbeat of the worker was examined.⁸¹ This conflicted with the culture of the black man in which a circumcised male is not allowed to strip before an uncircumcised one. After the men had passed the medical examination they were transported on a crowded train to Welkom, via Hennenman. Here they were met by tribal representatives whose duty it was to see that the new miners arrived safely at the mines. They were brought to the dining room for a meal. From where they were taken to the Native Administration Officer where they were reminded of the duration of their contract, their pay and what amount would be deducted from their wages if they failed to be productive. All the men accepted were vaccinated immediately after arrival. If they originally came from a suspect yellow fever area, they received the appropriate injections.

⁸⁰ Mining Survey, Vol 13 no 1, p. 21.

⁸¹ Moodie, D.M., Mine Culture and Miners' Identity, p. 190.

Central receiving areas were established in Johannesburg and Welkom. Here the men were given a second medical examination which included an X-ray.

They were accommodated in large compounds or hostels. The rooms were better designed than the older hostels on the Rand had been and they were adequately ventilated. Their food was cooked in a central kitchen and their diet was balanced and contained over 4 000 calories per person per day.⁸² A balanced diet was and still is very important, as most workers arrived in a state of vitamin deficiency and easily fell prey to diseases such as pellagra or scurvy.

After arriving at the mine where they were going to be employed, a medical officer yet again examined the worker according to physical appearance and to determine which kind of work he should be assigned to. A worker's chest was X-rayed on arrival. This procedure was repeated at six-month intervals. A large percentage of the labourers who arrived at the mine had had no previous industrial experience. Those who had previously worked on the mines, lost some of their earlier knowledge so every worker also had to undergo an aptitude test. This ensured that he would be placed in a job for which he had some natural ability.

This benefited the worker as well as the employer. "This increases interest in his work and reduces both frustration and proneness to accidents. The employer on the other hand, is assured a more rapid training and more efficient production."⁸³

This aptitude test involved the following:

- a mechanical sorting test.
- a disc sorting test.
- a cube construction test.
- a tripod assembly act.

About 70 % of the workers tested were subsequently classified as non-mechanical, before being employed underground as unskilled labourers. They did the shovelling and pushed the trucks. The remaining 30% were given mechanical jobs

⁸² ibid., p. 21.

⁸³ ibid., p. 21.

such as pipe and track-laying or winch and locomotive driving. The latter was also tested for leadership qualities.⁸⁴ Training centres were constructed on the surface which were exact replicas of underground stopes and tunnels. Here the men were instructed in the job they would actually perform on the mine. They learnt how to use the various implements and tools, and were taught about safety and protective wear. All through their training, personal hygiene and safety and accident prevention were emphasized.⁸⁵ Visual material was also used as part of training. It took about a week to test the worker, do the surface training and teach him some "Fanakalo".⁸⁶

The workers then had to go through an acclimatisation period. The workers had to work for 6 consecutive days in a cooler stope, followed by another 6 days in a much warmer stope. This took place under the supervision of specially trained personnel. Their temperatures were taken frequently to seek out those who were intolerant to heat. After the acclimatisation period the workers were considered fit for work anywhere on the mine.

Their recreation also received attention. Soccer was a favourite pastime with the mine workers and matches attracted thousands of spectators. Tribal dancing was also very popular and facilities for games such as skittles and "mrabaraba" were provided. The mines sometimes had free film shows for their workers. These pastimes are still practised today. Today most compounds also have a school room where workers are given literacy classes. They are taught to read and write in their own language and basic mathematics. Although they were taught basic language and mathematical skills, they were still not allowed to learn the skills of mining. The Colour-bar still existed and under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956, the Minister of Labour still had the authority to reserve any job for any

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

⁸⁵ Every worker on the mine is also taught how to do first aid.

⁸⁶ Fanakalo is a language that developed on the mines to help bridge the communication gap between Afrikaans, English, and other black languages so that the black worker could more easily understand his orders.

particular race. Black workers were still barred from enrolling as apprentices and gaining skills. The skilled trade unions did not allow Africans to become members. The gold mines still prohibited black trade unions.

Some of the early Witwatersrand mines had been exhausted by the time the Free State Goldfields were discovered so that most of the European and African workers could be absorbed by the new gold mines.

Of all the migrants working in the Free State Goldfields, those from Lesotho were the most fortunate as they could sometimes return home over weekends.⁸⁷ Those who were unable to return home, sent money and some workers never went home between contracts.⁸⁸

Some of these workers have been coming back to the mines of the Rand Mines group for spells of work for their entire working lives. Sometimes, they would bring their sons and grandsons along to learn basic mining skills.

The old customs of the black mineworkers on the Free State goldfields had not changed much over the years. Tribal ties were still strong and the men still returned to their kraals to plough and plant their crops. The time soon came when they had to go back to "eGoli" to earn some cash. Many of the old hands constantly returned to the mines they knew. Gold watches and cash grants were awarded to 488 of the black workers of Rand Mines workers for 25 years of service in 1965.⁸⁹ This is all the more impressive when it is borne in mind that it takes a migrant worker at least 40 years to establish a record of 25 years' continuous employment.

Rand Mines have been endeavouring to improve the conditions in which black mine workers live and work. The improvements made include smaller dormitories and hostels which aim to provide more comfortable accommodation. More white and black employers have been assigned to ensure that the men are well-fed and contented

⁸⁷ About half of the labour force of the Free State goldfields came from Lesotho.

⁸⁸ Moodie, D.M., p. 190.

⁸⁹ Carwright, A.P., p. 314.

The black officials employed on these mines were very conscientious in carrying out their duties. In most of the group's mines, every mine overseer has a black personnel officer assisting him. It is this person's job to take responsibility for the welfare of the men during their working hours underground.

The recreational facilities have also been extended and beer gardens have been established where the men can drink without fear of being assaulted or robbed as was the case when they went in search of liquor. The mines also have their own football grounds on which soccer, and sometimes rugby, is played. The traditional recreation of the black mine workers is dancing, football, athletics and skittles. Tribal dancing is still a favourite pastime and the mines have their own dance arenas. A.P. Cartwright writes, "The men's pride in the performance of their own teams, their intense interest in the technique and the energy they put into their own dancing, suggest that this pastime will never die."⁹⁰

4.5 HARMONY GOLD MINE

Before the Harmony Gold Mine was established, there were certain complicated dealings and negotiations to be completed. Central Mining had failed to obtain options to the south of Odendaalsrus and by this time it had become clear that their options to the east of Odendaalsrus were valueless.

At the same time there were three companies engaged in drilling in the Virginia area: the Anglo-Transvaal Company, with the financial assistance of the Kennecott Corporation, the Selection Trust and the New Consolidated Free State Exploration Company.

Anglo-Transvaal drilled in the area of the Sand River, near the railway halt called Virginia and found payable gold. The best results came from a borehole on the farm "Harmony", to the north of the Anglo-Transvaal option areas. At the time, the farm was under the options of the Union Free State Coal and Gold Mines Ltd, a

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 315.

company controlled by two well-known figures in South African Mining, Erleigh and Milne.⁹¹

Anglo-Vaal was anxious to include the farm "Harmony" in the lease areas for which they intended to apply. The situation was further complicated by the fact that Erleigh and Milne had broken away from the company and were awaiting trial involving infringements of the Companies Act. Brig. Ralph Stokes was sent to Johannesburg with the instruction, "We want a Free State Mine".⁹²

Erleigh and Milne found themselves in the extraordinary position in which they theoretically controlled a company that had mining rights which both the Corner House and Anglo-Transvaal wanted, while on the other hand their books were being examined and their business suspended.⁹³

The negotiations with Erleigh and Milne lasted several weeks and a figure was reached at which Union Free State Coal and Gold could be taken over. The eyebrows of the directors in London were raised when they heard that the price they would be required to pay for "Harmony" was 1 650 000 pounds.⁹⁴ Gordon Richdale persuaded his chairman, Lord Baillieu, to buy "Harmony". The company was to spend 25 million pounds before Harmony Gold Mine was eventually brought to full production.⁹⁵ It was prepared to take the gamble and in 1949 the company Central Mining Free State Areas was formed. The company also acquired a 10 % interest in the farm "La Riviera", the farm adjoining "Harmony".

Four new boreholes were sunk on "Harmony" and, to the great relief of Richdale, Stokes, Lawrence and Frams, who had shouldered the responsibility for this expensive purchase, they proved almost beyond doubt that the new mine contained

⁹¹ Cartwright, A.P., p. 286.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁹³ It was estimated that the options on the farm "Harmony" was worth one million pounds.

⁹⁴ Before World War II the cost of equipping a mine on the Witwatersrand was in the neighbourhood of 3 million pounds. In 1950 it was estimated that the cost of equipping a standard Free State mine was between 7 and 8 million pounds.

⁹⁵ Macnab, R., Gold: Their Touchstone, p. 186.

large ore reserves. On August 25, 1950 Harmony Gold Mining Company was incorporated in the Union of South Africa under the Companies Act of 1926, and amended, as a public company, with a nominal capital of 5 000 pounds, divided into 20 000 shares of 5s each. Following receipt by the Union Free State Coal and Gold Mines Limited of notification that the Honourable Minister of Mines had consented to the granting of the Harmony Mining Lease, an extraordinary general meeting of the company was held on the 6 October 1950. The authorized capital of the company was increased to 3 million pounds with the creation of 11 980 000 new shares of 5s each and the directors were authorized to issue 7 980 000 of the new shares of 5s each in order to provide 2 million pounds. This was to be the initial issued capital of the company in terms of the Flotation Agreement.⁹⁶ With regard to its "human" capital it was spelt out in the Memorandum of Association of the mine under no 3 (ee) that the mine intended to, "establish and support or aid in the establishment and support of associations, institutions, clubs, hospitals, funds, trusts and conveniences calculated to benefit the company or any of the officers or ex-officers or employees or ex-employees of the company, or any other persons who are rendering or have rendered services to the company, or any of the dependents or connection of such persons, and to grant to any such persons, dependents or connections, pensions, gratuities and allowances, and to make payments towards insurance thereof respectively, and generally to make donations, subscribe or guarantee money to or from charitable or benevolent objects or to or for any exhibition or to or for any public, general or useful object."⁹⁷

At first, it was one of the most expensive gold mines ever launched in South Africa, but after it had begun production in 1954 its working profit was 3 million pounds a year.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Harmony Gold Mine Prospectus, 1950.

⁹⁷ Memorandum of Association of Harmony Gold Mine, p. 17.

⁹⁸ Cartwright, A.P., p. 289.

"All in all, therefore, the acquisition of the Harmony mine was an operation carried out almost exactly in the terms of Baileu's prescription for mining enterprise: "great courage, with the right mixture of luck and administrative capacity."⁹⁹

The mine started production in 1954. This example was soon followed by three other mines, viz. Saaiplaas, Merriespruit and Virginia.¹⁰⁰ The uranium plant was completed 9 months later. During 1955 the then world tunneling record was broken by the crew driving the connecting cross-cut between the ventilation shaft and No.3 shaft.¹⁰¹

In 1958 the first skip of ore was hoisted from the main loading station at a depth of 5 500 feet. The sulphuric acid plant was commissioned in September 1959. Harmony became the first mine in the gold industry to reach 1 000 000 accident-free shifts. This feat was achieved in 1960.

The Basal Reef, the only reef exploited by the mine, is found at a depth of 4 500 feet. Two hoisting shafts served the underground workings and had a combined hoisting capacity of 380 000 tons a month. The ventilation shaft was another record as it was the biggest in the world. The ore from both original shafts was treated at a central crushing and extracting plant with gold, uranium and pyrite being extracted. The pyrite was processed to yield sulphuric acid for use in the uranium extraction plant. The two uranium plants at Virginia and Harmony began their operations in 1955. The Harmony uranium plant went into production in March, 1955 and in 1960 produced 464 tons of uranium oxide.¹⁰² Harmony mine also had a separate contract with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Board, so the mine also bought uranium from other mines.

Harmony Gold Mine had to be built up in an area of mealie fields with a very sparse population, poor non-existent roads, no railways, remote from large cities and with neither a white nor a black labour source available. The field is situated 200

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 289.

¹⁰⁰ Harmony Gold Mine was the 7th mine in the Goldfields to start production.

¹⁰¹ The Gold Mines of the Free State, p. 41.

¹⁰² The Gold Mines in the Free State, p. 24.

kilometres from Johannesburg and 130 kilometres from Bloemfontein. Materials had to be manhandled over rough roads and sometimes left without shelter. An entirely new labour structure had to be planned, a new standard of housing had to be set and other amenities supplied in order to attract workers. At the same time expenditure had to be kept within reasonable limits.

Underground water presented a major problem to the mining engineers in the Free State. To aggravate matters, the water contained a high proportion of dissolved salts, of which up to 90% was sodium chloride.¹⁰³ The erosion of plant and underground equipment was severe. Today, galvanized equipment and stainless steel are used and other equipment is given a strong coat of paint or some other protective coat to safeguard it from being eroded.

Harmony introduced a new pumping system to get the surplus underground water out. Tragically, the Merriespruit mine had been flooded in 1956 by a water inrush of 6-7 million gallons a day. Virginia and Harmony mines both installed a pumping facility with a pumping strength of 20 million gallons of water a day.¹⁰⁴ The disposal of the underground water presented a further problem. The water was too brackish for disposal into the local river and solar evaporation from dams and paddy fields had to be used.

Due to the wet conditions and the high rock temperatures, ventilation was a matter of high priority to the mines. One of the largest fan installations in the world was installed at Harmony. This would help to prevent heat stroke.

Another major problem was a financial one. The Free State mines were developed during a time when world-wide inflation increased.¹⁰⁵ This implied that money could not be easily obtained. European and British companies, as these were preoccupied with their own post-war economic recovery. Large sums had to be

¹⁰³ Water that contains Sodium chloride has the same properties as sea water. It leads to severe erosion of plant and underground equipment.

¹⁰⁴ Gold Mines in the Free State, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory, T., p. 566.

raised from inside South Africa and the De Beers Diamond Company had made a substantial contribution.

The most practical and urgent problem for the new mines was that vast supplies of labour were needed to get production started. Just like the older mines on the Rand, the new mine needed vast amounts of capital and a continuous and stable labour supply. Harmony, and the other Free State mine, had the advantage that recruiting operations had already been established, laws to regulate labour had already been implemented and some of the growing pains of the mining industry had already been solved by the mines on the Rand.

In December 1961, Rand Mines formed the Virginia-Merriespruit Investment Company, a consortium in which it was the principal shareholder to take over the interests of the Kennecott Corporation of America in the Virginia and Merriespruit mines.¹⁰⁶ The inrush of water which had flooded the Merriespruit Mine earlier had forced it to close down.

The Kennecott Corporation, displeased with the results of its massive investment in these mines, decided to cut its losses and withdraw the support it had given the Merriespruit and Virginia companies. Rand Mines led the way in forming the consortium, which paid R7 million for Kennecott and then rationalized the operations of the two mines.

By the end of 1964, the Merriespruit mine had been pumped dry and re-equipped at a cost of some R1,1 million. The joint Harmony-Merriespruit-Virginia venture was showing a substantial return. At the annual meeting of Rand Mines in 1965, Mr Engelhard was able to announce that the venture had returned the R7 million it had paid Kennecott for the company's interests and made a profit.¹⁰⁷ As early as in 1960 Harmony Gold Mine established a club for its white employees. It had 904 male

¹⁰⁶ The intimate relationship between politics and the economy is underlined by the fact that the Kennecott Corporation wanted out after the incident in Sharville in 1960. They sold their interest at a loss of approximately 10 million pounds. Sunday Times, 22.1.1961.

¹⁰⁷ Cartwright, A.P., p. 336.

and 544 female members. The club house had a huge hall with a stage where concerts could be held. It also had two lounges, a library, pool room and a cafeteria.¹⁰⁸ The first cricket match was played on the mine grounds on 16 November 1957. Other sports facilities catered for included two rugby fields, a 6-hole golf course, 4 tennis courts, a swimming pool, two bowls courts, a hockey field and a soccer field. The club also had indoor facilities for badminton, squash and boxing.¹⁰⁹

In the early 1970s Harmony was merged with the Anglovaal Mines, Merriespruit and Virginia to form the Harmony Gold Mine with a lease area of 993 367 ha.¹¹⁰ The original three mines were managed as separate business units, each consisting of 2 to 3 production shaft units with only essential or specialized services provided centrally.¹¹¹ The mine employed 11 000 white and black workers.¹¹²

In the 1980s Harmony owned 2 800 housing units for its white workers. The mine's black labour force was housed in 7 hostels. During the 1985-1986 financial year, the mine spent R16 million on hostel extensions in order to improve the quality of life of its workers. Additional hostels for black workers were constructed in an effort to reduce room density.¹¹³

Harmony mine claims to have one of the best training centres in the mining industry. In 1985, more than R7 million was spent on training. Videos are used in the training of the workers. The programmes are made in a well-equipped film studio on the mine premises and are of a high quality. Mr Eick, a former mine manager says in this regard, "We spend a lot of money on training in order to train

¹⁰⁸ Virginia Nuus, Oktober, 1960. Die Volksblad, 1955.09.17.

¹⁰⁹ Virginia Nuus, Oktober, 1960.

¹¹⁰ In 1980 the electricity bill of the mine was R1,6 million a month, which is more than a city like Bloemfontein uses.

¹¹¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1995.

¹¹² The Gold Mines of the Free State, p. 41.

¹¹³ SA Mining World, January 1986, p. 36.

and develop our people. I think that our productivity is partially due to the effort we put into training."¹¹⁴

The mine also provides for the families of its workers. There are three nursery schools and three primary school for black children, which care for about 780 pupils.

In 1985 the mine had over a thousand blacks participating in the mine's literacy training programmes. In the same year Harmony mine started a computerized labour control system, the EXTAS system which replaced the mine's clock card system. This computer system stores the complete history of every employee and makes it easier to forecast labour strength.

Since the company's inception up to December 1992 the company has:

- milled 186 million tons of ore
- produced 1 060 796 kg of gold with an average recovery grade
- of 5,702
- produced 12 482 192 kg of uranium
- produced 2 315 340 tons of sulphuric acid
- developed 1 329 000 metres underground.¹¹⁵

In 1995 the mine had a labour force of 15 000 employees with membership in the following bargaining units: NUM 77%, Associations 6% and Council of Mining Unions 4 %. The remaining 13% of the workers contribute to a collective bargaining fund which is administered jointly by management and NUM, and for all purposes of collective bargaining fall under the NUM banner.

Accommodation is provided for the employees in 1 700 houses and 6 hostels within the suburbs of Virginia and Meloding. The mine's infrastructure comprises of 7 production shafts, 6 hostels, 3 metallurgic plants, surface workshops, stores, a main office complex, a recreational club, and a recently renovated private hospital which caters for private and medical aid patients.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

¹¹⁵ Harmony and Its People, 1995, p. 1.

Harmony is currently listed on the Johannesburg, London, Paris, Antwerp and Brussels Stock Exchanges with 35 million authorized and 28,6 million issued shares.¹¹⁶

The mining leases of the Harmony Gold Mine covers 9938 hectares. The company is the registered owner of 1761 stands in the town of Virginia, which amounts to approximately 2 000 housing units.¹¹⁷

For the further purposes of this thesis, Harmony Gold Mine will be used as an example in the discussion of any improvement in wages, living and working conditions for black labourers and labour relations. Here follows a map of the mine and its different reefs under development:



116

Ibid.

117

Harmony Gold Mining Company Limited, p. 1.

CHAPTER 5 - A SHORT HISTORY OF LABOUR RELATIONS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS AND A HISTORY OF LABOUR RELATIONS AT HARMONY GOLD MINE.

The transformation of the black gold mine worker took place mainly on the labour front. Initially he was transformed as a labourer on the gold mines of South Africa, and in the process also transformed on a social and personal level. The dependence of South Africa's economy on the labour of the black man assisted the latter in his efforts to take up his rightful place in society. The collective bargaining power of the black labourers from the 1970s did much to speed up the transformation process. Better wages and the relaxation of the colour-bar transformed the black miner into a skilled, career miner who extended the period of his contract and returned home only for short periods. The black gold mine-worker was given more permanent status. This transformation on the labour front, did not come about spontaneously. Like the early prospecting of gold in the Free State, it was a history of hardship and disappointment. Black trade unionism has a history of hardship and struggle.

To a large extent, South Africa's labour relations have, their roots in the mining industry. The mining industry set the pace with regard to labour legislation, the colour-bar, trade unionism, and general labour practice. The mining industry was a trendsetter when it came to labour practice and regulations. It was the first major industry in South Africa in which blacks and whites worked side by side. It had to establish a wage structure and other fringe benefits for its workers, which were often adopted by other industries and improved upon. The mining industry provided the blue print for the labour front.

By 1970 the racial hierarchy in the labour market had changed but little. White supervisors still maintained their privileges and dominant positions, while unskilled

black labourers remained subordinate to them. In the 1970s there were many indicators that things were about to change.

- Firstly, the fixed gold price was abolished, this led to a steep increase in the gold price, followed by unstable gold markets.
- Secondly, internal disapproval about working and living conditions gave rise to violence and production disruptions.
- Thirdly, the country was experiencing large labour shortages, resulting from political developments in neighbouring countries.
- Fourthly, there were dramatic increases in the wages of black workers.
- Fifthly, there was a dramatic change in the migration patterns. A temporary work force was giving way to a tendency to have a more permanent labour force.
- Finally, the government was forced to admit that dramatic changes would have to be made to accommodate the needs of black workers.

Negotiations about wages and working conditions were a novelty to the African worker. Before the 1970s trade unions with African members were excluded from any participation in such matters. The black workers entered this new era as inexperienced novices. Novices with no organizational or practical experience, or past structures which they could rely on and without experienced, competent leadership figures. It was a case of trial and error.

Elsewhere in the economy, in the beginning of the 1960s, white labour shortages created demands for a more skilled, better educated black labour force. This had led to a gradual erosion in the colour-bar in the manufacturing industry. Sometimes after informal agreements between employers and their white workers, blacks were allowed into a specified number of reserved jobs in return for better wages. On the mines, however, the colour-bar survived virtually intact. The mines were the initiators of the colour-bar and white miners defended it. Yet, the mines could no longer keep isolating themselves from other labour trends in the South African economy. S. Bendix writes about the years leading up to 1970, "The years 1950 to 1970 saw a shift on the South African labour scene from a time of heightened action

by unions across the colour and political spectrum in the 1930s and 1940s to a phase of relative, perhaps imposed, peace. It also marked a greater polarisation between workers of different races and the virtual disappearance of the black labour movement."¹

Mining companies were in competition with farmers for labour. Due to growing capital intensity, technical innovations and consolidation of farm units, farmers began to make increased use of a smaller, semi-skilled labour force and drew their seasonal labourers from the homelands. Mines were prevented by law from recruiting from farming areas and only black farm workers with written permission from their landlords could proceed to the mines. In 1974 the Chamber of Mines requested the government to abolish its farm labour policies.

African trade unions came into existence after an upsurge of strikes and militancy in the various sectors of the economy in the early 1970s, which threatened to undermine the government, which reacted by appointing the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Inquiry. Prof. Nic Wiehahn headed a commission of inquiry into industrial relations, which spent two years hearing evidence from a wide spectrum of opinions about ways in which the country's labour laws should be amended. Two years later the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act was accepted. "The major impact of this Act and subsequent amendments was that it no longer excluded Black workers from the definition of employee, thereby granting all South African employees equal rights in the industrial relations sphere."²

The report of the Wiehahn Commission consisted of six parts. The first dealt mainly with labour relations and the previous Industrial Conciliation Act. The second addressed the problems of training and manpower utilization, while parts three and

¹ Bendix, S., Industrial Relations in South Africa, p. 299.; Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 257.;

Brown, G., Hard Labour, p. 2.

² Bendix, S., p. 285.; Liebenberg, I., (ed), a.o., The Long March, The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa, p. 232.

four dealt with job and social security, health and safety issues and conditions of employment.³ These were the problems that mostly concerned the black workers. Many of the recommendations of the Commission were accepted and in due course implemented by the government. The legislation that followed would bring about the most radical changes in labour relations. The most important recommendations were that:

- full freedom of association be granted to all employees, regardless of race, sex or creed
- trade unions, irrespective of composition in terms of colour race or sex, be allowed to register
- stricter criteria be adopted for trade union registration
- a system of financial inspection of trade unions be introduced
- prohibitions on political activity by unions be extended
- liaison committees be renamed as work councils
- where no industrial council had jurisdiction, work councils and workers' committees be granted full collective bargaining rights
- statutory job reservation be phased out
- safeguards be introduced to protect minorities previously protected by job reservation
- the Industrial Tribunal be replaced by the Industrial Court.⁴

The first two recommendations were the most revolutionary. The granting of trade union rights to black workers would give them access to the collective bargaining process.⁵

³ Bendix, S., p. 303.; Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., (ed), South Africa in the 20th Century, p. 496.

⁴ Ibid., p. 303.

⁵ The government was very persistent that it should only include blacks who were permanent residents in urban areas. The government also proposed that unions should be fined R500 for each migrant or commuter who was a member of a union. The reaction to this proposal was so severe that it was dropped.

Ncube mentions that the Wiehahn Commission was regarded as a milestone in South Africa's labour history. It heralded an era of labour reform which moved away from the traditional practice of racial segregation to an integrated, unitary labour relations system.⁶

The Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act of 1979 thus introduced a new era in South African labour relations. Some amendments were made to the act and by 1983 the most important changes were:

- the term "employee" had been redefined to include all persons working for an employer
- previous provisions for racially mixed unions to have separate branches and all-white executives had been withdrawn
- the provision for ministerial approval prior to the registration of mixed unions had been cancelled
- unions were more expressly prohibited from influencing members in order to assist the activities of a political party
- the job reservation clause had been repealed
- provision had been made for the establishment of the Industrial Court and the Manpower Commission⁷

G. Brown comments, "After many years of a labour policy designed to keep blacks out of the "white" economy Wiehahn was going into reverse and sketching a set of policies aimed at speedily drawing blacks back into the economy."⁸ Mr Arrie Paulus of the white Mine Workers' Union said that it was the greatest betrayal of the white worker since 1922.⁹

The road had been opened to organizational activity, mergers and alliances amongst the fledgling black trade unions and worker resistance groups. Similarly,

⁶ Ncube, D., Black Trade Unions in South Africa, p. 117.

⁷ Bendix, S., p. 303.

⁸ Brown, G., Hard Labour: A Political Survey of Labour Relations in South Africa since 1979, p. 2.

⁹ Lipton, M., Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1984, p. 204.

white management went scurrying to seminars and meetings to analyse and determine how the changes would manifest themselves in the workplace and what policies and procedures would be required to control, direct and cope with them.

A second commission of inquiry headed by dr Piet Riekert was set up to investigate the restrictive effect of various apartheid laws on the utilisation of black labour. In 1978 he recommended that the control on African residents inside the borders of South Africa be relaxed and that they should be allowed greater freedom of movement.¹⁰ The government did make some changes under the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, but actions against illegal workers were still taken and employers who took on illegal workers, were still fined. Moreover, his report also led to the abolition of the dreaded pass laws in 1986.¹¹

From 1977 until 1980 a large number of workers turned up at mining recruiting offices countrywide. These included retrenched workers from other sectors, experienced mineworkers, blacklisted workers and a large number of school dropouts without other prospects. They would bring a new vigour to the struggle for black trade unions.¹²

Registering African trade unions were compelled to submit their constitutions and financial records to the registrar and were prohibited from affiliating with political parties. Once they became official, African trade unions lost no time in determining minimum wages, working conditions and machinery for settling disputes. Employers and employees were now negotiating about the terms by means of the Industrial Council.

The State's new urban labour policies further hastened the process of integrating the black man into the South African economy. Migrant workers were now able to move their families to townships and squatter camps closer to the mines.

¹⁰ Bekker, S., Humphries, R., From Control to Confusion: The Changing Role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983, p. 25.

¹¹ Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., (ed), p. 471.

¹² Bendix, S., p. 304.

The government came to realize the inevitability of the black urban resident. This led to the concession of long leases and home purchase arrangements in the townships. Due to the lack of providing housing for black urban residence, the government was faced with a dilemma of severe housing shortages. This did not keep the black urban dwellers from putting up shacks in squatter camps around urban centres and taking their - very modest - place in South African urban society.

5.1 BLACK TRADE UNIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of black trade unions goes back as far as the turn of the century. It is one of hardships and many obstacles which had to be overcome in the process. Liebenberg argues, "White capitalism was beginning to grow. However, the working class was very small and fragmented. Most workers still had strong links with the land and often only spent a few months of the year working in the new cities. It took a long time before black unions organised themselves into strong black trade unions."¹³

Since the establishment of the gold mining industry in South Africa, the mines had dealt very strictly with any strike activity. In the early years of the industry it was decided that no worker could be signed on unless his discharge papers had been examined. If the reason for his dismissal was strike action, he could only be reappointed at the mine where he was discharged from. Managers were asked, moreover, to submit lists of names of men considered undesirable on mines. Non-strikers were always rewarded with a day's pay and a new contract.¹⁴ Walshe agrees when he says that the black labourer had entered the socio-economic arena as early as the 1920s, but had encountered considerable resistance.¹⁵

¹³ Liebenberg, I., (ed), a.o., p. 1.

¹⁴ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue 1892-1992, p. 23.

¹⁵ Walshe, P., The Rise of African Nationalism, p. 192.

Already in the 1920s the Industrial Workers Union (ICU) had as many as 100 000 members.¹⁶ The union received its first big impetus when 8 000 non-white Cape Town dockworkers and railwaymen staged a successful strike for pay increases. During the 1920s the organization was weakened by internal differences and by 1931 it was a thing of the past.¹⁷ During the Second World War, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions had 119 trade unions affiliated with a combined membership of 158 000. The Smuts government did consider a limited form of union recognition for blacks during the Second World War, but the Chamber of Mines sided with those in government who rejected the idea. Draft legislation to allow black trade unions did not become law.

After the mineworkers strike in 1946, which involved 70 000 workers, and industrial militancy, there followed a period of severe repression of black trade unions.¹⁸ This had much to do with the election of the National Party into power in 1948.

"It was a coercive and repressive labour system in that the rights of African workers regarding conditions of employment, housing, accommodation, collective organizing and trade unionism were circumscribed, even suppressed, by corporate management or the state and frequently by both."¹⁹

Workers still flocked to the cities, but to seek non-mining employment. Competition for labour was intensified after the Second World War with the expansion of secondary industries.²⁰ White farmers were likewise competing for the cheap labour of the black worker. It was only by the mid-1950's that the South African workers

¹⁶ The ICU was established in 1919 and achieved reasonable success with mass mobilisation under the leadership of Clements Kadalie and George Champion. In the 1920s the ICU was gradually weakened by internal differences. Maylam, P., A History of the African People of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to the 1970's, 158.; McClellan, G.S., Southern Africa, p. 172.; Horrell, M., South Africa's Workers: Their Organizations and the Patterns of Employment, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁸ McClellan, G.S., Southern Africa, p. 172.

¹⁹ Green, T., The New World of Gold, p. 4.

²⁰ The industrial labour force grew from 55 638 in 1933 to 433 056 in 1955.

Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labour Empire, p. 63.

were returning to the mines in great numbers. This resulted in a labour surplus by 1959.

In 1953 the Labour Relations Regulation Act created separate means of dealing with industrial relations of black workers in the form of workers' committees. In 1955 the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was established after the white-dominated Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) excluded Africans from membership. It was a characteristic of African trade unions in South Africa that they were a broad movement with national liberation in mind. On this account, they were severely restricted. Their leaders and activists were detained, banned and harassed. From the 1960s they were forced to operate underground.²¹

The black labourers' status had changed but little. They produced more gold, but were not rewarded accordingly. In 1968 the number of black mine labourers stood at 368 000, the same number as in 1941, yet their output had more than doubled. The higher grade ore in the new mines of the Free State contributed to the figure, but mechanization, more efficient management and better training of the work force also played a role.²² However, all the gains were shared by the mining companies, shareholders, the government and the white miners.

Dr A.J. Norval, a former chairman of the Board of Trade and Industries, estimated in 1960 that by replacing 70% of the white labour force with black workers, the mining industry would save R30 million a year.²³ That was the economic reality. The government, the mining companies, the black workers were all aware of it.

Anglo American was the mining company which pressed for higher wages for its black employees. G. Lanning comments, "But Anglo's pressure for higher black wages reflects not so much political liberalism as good economics."²⁴

²¹ In 1963 there were only 13 African trade unions with a membership of 16 000.

²² Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 162.

²³ The Star, 22.11.1968.

²⁴ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., p. 162.

The 1970s represented a turning point for black trade unions in South Africa. There were several indications that the labour framework was about to change. There was a tremendous shift towards domestic labour.²⁵ In the 1960s, unexpected events forced the mining industry to adopt a system of domesticated labour. The newly independent Tanzania and Zambia disengaged from the migrant labour system. In 1974, after an air disaster that killed 70 miners, the government of Malawi ordered the return of 20 000 miners.²⁶ When Mozambique became independent its numbers of South African employed dropped from 114 385 in January 1976 to 48 565 in December 1976.²⁷ In 1974 black miners from Lesotho became violent when they heard that the Lesotho government planned to delay passing on their pay. Riots broke out in hostels and attacks on tribal enemies resulted in 100 deaths. Dogs were used to control the workers and hostels were monitored by helicopter. Thousands of Lesotho workers were repatriated.²⁸

Mr A.C. Peterson, chairman of Harmony Gold Mine writes in the annual report about these factors influencing the flocking of foreign migrants to the mines, "Although the initial drop in production will be inevitable, I believe that the industry has the resources and ability to overcome this labour shortage by further mechanization and changed work patterns that will result in better utilization of the labour available. Amongst other things, this will require additional training and changed attitudes amongst both workers and supervisors."²⁹

²⁵ Developments in Malawi and Mozambique, the two major external supplying states, created uncertainty in the migrant labour system. Members of the Chamber of Mines at the time believed that had Lesotho also withdrawn its labour, the gold mines would have come to a complete standstill. They felt that the industry was too dependent on foreign workers and decided to turn to domestic labour instead.

²⁶ In the 1960s the newly independent Tanzania and Zambia gave notice. Tanzania recalled all of its 14 000 workers and by 1966 they had all left. Zambia's 6 000 miners were recalled in 1965 and by 1968 they had all gone.

²⁷ First, R., The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant, p. 58.

²⁸ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 245.

²⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

Who was going to fill the gap left by these foreign migrants? Hocking writes, "The answer was to step up recruiting at home."³⁰

On the local front, recession rural impoverishment and mass retrenchment in other sectors meant that the mines could now compete for labour at home. The proportion of foreign:domestic labour had been reversed from 70:30 to 40:60.³¹

The relatively peaceful stage on the black labour front between 1950 and 1970 was over. The black worker was no longer willing to accept his backward status in industry.

The militancy of the 1970s commenced in Natal. In 1973 an estimated 61 000 black workers came out on strike over a short period of time. The strike started at Coronation Brickworks, spreading to the textile and other industries and to the Durban municipality. The Durban strikes of 1973, which were followed by mine unrest at Carltonville were indications of future events.³² Bendix argues, "The 1973 strikes added impetus to the reawakened black worker consciousness."³³

J. Crush agrees, "As the geographical composition of the work force shifted in the 1970s towards domestic labour, the mining compounds and hostels exploded."³⁴

The moment more black South African workers were employed on the mines, the situation became more militant. Why? These workers were also affected by the politics of their country of birth. They were not merely working in the country on a temporary basis. They were South African citizens, ready to claim their rightful place in society.

It was a time of industrial militancy and vigorous re-organization by black trade unions. Employers tended to blame age-old ethnic rivalries and political agitators for the situation, while the workers blamed low wages and living and working

³⁰ Hocking, A., p. 245.

³¹ Crush, J., a.o., p. 22.

³² Friedman, S., Building Tomorrow Today: African Workers in Trade Unions, 1970-1984, p. 37.; Barker, F.S., The South African Labour Market, p. 4.

³³ Bendix, S., p. 301.

³⁴ Friedman, S., p. 24.

conditions. By the mid-1970s, the unrest among black workers had mounted to such an extent that an adjustment had to be made on the labour front.

The government reacted to the militancy by passing the 1973 Black Labour Relations Regulation Act. This sought to improve the communication between employers and their black employees on a committee basis. "By 1976 it had become obvious that the provisions of the Black Labour Relations Regulation Act of 1973 had not solved the problem of black worker militancy."³⁵ The internal turmoil was aggravated by the fact that the outside world was also pressuring the government. "Also, South Africa's major trading partners had, partly because of representations made to overseas bodies by local unions and partly because of the 1976 riots, become more aware of the position of the black worker."³⁶

In April 1979, 12 trade unions formed the non-racial Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). This organization became the largest union federation within 2 years with a membership of 95 000 in 387 factories.³⁷

By 1980 another federation of trade unions, the black conscious supporting Council of Unions in South Africa (CUSA) was launched with 9 affiliating unions and a membership of 30 000.³⁸ CUSA took the lead in organizing the mineworkers and launched the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in 1982, masterminded by a black lawyer turned activist, Cyril Ramaphosa.³⁹

³⁵ Bendix, S., p. 302.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 302. International criticism was brought to a head by a book by F. Wilson, "Labour in the South African Gold Mines" which appeared in 1972 and stated that the wages for the black workers remained low.

³⁷ Bendix, S., p. 301.

³⁸ Reese, K., Industrial Relations in Southern African Perspective, p. 12.; Finemore, M., van der Merwe, R., Introduction to Industrial Relations in South Africa, p. 119.

³⁹ Hocking, A., p. 282.

The Chamber of Mines declared a policy for handling the emergence of black trade unions. A union's constitution first had to be approved before it could be granted access to the mines under conditions prescribed by each mining group. When it had signed on about 40% of an employee category, it could ask for formal recognition.⁴⁰ By the end of 1981, the independent trade unions had a total membership of at least 200 000. In 1985, the largest federation of independent trade unions was established when COSATU came into being with a membership of 500 000. In 1986, a smaller federation, the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU) was established with a membership of 169 000. This federation rejected COSATU's non-racial approach. As was expected the black trade unions movement grew rapidly. According to the department of manpower in 1987, black trade union members numbered 835 122.⁴¹

During the 1980s, strikes became an everyday occurrence in the labour market, together with go-slows and sit-ins. "The demands of labour and the broader political struggle have of necessity become linked"⁴² Minister Buthelezi of KwaZulu said, "The only non-violent weapons for blacks are strikes and consumer boycotts - the first because blacks comprise 71% of South Africa's work force, the second because their growing spending power makes business increasingly vulnerable."⁴³

⁴⁰ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 94.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 306.

⁴² Bendix, S., p. 285.

⁴³ Optima, March 1982, p. 154.

The following table indicates the number of strikes since 1982 and the man days and income lost on their account:

	Strikes	Workers Involved	Mandays Lost	Wages lost
1982	394	141 571	365 337	R4 544 362
1983	336	64 469	124 596	R1 679 610
1984	469	181 942	379 712	R5 174 798
1985	389	239 816	678 273	R8 184 985
1986	793	424 340	1 308 958	R23 166 278
1987	1 148	591 421	5 825 231	R14 058 102
1988	1 025	161 679	914 388	R23 879 287
1989	942	197 504	1 511 499	n/a
1990	855	341 097	2 729 844	n/a
1991	600	172 096	1 339 333	n/a

SOURCE: RACE RELATIONS SURVEY, 1992/93, p. 376.

Ethnically, the picture looked as follows:

	Black Workers	Asian Workers	Coloured Workers	White Workers
1982	112 481	1 170	17 920	0
1983	61 331	1 712	1 415	0
1984	174 897	1 725	5 304	11
1985	225 045	1 879	12 883	16
1986	400 775	1 366	13 944	255
1987	572 706	2 266	16 359	90
1988	138 653	6 308	16 573	145
1989	163 757	6 605	25 969	1 446
1990	292 480	9 098	36 530	2 989

SOURCE: RACE RELATIONS SURVEY 1992/93, p. 376.

In 1986, a State of Emergency declared by the government, hit the unions hard, as it hampered their operations. In 1988 the two major federations of black trade unions were forced to set aside their differences and fight the government's new labour proposals, which included a bill that posed the biggest threat to organized labour. It allowed employers to sue unions for loss of profit resulting from industrial action and it also imposed restrictions on strike action. After two years, the government was forced to amend the bill. This was a victory for black trade unions. By this time the country was swept by a wave of violence. From September 1984 to May 1990, more than 4 500 people were killed and 12 000 injured in 52 000 incidents of violence.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Van Vuuren, D.J.(ed), South Africa in the Nineties, p. 3.

The black worker was knocking on the door of political and economic equality and the door was being opened too slowly for his liking.

The black trade unions had a difficult struggle ahead of them. Why was this the case, since they had such a vast number of supporters?

Firstly, black labour movement leaders neglected the ideals of their black workers, in favour of broader political ideas. Because they had such impressive numbers, they did not look at the individual worker, but pursued a national agenda. Their leaders also lacked the necessary experience and knowledge as this was an area quite new to them. Some of the members started out very enthusiastically, but once their demands were not met, their enthusiasm dwindled. In general, they did not want to accept the expertise of the white man, and some trade unions were exclusive to black workers. The officials of the trade unions were paid large salaries by the union, which soon led to corruption. The practical problems of organizing meetings, such as obtaining suitable venues and handing out pamphlets often got the better of trade union organization.⁴⁵

5.2 THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK MINERS' RIGHTS

The South African gold mining industry strongly opposed black trade unionism and collective bargaining right from the start. The industry consistently refused to recognize workers' rights and institute the necessary mechanisms for negotiations. At the same time, the mines were not willing to lose any man-hours because of labour disputes.

The first recorded strike of black gold mine-workers, having taken place in 1896, in reaction to a decision by mine managers to reduce wages, had been followed by more strikes after the Anglo-Boer War and by other protest actions, such as boycotts at some mines, desertion and non-co-operation.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Bendix, S., p. 297.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

After the black mine-workers' strike of 1913, a number of improvements were introduced in the mining compounds, but protest still continued. As prices rose in relation to wages, the discontent was not confined to the mining industry alone and the Industrial Workers of Africa was formed in 1918 - the first union for black workers.⁴⁷ A massive strike by black gold mine-workers in 1920 led to the tightening of the pass laws and the curtailment of black mine-worker resistance for some time to come. In the meantime, the functions of the IWA were taken over by the Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa(ICU). The years between the two world wars were relatively quiet on the black trade union front.

When the war-time government of Smuts in the 1940s was considering a limited form of trade union recognition for blacks, the Chamber of Mines rejected the idea. During the Second World War, when there was an increase in trade union activity, the Chamber of Mines reacted by closing the hostels and compounds to union organizers. The compound or hostel system had the advantage that the mine managers could regulate and restrict movement to and from the areas, making it practically impossible for the emerging black trade unions to operate.

The National Party Government of 1948 appointed the Botha Commission to investigate existing labour legislation.⁴⁸ Some of the recommendations of the Botha Commission were passed in 1953 in the Bantu Labour(Settlement of Disputes) Act, later known as the Black Labour Relations Regulation Act.⁴⁹ This act made

⁴⁷ The IWA worked closely with the Transvaal Native Congress and the African People's Organization to initiate the mineworkers' boycott of compound shops in 1918. The organisation campaigned for the "shilling-a-day" campaign on behalf of the all black workers. Prime Minister Louis Botha, agreed to look into the complaints of the workers, but not much came of this promise. The IWA also took action against the pass laws.

⁴⁸ The Commission argued that if parity representation was granted to black employees in the industrial situation, it would lead to equality between races. This would put white supremacy at stake. The Commission did recommend that separate bargaining bodies should be established for blacks, but it stressed that recognition of black trade unions should be subject to stringent conditions and that strike action should be outlawed.

⁴⁹ Bendix, S., p. 297.

provision for workers' committees for black employees. The blacks were appointed by the Minister of Labour in the hope that black trade unions would die a natural death.⁵⁰

Under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956 the Minister of Labour had the power to reserve any job or class of jobs for members of any race.⁵¹ Black people were not allowed to enroll as apprentices and were thus prevented from acquiring any skills. Consequently the skilled trade unions did not admit blacks as members and only some of the semi-skilled unions allowed mixed membership. Under the Industrial Conciliation Act, mixed unions were prohibited and an amendment to this act limited the activities of the existing ones by compelling them to organize separate branches, hold separate meetings and elect whites only to their executive committees.

In the mining industry, the only way by means of which workers could view their grievances was the induna system. As the indunas were often appointed by management, they were not always regarded by the workers as their spokesperson. Through the compound system, management retained a tight control over their workers and they made it inaccessible to political activists and union leaders.

In the twenty years following the Second World War, the mine-workers were very quiet on account of the manifold restrictions imposed by the National Party government. Protests by labourers were sporadic, disorganized and short-lived.⁵²

By 1968 the situation in the labour market was as follows:

- 89 white trade unions with a membership of 279 000
- 37 Coloured and Asian unions with a membership of 40 000
- 46 mixed unions with a membership of 166 000, of which more than 50% was Coloured or Asian.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

⁵¹ Horrell, M., p. 16.

⁵² Crush, J., a.o., p. 178.

⁵³ Marquard, L., *The People's and Politics of South Africa*, p. 132.

The Mine-workers Union did, however, continue its activities in the years following the Second World War. It was clear that the main cause of the strike in 1922 had not been eradicated. The black mine-workers were in favour of easing up on the underground colour-bar so that blacks could perform some of the traditionally white work underground.⁵⁴ This would imply being paid better wages, moreover.

A further retarding factor to trade unionism on the mines was that a large percentage of the workers did not come from within the borders of South Africa and they were not influenced by the political situation to a large extent.

From 1970 onwards, the mine's labour system entered a new phase. The mine's black labour force was still overwhelmingly migrant and the compound system still existed.

The South African government still preferred "commuter migrancy", which involved having workers travelling on a daily or weekly basis to a home base within travelling distance from their place of employment in preference to a more permanent work force. The industry began to invest heavily in the upgrading of compounds and providing additional facilities. The quality of life on the mines undoubtedly began to improve, even though workers still condemned the system. Production changes underground had been slow, despite large investments by the mining houses in the field of research and development. The racial situation also remained the same, with the white supervisors maintaining their privileges while the black workers still lacked any rights and privileges. This was about to change.

During the 1970s, the mines experienced frequent outbreaks of violence, including damaging of mining property and violence between the different ethnic groups. This occurred at a time when black trade union movement was growing rapidly, particularly in the manufacturing industry. Mine management realized that workers were no longer content to keep quiet about their grievances and ambitions. The mines attempted to establish better communication frameworks with their workers at ground level. Hocking writes, "Many mine managers would have welcomed the

⁵⁴ Du Toit, M.A., South African Trade Unions, p. 7.

chance to hire their black workers long-term, just as happened with whites. But the law ruled that out."⁵⁵

In 1975, the Chamber of Mines Research Division did extensive interviews with mine-workers to try to understand their motives and behaviour or protest. In 1976, the Chamber defined its goals as reducing wastage and labour turnover rates, encouraging career miners, the introduction of standard service guarantees⁵⁶ and an adjustment of foreign recruitment rates to reduce seasonal fluctuations.⁵⁷ The longer stay at the mines and the shorter break periods also reduced training costs. Mr A.C. Peterson, chairman, writes, "The recognition and development of the strong common interest which should exist between management and labour have been a high priority at Harmony during the past year. A workers' forum has been established at the mine to improve communication. Matters such as a reduction in job categories and multi-skilling are currently being considered."⁵⁸

The government was beginning to realize that in a thoroughly integrated economy where blacks make up over 90% of the work force in industry and agriculture, the idea of not recognizing their rights could be no more than a grand illusion.⁵⁹

The gold price having improved remarkably after the fixed price of gold was abandoned in 1972, made higher wages for black workers possible. Between 1972 and 1980 wages for black workers were increased by 320%. They were increased

⁵⁵ Hocking, A., p. 246.

⁵⁶ The mines introduced a stabilization bonus for workers in more skilled positions who returned to a mine on a date specified by management. To further encourage workers to reduce their period at home, a Re-Employment Guarantee and Early Return Bonus Certificate was issued after at least 9 months' service. This would guarantee a worker that he would return to the same mine, to the same job at the same rate of pay if he returned within 6 months of discharge. If he returned within 3 months he also qualified for an early return cash bonus. Taylor, J., "The Pattern and Consequences of Declining Migrant Labour Recruitment in Botswana", p. 12.

⁵⁷ TEBA, Five Year Plan, 1978-1983.

⁵⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

⁵⁹ Robertson, I.,(ed), Whitten, P., Race and Politics in South Africa, p. 96.

by a further 60% from 1980 until 1987, so more workers from the homelands wanted to return to the mines.⁶⁰

The improved gold price, moreover, contributed to the fact that more funds became available for research and development on the mines. Drills, cooling, air-conditioning, stope-support systems and underground refrigeration could now be improved, which led to improved working conditions for miners.

The higher gold price also enabled mines to mine the poorer-grade ore and still make a profit. This lengthened the life span of some of the poorer mines. Crush remarks, "Dying mines surviving on state subsidies sprang back to life, others re-opened abandoned shafts and drives. Mining groups that had been declining suddenly found their marginal mines revitalized. Even minute traces of gold left in the disfiguring mine dumps of the Witwatersrand, could now be profitably extracted."⁶¹ This led to employment opportunities since additional workers were required.

The task of the black mine workers' union was not an easy one. The mines still relied heavily on migrancy, so there was a constant flow of workers to and from the mines. Their contracts varied from 9 months to 2 years, a factor which did not favour trade unionism.

Another factor which made things difficult for the mine workers' union was the fact that there were 35 gold mines spread but over several hundred kilometres, which made it difficult to keep a strike going. The mine security was also well-armed with tear gas, plastic bullets and dogs.

In September 1973, 7 000 black mine-workers protested at Anglo's Western Deep Mine near Carltonville. The police opened fire and 11 mine-workers were killed while 26 were injured.⁶² Anglo American reacted to the wave of unrest by raising

⁶⁰ In 1970 a black worker earned R16 a month, while a white mine worker earned R337 per month. The White:African ratio was 22:1. During the 1980s the ratio was 5:1.

⁶¹ Crush, J., a.o., p. 16.

⁶² Ibid., p. 141.

wages, scrapping the old system of "boss boys" and replacing it with the two-way communication of work committees, sports facilities were provided and a big investment was made in improving the existing hostels. These improvements failed to put an end to unrest on the mines and the government set up a commission of inquiry into the riots on the mines.

"At the centre of its analysis was the conclusion that the migratory labour system, one of the bastions of apartheid, was the main cause of the riots. But it went on to say that it is a system which had been in existence for at least 75 years and, at this juncture, there does not appear to be any practical alternative."⁶³

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) took root among the work force and grew rapidly in membership and strength. Wage bargaining replaced wage-fixing and in general black workers became more aware of their rights and power, especially if they were to be unified. A fertile field for protest was further enhanced by the more permanent status of the black gold mine worker. They longer he stayed, the more unbearable the compounds, alcoholism, sexual disease and his abnormal lifestyle became. It made the workers far more responsive to the appeals of unionists for improving their lifestyle. "Unbroken mine work proved to be a fertile environment for union organizers."⁶⁴ Mine management could no longer delay looking into improving living conditions and in establishing an industrial relations strategy.

A factor that did not favour the mine-workers' trade union was the flooded labour market. When workers went on strike, government and the mining houses reacted by dismissing workers who were deeply involved and merely replaced them with other workers.⁶⁵ Though mines were affected by the strikes, they had little trouble in replacing the workers with others from the homelands and even from neighbouring

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁶⁴ Crush, J., a.o., p. 152.

⁶⁵ During the 1987 mining strikes the TEBA offices in the recruiting areas were crowded with workers who could replace those involved in strike action.

countries. These replacements were not NUM members, which negatively affected the activities of NUM.

In 1982, after several years of hesitation, most of the mining groups permitted the new trade unions to organize on their premises. Hocking wrote about the president of NUM, Cyril Ramaphosa, "Where possible Ramaphosa turned managers into allies. Some managers liked him on sight and before long were on first-name terms. Other kept him at arm's length."⁶⁶ Jack Steyn, a mine manager writes in 1982, "It would be an naïve observer indeed, who expected only good to flow from the new moves which allow black mine-workers to organise - and a confirmed pessimist who expected it to be all bad. There will certainly be problems to start with, and inevitably a certain amount of shows of power. Would it not be better to acknowledge the circumstances, and accept them in good grace, than to cause antagonism by resisting the change?"⁶⁷

In June 1983, NUM smelled victory when they succeeded in negotiating wage increases for 6 000 of their employees on 41 gold mines, truly a first and a milestone for NUM.⁶⁸ In the same year the Chamber of Mines allowed NUM to elect shaft stewards.

In the Association of Mine Managers report of 1983 it is argued that, "Because these unions represent black workers who have long been denied statutory collective bargaining rights, it is not surprising that they have differing needs and priorities from those of the established unions and associations representing white workers. Managers are going to have to get used to previously undefined items on the negotiation agenda, as well as to demands for a share in decision-making on many issues which have traditionally been their preserve."⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Hocking, A., p. 282.

⁶⁷ Association of Mine Managers report of 1982.

⁶⁸ James, W.G., Our Precious Metal. African Labour in South Africa's Gold Industry, 1970-1990, p. 22.

⁶⁹ Association of Mine Managers report of 1983.

After the 1987 mine-workers strikes, management dismissed 50 000 workers and selectively hired non-union members.⁷⁰ With a new computerized labour structure it was easier for mine management to regulate and control its work force.⁷¹ In cases of violence and strikes, it was easier to select the agitators and dismiss them. This had a devastating effect of the efforts of NUM which they had to re-organize as workers were afraid of losing their only potential source of income. J. Crush writes, "For the workers there was more safety in numbers, however, which is one reason why NUM became so important to them. In the old days, disgruntled miners voted with their feet, not many could afford the luxury."⁷² Most of them had nowhere else to go as their agricultural activities were non-existent. Cyril Ramaphosa, the general secretary of NUM, commented after the union had called off the strike, that he had known how tough the companies could be, but that he had still under-estimated them.⁷³

W.G. James remarks, "Indeed, by the late 1980s the union lost the recognition it had earlier gained in a number of job groups and at a number of mines."⁷⁴

Most of the mines also kept 4 months of ore reserves on surface. In case of strike activity they were able to keep up some level of gold output even if underground work were completely halted. This favoured the mining houses.

By 1980, the mining industry was faced with a crisis: there was severe pressure to improve the wages of black miners, cost-inflation had a tremendous effect on profits and there was a decline in the gold reserves.⁷⁵ Bill Jamieson wrote in his book about the Oppenheimer Empire, "A central concern of Anglo American in

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

⁷¹ In the early 1980s the Chamber of Mines began to computerize migrancy. Terminals were installed at all TEBA offices and they were all connected to a central data base in Johannesburg. The information installed on the computer included the physical features of the worker, mine behaviour, work history and educational qualifications. It made it much easier for the mines to identify undesirable elements and dismiss them.

⁷² Crush, J., a.o., p. 161.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 161.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁵ Jamieson, B., Goldstrike! The Oppenheimer Empire in Crises, p. 27.

recent years had been to close the wage gap between black and white miners."⁷⁶ The working cost per kilogram of gold produced by the Chamber of Mines between 1984 and 1988 rose by 126%.⁷⁷ Gold production on South African mines was declining. In 1984 the country was producing 683 tons of gold, but by 1988 this amount had dropped to 619 tons. The majority of South African mines were middle-aged and their reserves were being depleted at a rate faster than that at which new discoveries were made. Moreover, the mining industry was facing an uncertain and violent political horizon. As T. Green puts it, "Thus the development of NUM is inextricably mixed with the political future of South Africa."⁷⁸

NUM certainly re-awakened the political aspirations of black people in South Africa. Winnie Mandela told mine-workers after the deaths of their colleagues in the Kinross disaster, "You hold the key to our liberation. The moment you stop digging gold and diamonds, that is the moment you will be free."⁷⁹ T. Green comments, "Inevitably NUM has become a conduit for black political aspirations, "⁸⁰ This illustrates the fact that politics and economics cannot be separated. Movements on the labour front were bound to have an effect on political aspirations. Black workers did not have a political party which took care of their political aspirations. Hocking writes, "As often as not, the strikes were political. With their party leaders banned, blacks lacked regular channels for expressing themselves and the new trade union was made to fill a gap."⁸¹ The role was fulfilled by the black trade unions with their political agendas. The new political awakening was not confined to the mining industry. D. Pallister agrees, "Industrial unrest among Blacks in all sectors of the economy began to take on a more acute political edge in the early 1970s."⁸²

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

⁷⁸ Green, T., p. 21.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸¹ Hocking, A., p. 290.

⁸² Pallister, D. a.o., South Africa Inc., p. 141.

The black mine worker in South Africa was becoming increasingly aware of the important part he played in the mining industry. He was aware of the better gold price and the fact that the industry was largely dependent on him. He wanted that recognition from the mining houses and the government and demanded to play a part in management. He no longer wished to play a passive role.

The unrest on the mines continued. Riots broke out at the Pres. Steyn mine in the Free State over meat rations. More than 1 000 mine-workers burned down 3 dining rooms, a liquor store and 3 change rooms. Fourteen miners were injured and 23 arrested. The damage done was estimated at R1 million. The next morning the morning shift refused to go down. Management reacted by giving the miners a choice, they could either go down or their contracts would be terminated and they would have to go back to the homelands. Of the 7 000 workers at no.4 shaft hostel, 640 cancelled their contracts and returned home.⁸³

In May 1978 a large number of workers refused to go underground because their complaints about bonuses and overtime had not been dealt with.

In March 1979, workers at Western Deep Levels complained about their wages and living conditions. They also complained that they had to wait at cages to go underground and about the fact that at times they missed their meals.⁸⁴

Working on a gold mine in South Africa had always been unpopular with blacks. The low wages, in comparison with other industries, the dangerous working conditions and bad living conditions had contributed to the fact. The temporary status of workers on the mines had also contributed to discontent and violence.

The unrest on the mines in the 1970s and the Soweto unrest of 1976 gave new impetus to the black trade union movement.⁸⁵ Black trade unions had a history of

⁸³ Mc Namara, K., Black Worker Conflicts on South African Gold Mines: 1973-1982 p. 367.

⁸⁴ In the 1970s, 423 workers were injured during strike action at Anglo American mines, 68 were killed in clashes with the police and security forces. Deaths from accidents in the mines were still approximately 600 a year.

⁸⁵ On June 16, 1976 riots broke out in the black township of Soweto and the enormous loss of life which resulted, was an indication of the dissatisfaction of the black people

militancy going back half a century. The same problems still prevailed and black workers still possessed no rights.

Before NUM was recognized, workers' protest on the mines could be divided into three categories:

- conflict arising from tensions between migrants from different countries, because of the different employment contracts.
- conflict between the different groups or faction-fighting.
- protest about low wages, working and living conditions.⁸⁶

In 1982, after another upsurge of black violence on several mines, the Chamber of Mines announced its intention to allow black miners to organize themselves into unions. Some mines even gave the trade unions offices on mine premises to organize from.⁸⁷ By 1982 the majority of mining groups permitted NUM to operate on mine premises.

Although many changes were introduced in health, living conditions and even wages in the 1980s, the mining industry rarely negotiated any of them with the workers themselves. It consistently refused to recognize popular worker leaders or to provide credible institutional mechanisms for real negotiations.⁸⁸

The early success of NUM lay precisely in its ability to utilise the compound system to its own benefit. "Paradoxically the new-found power of African mine-workers was rooted in the mine compounds. Although NUM leaders objected to the mine

with their political situation. Some of the reasons for the riots were the Afrikaans language issue in black schools, the government's indifference to warnings that an explosive situation was developing and the political powerlessness, economic backwardness and social insecurity of blacks. Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, J.B., p.462.; Liebenberg, I., (ed), p. 18.

⁸⁶ Mc Namara, K., p. 367. In the 1970s clashes between Sotho and Xhosa workers at Pres. Brand mine near Welkom left 35 workers dead. In 1974, 3 500 Malawians went on strike because of their employment contracts. Between 1972 and 1982, black miners were involved in over 100 strikes about wages, terms of service and working conditions.

⁸⁷ NUM was granted office accommodation on Anglo American mines and had the highest membership on these mines, 111 000.

⁸⁸ Crush, J., a.o., p. 177.

compounds in principle, in practice the leaders used the compound - once union members were granted access to the compounds."⁸⁹

NUM was also favoured by the fact that even though a large percentage of the work force was migrant, a large number of black workers became career miners, who were employed by the mines on a continuous basis. In contrast with the patterns of the past, workers now returned regularly and repeatedly to the same mine, mixing with the same workers and doing the same jobs. They no longer stayed away from the mines for extended periods. They worked for 11 months at the same mine, doing the same job and thus improving their skills and productivity. "As workers began to spend more and more time working in the mines, and less at home, their sensitivity to unacceptable working and living conditions was heightened."⁹⁰

Although workers could endure the grim living conditions for a few months, these became less bearable the longer the workers stayed. The more permanent status of the black mine worker had much to do with his improved living and working conditions. Mine management was acutely aware of the fact that poor living conditions aggravated worker-related grievances and management began to improve compound accommodation. The concrete bunks were replaced by beds and mattresses and serious attention was given to maintain the privacy of workers, and to improve dining and recreational facilities.

Another factor that changed the labour front on the mines, was the abolition of the colour-bar. One of the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission was that the colour-bar be removed, which was done through legislation in 1988.⁹¹ Although the colour-bar had been removed on paper, however, it remained deeply rooted in the hearts of the mine-workers and was not easy to erase in practice.

Until 1988 only Whites could obtain a blasting certificate under the Scheduled Persons Act. This regulation was finally removed. By the end of the 1980s more

⁸⁹ James, W.G., p. 9.

⁹⁰ Crush, J., a.o., p. 195.

⁹¹ Mine Manager's Centenary, Special Supplement to SA Mining World, October, 1992, p. 103.

than a 100 black workers were employed as supervisory miners with blasting certificates.⁹²

The growth in the membership of NUM surprised management and workers. In 1982 the union had a membership of 14 000. By the end of 1985 this number had increased to 200 000 and a year later it totalled 320 000.⁹³ By 1984 it had reached 18 recognition agreements with mines and this number had risen to 72 by the end of 1986. NUM, under the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa, was slowly becoming more organized and more potent.⁹⁴ The growing strength and political and economical aspirations of this black movement could no longer be ignored by the mining houses. Once they had become aware of their collective strength, they were unstoppable. The old belief that migrant mine-workers would be difficult, if not impossible to organize, was proven wrong when over the next 5 years to 1987 no union in South Africa grew faster than the mine-workers union.

In the past the mining houses had followed the practice of dismissing workers who were involved in strike action, as plenty of substitutes were available. All this changed when NUM had the workers who were dismissed after an official strike at the Marievale mine reinstated on the instruction of the Supreme Court.

Initially NUM concentrated on mining safety.⁹⁵ It held several safety congresses and formed regional and national safety committees. It now frequently happened on the mines that black workers refused to go work in dangerous places. Ramaphosa was also determined to put an end to the migrant labour system and to replace it with a more stable and permanent work force, which had to be better paid and more skilled and would be able to live on the mines with their families. They were opposed to the hostels as a means of housing, as NUM believed this created restlessness and tension. They were also of the opinion that it encouraged tribal

⁹² Ibid., p.187.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 187.

⁹⁴ Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., p. 530.

⁹⁵ It is estimated that from after the Second World War till 1984, 20 000 mineworkers, mostly black, had died in the mines. In 1986 disaster struck at the Kinross Mine in Evander, when 177 miners died and 235 were injured. SA Labour Bulletin, 1986, p.15.

fighting which has cost many lives. NUM also attacked the induna system and pledged for the abolition of the system. These black officials were often the targets of black miners during strike action. NUM also resorted to boycotts of mine stores, bars, taxis and sports facilities to show its discontent.

Initially the organization concentrated on the skilled and clerical black workers, as quick results were needed and these were obtainable in these categories. They also focused on team leaders and skilled machine operators before turning their attention to the unskilled masses with promises of better wages and living and working conditions.

The elections of 1984 led to widespread unrest which attracted international sympathy on an unprecedented scale.⁹⁶ On election day almost 3 million workers stayed home to protest against the lack of representation for black workers.

On 25 June 1985, at the 95th annual congress of the Chamber of Mines, G.Y. Nesbitt comments, "The political environment gives rise to more serious concern. The widespread domestic unrest and violence in recent months would seem to stem from a complex mixture of factors, including genuine frustration, disillusionment and sheer economic hardship among blacks, and in those circumstances deliberate efforts to destabilize the black community and to create a revolutionary climate, find fertile soil."⁹⁷

Another description of the masses of unskilled workers was, "These people are mostly illiterate and uneducated. They are hundreds, if not thousands of miles from home. They are superstitious and fearful. They are a tinderbox waiting only for the appropriate spark to send them into a surging flame of unrest and devastation, spreading even to other mines with consequences too horrific to contemplate."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ The elections took place to choose representatives for the tricameral parliamentary system, that made provisions for the Whites, Indian people and Coloureds, but excluded Blacks. On 3 September, the day that the system came into effect, the black population of the Vaal Triangle erupted into violence. It was to last until 1986. Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., p. 488.

⁹⁷ Mining Survey, June 1985, p. 36.

⁹⁸ Industrial Labour Journal, 1986, p. 379.

Although NUM succeeded in getting mine-workers a 23% wage increase in 1986, they were of the opinion that the gap between the wages of white and black mine-workers was still too big. The organization of the black trade union movement was hampered by consistent police harassment and the arrest of leaders and officials.⁹⁹

In 1985 faction fighting broke out on the mines in the Free State and led to the most serious clashes between workers and the authorities in 10 years. Several workers were killed over a dispute about illegal liquor sales at Western Deep. At Vaal Reefs, 4 team leaders were killed when workers started a boycott. Eventually 43 000 workers were involved in a boycott about the induna system, hostel management and pay for overtime work and work done on Sundays. Workers who continued the boycott were returned to their homelands or neighbouring countries.¹⁰⁰

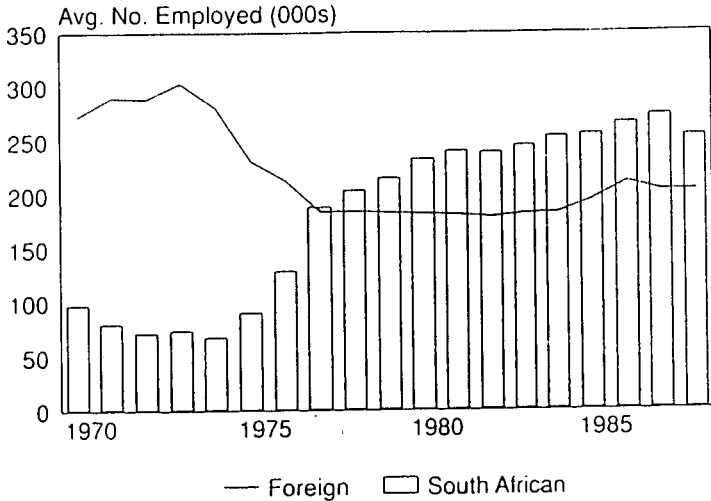
It was only in 1986 that the government acknowledged the futility of its existing controls over black urbanization and abolished influx controls and the pass laws. The government replaced the tight system of control with one of endeavouring to create housing and employment for black people in the urban areas.

The phenomenon of having a larger portion of South African-born workers added to the conflict in the sense that these workers did not only had economical and social motives, but political ones as well. The following table indicates how the work

⁹⁹ Crush, J., a.o., p. 195.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 195.

force of mines that belong to the Chamber of Mines, was getting an increasing domestic flavour:



Source: Data from NRC and TEBA, *Annual Reports*, 1970-1988.

as it appeared in Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire, p. 128.

In 1987 NUM called for an industry-wide strike against wages and working conditions. The movement was also aimed at demonstrating worker support for international economic sanctions against South Africa and to seize control of the national economy. The strike, which lasted for three weeks, was the largest co-ordinated action by black miners since 1946. Approximately 300 000 workers of the gold and coal mining industry were involved. Although the mine-workers' union did not achieve any substantial gains with the strike, it served as a reminder of the collective strength of the union. When one considers that it was 40 years after the massive miners' strike in 1946 and the black mine-workers still had the same grievances, one realizes how slowly their transformation took place. This time the

black mine-workers had a voice in their trade union and were empowered by their unity. They were much better organized and the political climate was about to change.

Nearly 50 000 mine-workers of Anglo American were dismissed during the final days of the strike. Many of these miners were NUM leaders, which was a tremendous step backwards for the union. NUM went to the Industrial Court and succeeded in re-employing many of the dismissed workers and negotiated pay for some of the workers who were fired.¹⁰¹

The mining industry was facing a problem, which was not an engineering, labour, or mechanical problem, but one of a political nature. "How it can assist the process of black empowerment within the group itself if it is to have a future in an internationally acceptable South Africa. How on the one hand, it can help speed up political change at home and, on the other, protect itself against the consequences of that change - one likely to result in a multi-racial state where the principal new actors are committed to socialist solutions and, at best, a limited role for the market economy."¹⁰²

In a document entitled "Life Beyond Gold in the Free State" NUM writes about the 1987 strike, "The National Union of Mineworkers was formed in 1982. After five years of its existence it went into a massive National Strike - 1987. The hostility and brutality with which the strike was confronted by employers, particularly Anglo American, made our union realize that the honeymoon was over. Between 1987 and 1992, 31% of mining jobs were shed."¹⁰³

This has always been one of the major characteristics of the mining industry, its link with the political situation in South Africa. Only now the political situation was facing a drastic change.

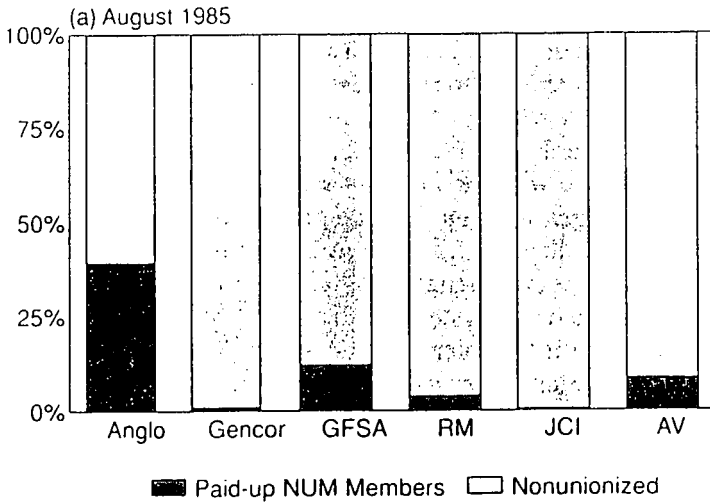
One of the consequences of the strike was that the mining houses drastically curtailed the freedom of access of union organisers to mine property. After the

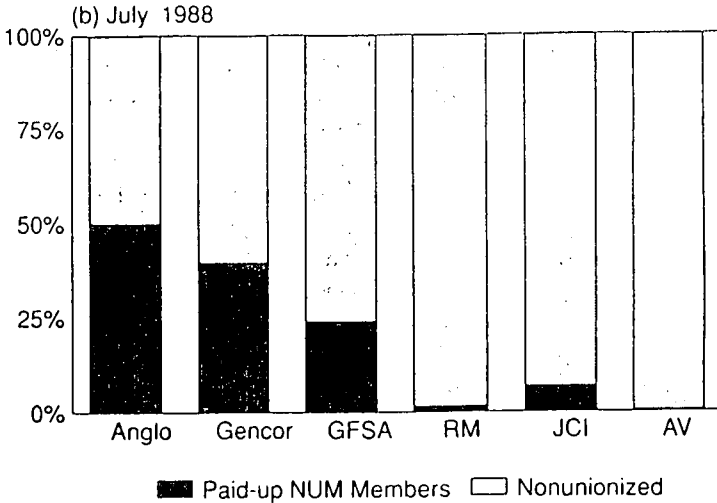
¹⁰¹ The president of NUM, James Mottlatsi, was not re-employed by Anglo American.

¹⁰² Jamieson, B, Goldstrike: The Oppenheimer Empire, p.223.

¹⁰³ NUM, "Life Beyond Gold in the Free State Gold Fields", p. 1.

strike action NUM had to begin a painful process of rebuilding support and confidence. The following table is an indication of the NUM membership per Mining House in August 1985 and in July 1988:





Source: Unpublished Chamber of Mines of South Africa data.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s NUM also began focusing on socio-economic issues such as education, health, safety and AIDS. At their annual conference in May 1992, the president, Mr James Motlatsi proposed that hostels in the mining industry should be diverted into evening colleges where workers would learn to read and write and undertake advanced study.¹⁰⁴ He also predicted that black miners would be involved in managing the industry in a post-apartheid South Africa, but that it could take up to a decade or more to acquire the necessary skills. Previous adult education programmes had not been very successful as miners were

¹⁰⁴ It was estimated in 1992 that 45% of the economically active population was illiterate and 25% semi-literate, leaving a mere 30% fully functional.

too tired to study in the evening so NUM would pressure employers for a few hours paid educational leave a week.¹⁰⁵

At the union's Health and Safety Conference in February 1992 it was announced that it would embark on a campaign to repeal the Occupational Diseases Act in the Mines and Works Act of 1973 and a revision of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1941. NUM objected to racial bias in the occupational diseases act and planned amendments to scrap compensation for TB because of its link with AIDS.¹⁰⁶

Its resolution on accidents called for work stoppages for every death, union representation at inquiries and commemoration services at the workplace during and after working hours, and to mobilize, educate, recruit and agitate the workers. It also resolved that:

- campaigns over dust, noise, chemicals, radiation and racial discrimination at mine hospitals would be planned;
- the training period for underground and surface workers be extended by two weeks;
- repatriation of workers on medical grounds be replaced by the rehabilitation, retraining and employment of disabled or ill mineworkers; and
- COSATU, the ANC and the SACP develop an AIDS policy.¹⁰⁷

In June 1992 NUM and the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa signed a code of conduct aimed at ensuring peace on the mines. This came after a period of continued violence and strike action at mines all across South Africa. The code had taken 4 years to complete. Some of the provisions in the code were already common practice on some mines. The code included:

- the right to picket and to peaceful assembly;
- the right to freedom of association and to human dignity and equality;
- safer mines;
- full disclosure of relevant information;

¹⁰⁵ Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 345.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 345.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 347.

- a positive programme of job and skills development which would redress past imbalances; and
- hostels no longer divided along ethnic lines.¹⁰⁸

The code also provided that workers would be allowed to meet freely, that mines would make meeting places available and that traditional and cultural expression in the form of singing and dancing be allowed. In turn NUM committed itself to ensure that miners would not use derogatory language and behaviour, would not carry weapons and would not wear party-political T-shirts, badges and slogans at the workplace.¹⁰⁹

NUM was becoming more involved at top level in the mining industry. After an agreement with the union, a mining summit was held on June 3, 1991. It was attended by representatives of employers, trade unions in the industry and senior government representatives and was held under the joint auspices of the Chamber and NUM, under the chairmanship of Dr Frederick van Zyl Slabbert.¹¹⁰ The main objective of the summit was the commencement of dialogue which would seek to secure the future long-term viability of the South African mining industry. Matters seeking on-going attention would be:

- co-ordination of mine closures and downgrading of operations;
- prolonging the lives of mines and mining operations as long as possible and the expansion of the mining industry;
- protection of agreed conditions of employment and the maintenance of acceptable standards of health, welfare and safety for employees;
- training and retraining of retrenched miners and assistance to communities affected by mine closures and downscaling in mining operations.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1992.

¹⁰⁹ Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 351.

¹¹⁰ Dr van Zyl Slabbert was the leader of the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) who later became the head of the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA). He made news headlines when he was part of a 50-man delegation who met with ANC leaders in Dakar in Senegal in 1987.

¹¹¹ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1991.

This was very relevant as the gold mining industry at the time was struggling to keep marginal mines open.

Racial discrimination in the gold mining industry was another matter of concern for NUM, which had handed a letter to the president of the Chamber of Mines in June 1990 in which the union alleged racial discrimination on the mines. The Chamber of Mines reacted to the letter in January 1991, accepting a definition of race discrimination as proposed by NUM and affirming its commitment to work towards the elimination of racial discrimination wherever it continued to exist in the mining industry. The Chamber also proposed that each member mine would commence a process, if not already begun, whereby the parties would identify and discuss such discriminatory practices and eliminate them completely. The Chamber of Mines also undertook to establish a joint employer/trade union forum at industry level, in which the remaining discriminatory practices at industry level could be identified and eradicated.¹¹²

NUM also joined in the 1991 work stayaway to protest against the introduction of VAT¹¹³. The union requested that no disciplinary action be taken against members who stayed away from work on 4 and 5 November 1991. The Chamber advised the union that 4 and 5 November would be regarded as normal working days. In the event 82,2% of the work force on the mines worked on 4 November 1991 and 83,8% on November 5.

It was hoped that the black trade union movement would become more responsible and would be absorbed into the established movement. Initially, however, most of the now permitted black trade unions refused to register, either as a matter of principle or because they believed that registration would entail greater governmental control.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Value Added Tax, was initiated in 1991 on any purchase consumers would make.

5.3 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, UNREST AND WORK STOPPAGES AT HARMONY GOLD MINE

The industrial unrest that plagued South Africa in the 1970s was also felt at Harmony. In June 1974 workers were unhappy about the low wages and planned to strike on Monday, June 10. "A full inquiry has revealed that the employees were unhappy that Harmony, which had always been considered a high paying mine, had fallen behind to adjacent mines in this respect."¹¹⁴ It was supposed to be a peaceful strike, but a workers' meeting on the Sunday night, June 9, got out of hand and escalated into a riot. Six black workers were killed and mine property was damaged.¹¹⁵

The chairman, Mr A.C. Peterson, remarks about this incident, "Many lessons have been learnt from these disturbances. Amongst the more important are the need to establish better communication between management and an ever-changing migrant labour force and the need for a common approach to the timing of wage changes by mines in a particular area. The second requirement will be negotiated through the Chamber of Mines of South Africa, but the first will be more difficult. The bulk of the labour force comes from countries other than the Republic of South Africa. Neither the men, nor their governments desire that the employees become permanent residents of this country. Therefore, as long as these men wish to come, and the mining industry has work opportunities to offer them, mine management will be faced with the difficult task of effective communication between itself and a large labour force of short-term workers, speaking a variety of languages, and, because of its migratory nature, lacking effective leadership. No easy solution presents itself and it is very doubtful that the normal white style trade union would operate effectively under these circumstances."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

¹¹⁵ The administration block of the mine and the beer garden at Harmony No 2 hostel was extensively damaged.

¹¹⁶ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

Mr Peterson mentioned to the shareholders that the company was actively pursuing a policy of increasing the training facilities for all its employees and improving the working and living conditions on the mine.

The grievances of the workers were discussed and a substantial wage increase of 50% was granted. Wages were again increased in December 1975.¹¹⁷ This had an immediate effect on the availability of labour to the mines. More workers flocked to the mines, attracted by the better wages.

In 1976 there was a further difference of opinion as to whether to introduce a 5-day-work week on the mines. White unions were still hanging on to the colour-bar to secure their jobs. Mine management advocated that the restrictions on black labour be lifted to enable the latter to reach their full potential and acquire the necessary skills the mines so badly needed. As chairman, Mr Peterson was of the opinion that the artificial restrictions on the use of black labour not only limited the possibility of moving towards the five-day week goal, but also led to a degree of frustration among black workers that further lowered their efficiency and led to the type of unrest plaguing South Africa at the time. He continued that if government legislation and the unions would open the door to the training and employment of all the people of the country, the mining industry would not only be able to move towards a 5-day-week, but the total economy of the country would be so strengthened that the job security and job opportunities for whites, so carefully guarded by certain sections of the community and by legislation, would also improve.¹¹⁸

An agreement was reached between the government, the Chamber of Mines, the Mineworkers' Union and the Officials' Association about the shifts per week. It was agreed that workers would follow a schedule of 11 shifts every fortnight and this was introduced in April 1977. The arrangement applied to all employees with the exception of certain cycle-shift workers and members of the Federation of Mining

¹¹⁷ During this time there was a severe labour shortage on the mines and the wage increase did much to bring workers back to the mines.

¹¹⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1976.

Unions who with the black assistants continued to work a 6-day week. This arrangement negatively affected productivity and eventually led to a 6% drop in overall production.¹¹⁹

Harmony was not isolated from the broader labour spectrum and drastic changes were taking place in the 1970s. It could not ignore the outcome of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions of Inquiry and had to respond to them. The management of Harmony Gold Mine reacted as follows on these Commissions, "The recently published reports of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commission contain recommendations which are far reaching and, when implemented, will clearly go a long way towards eliminating racial discrimination in industry. Legislation which has been enacted in the wake of these reports is tangible proof that the Government has accepted the recommendations of the two commissions. This legislation has been criticized in certain quarters as being both inadequate and incomplete. This criticism may well have been founded on a lack of appreciation of the dilemma confronting the government. It must be realized that the attitudes of certain sectors of the white population to labour relations and indeed all race relations, arise out of the acceptance of a social structure that has remained unchanged for many decades. Changing attitudes are perceived by these people as constituting a threat to society and their security. Forcing change at too rapid a pace will leave certain workers feeling threatened and could promote undesirable counter-productive reactions. In this connection it is certain that political leaders are aware of the necessity to proceed cautiously in changing long established employment practices, but it is hoped that they will continue to make successive alterations to the legislation which will ensure that the required changes are implemented at the earliest date that is attainable in order to avoid significant social unrest developing amongst the unskilled sector of the population."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1977.

¹²⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

The colour-bar was beginning to crack and crumble and this alarmed some white workers and their unions. The continuing unrest and work stoppages were a matter of concern for government and the mining industry as they affected production. The mining industry had been advocating the elimination of restrictions on black manpower for many years, but the industry did not know what the implications would be. They were very open-minded about the situation, realizing that it would not be a smooth process. Mr D.T. Watt addressed the shareholders at Harmony and attempted to ensure them that management would try to avoid any disruption of operations."¹²¹

In the years leading to the 1980s the mine spent much effort, training and negotiations on improving the industrial relations with its employees. Various consultative committees met regularly to determine and analyse employee requirements and grievances. Problem solving became an essential part of industrial relations. Watt comments on these committees, "While such consultative committees may have shortcomings and be criticized by certain commentators, it would appear to be clear insofar as the mining industry is concerned as a major employer of migratory labour, that this committee system will endure for some time as no satisfactory substitute therefore can now be foreseen."¹²²

Management spent a great deal of time and effort on industrial relations, something which had not been done in the past. At Harmony the Barlow Rand Code of Employment was still being implemented and the consultative committees functioned well. These consultative committees were a forerunner to the black trade unions which would soon follow. These committees contributed to the fact that Harmony mine did not have as many labour disturbances and work stoppages as other mines. By the time the black unions became organized and started functioning, mine management had gained a clearer picture of their workers'

¹²¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

¹²² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1981.

grievances and aspirations. The mine also instituted regular quarterly meetings at which progress towards achieving critical objectives was reviewed and monitored.

In 1984 the Briefing Group system was introduced to strengthen management and supervisory communication down the line. Upward communication from the shop floor continued to be evaluated through the Consultative Council system and recently revised grievance procedures. Moreover, in 1984 the disciplinary code for the mine was also revised to ensure fair and consistent discipline at all times. In addition, ongoing attitude monitoring ensured the early detection of any discontent among employees.¹²³

Nine unions seeking to represent the interests of the black and coloured mine-workers were formed. Five of these nine aspirant unions were granted access to hostels at Harmony in 1983. Initially the main purpose at first was the recruitment of members. Two of these, Federated Mining Union and the National Union of Mineworkers, signed recognition agreements with the Chamber of Mines of South Africa in respect of certain specific classes of workers on 7 gold mines.

It must be noted that Harmony could not singly negotiate with these unions as it was the mining industry's policy to centralize all the more important labour negotiations concerning conditions of employment under the Chamber of Mines. All formal recognition agreements with these aspirant unions would be signed by the Chamber of Mines on behalf of the industry.

The awakening of black trade unionism came at a difficult time for the mines. The Rand/Dollar exchange was weak and the gold price fluctuated. Sanctions were making it difficult for the mines to import goods and the mines were enforcing strict discipline to try to keep costs low and productivity high.¹²⁴ The mines were heavily dependent on importing equipment from other countries and sanctions would have a devastating effect. Mines in the Free State, particularly Harmony, extract a very low grade ore and profit margins are low.¹²⁵ If the mine had been forced to close down it

¹²³ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1984.

¹²⁴ Vista, 29.10.1984.

¹²⁵ In 1986 the mine extracted less than 4 grams of gold per ton.

would have meant that more than 30 000 people, including migrants from Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho, would have lost their jobs. It was a difficult time for the mines.

By 1984 there was little discernible black union activity at Harmony Gold Mine and no unions had approached the mine for access to recruit members.¹²⁶ In the rest of the country, however, 27 coal and gold mines, all members of the Chamber of Mines, entered into formal recognition arrangements with emergent black unions for certain categories of employment.

NUM approached Harmony management for access for recruiting purposes in 1985. This was granted on July 3, 1985. The mine still continued its own efforts to improve industrial relations and the consultative council system for black employees was still functioning effectively. Industrial relations training for junior supervisors still progressed. In 1985, 280 black supervisors attended consultative training.

Mine management was apprehensive as to what to expect from the new unions. The chairman of Harmony comments in 1985, "It is to be expected that the growth of emergent unions will follow some form of maturation cycle. Initially there is likely to be "muscle flexing" which hopefully leads to a healthy mutual trust and respect and ultimately, a more business-like relationship. This maturation cycle is, however, being complicated by the expression of black political frustrations at shop floor level. In the absence of credible and effective political structures at a national level the union movement is bound to become the vehicle for the expression of black political power."¹²⁷

The increase in membership of NUM was phenomenal. In 1986 the paid-up membership increased by 43% from 105 000 to just over 150 000 in the 6 months

¹²⁶ In 1984 the country experienced 26 strikes and work stoppages, most of which involved black employees. This compares with 10 strikes in each of the preceding 2 years.

¹²⁷ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1985.

from January to June 1986.¹²⁸ Harmony Mine, which belongs to the Rand Mines Group, was one of the last mines to recognize NUM.

Despite the turbulent period in the gold mining industry, Harmony enjoyed a high degree of peace and stability in industrial relations. This may be attributed to the consistent efforts of the mine's management to promote a climate of open dialogue in the work force.

In 1987 the management of the mine was formally approached by NUM for recognition. In the same year Harmony, together with other mines in the Rand Mines Group, instituted a programme involving all employees to a far greater extent than before in decisions directly affecting them. "It is hoped that this participation by employees in problem solving and decision making will lead to greater job satisfaction and self-actualisation. This in turn should impact positively on the interaction between supervisor and worker, and between the different race groups."¹²⁹

In 1987 wage negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and NUM ended in a dispute and triggered a 3 week strike by a large proportion of the industry's work force. At Harmony a few hundred workers were involved in a sit-in strike, but they returned to work shortly afterwards. An inquiry revealed that workers at No.4 shaft were dissatisfied about their wages. They manifested their discontent by remaining underground. After talks with management, they were persuaded to return to the surface.¹³⁰

During the 1980s a great deal was done to remove the last remnants of job reservation, but it would take a while before people's attitudes would change accordingly. The white workers were feeling insecure about the fact that they would have to compete with black labour on the same level. Racial barriers could not simply be removed overnight and racial incidents still took place.

¹²⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1986.

¹²⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1987.

¹³⁰ Die Volksblad, 27.7.1987.

In 1987 at Harmony Gold Mine such an incident occurred. Approximately 90% of the white workers stayed away from a multi-racial function at the mine, where the mine would receive the millionaire's shield from the Chamber of Mines for its safety achievements.¹³¹ The white workers were requested by mr Arrie Paulus of the white workers' union to boycott the function because of its multi-racial nature. White workers were requested to invite their team leaders to the function. The team leaders attended, but the whites stayed away. Mr Karl Eick, manager of the mine, condemned this action and stated that there would be no place at the mine for white workers who could not work as a team with black workers. He gave a clear message to the white workers that those who did not wish to co-operate would have to find themselves other means of employment.¹³² This incident occurred just a week after the Minister of Economical Affairs and Technology had stated that the government was about to abolish the last remains of job reservation and discrimination in the mining industry.¹³³ Mr Dan Jordaan, section manager, said after the incident, "All people must be treated fairly and with respect. Aims can only be achieved if everybody works together."¹³⁴

In 1990 the number of unskilled and semi-skilled employees joining NUM increased to such an extent that by July this union was officially recognized. During the negotiations with NUM wage increases of between 14 and 17% were granted. Various other employment conditions were also improved.

In the beginning of July 1990, 25 000 black workers from 6 of the 7 shafts at Harmony Gold mine stayed away from work. The reasons for the stay-away were threefold. Firstly, the workers demanded the release of the accused in the murder of mr S Buitendach,¹³⁵ secondly, they insisted that mine management recognize NUM and thirdly they advocated higher wages.

¹³¹ Die Volksblad, 23.2.1987.

¹³² Die Volksblad, 22.6.1987.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Die Volksblad, 4.2.1987.

¹³⁵ Four black workers appeared in court on charges of murdering mr S Buitendach. Mr Buitendach, a senior personnel officer was killed on July 2, 1990 when he

The striking mine-workers gathered on mine dumps and some roads leading to the shafts were closed by the police and the army. Sections of the road between Virginia and Welkom were also closed to protect motorists.¹³⁶ Late in the afternoon workers returned to the hostels.

Two weeks later 3 000 workers of Merriespruit No 3 shaft and a further 3 000 of Harmony No 4 shaft were still on strike. They refused to go underground and demanded a wage increase. A spokesperson for the mine said that though workers had been granted a wage increase of 13,5%, they were not satisfied. The strike was peaceful and mine management was negotiating with workers.¹³⁷ Even if it were a peaceful strike, the mine was negatively affected by it. An underground fire that raged at the time of the strike action, resulted in a loss of 48 000 tons of ore for the month of July.¹³⁸

By the end of August 1990, the No 3 shaft of Harmony Gold Mine was closed after black workers damaged property underground. After being threatened by black workers underground, white workers refused to go underground. When black workers then went underground they damaged property.¹³⁹

In October of the same year 9 workers were killed and 37 injured at Harmony No 2 shaft when fighting broke out between two groups of miners. The fighting started when the 2 groups differed on strike action.¹⁴⁰ A month later Rand Mines announced that it was about to decrease production at 4 of the 7 shafts at Harmony. Moreover, one of the metallurgical plants was to close down, an action which could affect thousands of workers.¹⁴¹ It was speculated that 163 blasting certificate holders, 90 shift bosses and 54 fitters could lose their jobs. In total

investigated an illegal gathering at the mine.

¹³⁶ Vista, 10.7.1990.

¹³⁷ Die Volksblad, 19.7.1990.

¹³⁸ Vista, 24.7.1990.

¹³⁹ Vista, 31.8.1990.

¹⁴⁰ Die Volksblad, 29.10.1990.

¹⁴¹ Die Volksblad, 7.11.1990.

approximately 800 white workers and 8 000 black workers could be fired.¹⁴² This information came at a time when the gold mining industry had endured two difficult years on account of the low gold price and new methods and techniques had to be found to survive. Gold had to be extracted at a higher profit and workers had to become more productive.

According to Mr. S. Mahemu, the branch chairman of NUM at Harmony, Rand Mines was one of the last companies to acknowledge NUM.¹⁴³ He asserts that on other mines NUM started campaigning between the semi-skilled workers, but at Harmony it was the general underground labourers who did much of the campaigning. He continues that these workers were the most militant because of the dangerous working conditions they experienced. They were forbidden to discontinue their work to drink water and eat some food. Workers then approached Saaiplaas Mine, an Anglo American mine, for assistance in helping them change their situation, but NUM at Saaiplaas suggested to them to start their own branch at Harmony.¹⁴⁴

The NUM makes use of shop stewards to deal with the problems of the workers. In 1990 there were 1 000 shop stewards as the mine still had a very large work force of 25 000 people, whereas in 1995 it only had 500 stewards for a work force of 13 000 men.¹⁴⁵

In January 1991, a black worker was killed and 4 were seriously injured when faction fighting broke out at No 2 shaft of Harmony. The fighting broke out when factions attempted to control one of the entrances to the mine. The black worker

¹⁴² Vista, 13.11.1990.

¹⁴³ Mr Mahemu admits that he himself only has a Grade 2 education and that he has only learnt to read and write after becoming involved with NUM. The organization send him on different courses and today he is literate.

¹⁴⁴ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Mr S. Mahemu, branch chairman of NUM, 18.9.1998.

¹⁴⁵ Every group of ten black workers underground appoint a Health and Safety steward and an Industrial Relations steward. These stewards deal with workers' problems and represent the workers. If a worker has a problem, he can go to his shop steward at the shaft offices. There a statement is prepared with the complaint. If the problem cannot be dealt with it is handed over to the full-time shaft stewards. If it is still unsolved it is dealt with by the branch who have their officers at Harmony no. 3 shaft.

was killed with a panga and others were taken to hospital for gun shot wounds. They closed one of the entrances to the mine with wire. A spokesperson for the mines said that the situation was tense but under control.¹⁴⁶

In the beginning of 1991 it was announced that 5 800 black workers were going to be dismissed at Harmony as part of the mine's rationalisation programme. Three hundred skilled workers were also going to be dismissed which brought the total amount of white workers to be fired since October 1990, to 700.¹⁴⁷ Rand Mines announced that it was forced to take these measures since Harmony was no longer profitable. This had serious socio-economical repercussions on the town of Virginia and left the town with more than 600 empty houses.

Rand Mines also closed some of its clubs and restaurants to cut down on expenses. The Harmony Country Club closed down. At head office in Johannesburg a further 500 workers were retrenched.¹⁴⁸

Management was not excluded from these retrenchments. In April 1991 it was announced that 10 senior managers at Harmony were in danger of losing their jobs. The mine was to be divided into two sections and would only need two section managers.¹⁴⁹ The restructuring came as a result of the low gold price, high production costs and complex labour relations.¹⁵⁰

The pattern of wage and salary negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and the various employees organizations in 1991 differed from the pattern previously established. The president of the Chamber of Mines made presentations to all employee organizations prior to the commencement of the wage and salary negotiations in which he highlighted the state of the mining industry as a whole and the gold mining sector in particular. Negotiations with NUM commenced on June 4,

¹⁴⁶ Die Volksblad, 7.1.1991.

¹⁴⁷ Die Volksblad, 8.1.1991.

¹⁴⁸ These retrenchments over the last three years resulted in a cut down of personnel from a work force of 100 000 to 57 000.

¹⁴⁹ In the last 5 years the work force of Harmony was reduced from 34 000 workers to between 18 000 and 19 000.

¹⁵⁰ Vista, 24.1.1992.

1991 and agreement was finally reached on July 31, 1991. The basic wage increase for 1991 was between 5-9%.

Both parties also agreed to increase paid education leave for shaft stewards, to introduce a new method of union membership verification, to introduce a new way of processing stop orders for union dues and to review the facilities for wives visiting their husbands on mines.

New guidelines for governing the role of medical examinations with regard to employment were agreed on as well as guidelines governing worker participation in hostel affairs and access to union officials to mine property.

A further interesting feature of the 1991 wage negotiations was the proposal by NUM of a bonus scheme which would link to a measurable index of employees' collective performance. The proposal was discussed by the Chamber representatives and all recognized trade unions and accepted on October 26, 1991. Included in the scheme were certain principles, e.g., that no employee would be retrenched as a direct result of the scheme, that health and safety would not be jeopardized, that relevant information would be disclosed and that worker participation would be encouraged.¹⁵¹

In the meantime re-organization and survival tactics were still going on at Harmony. These retrenchments and this restructuring had a positive effect on profit margins, but the mine was not yet in the clear. In 1992, Mr Turner of the gold division of Rand Mines said that although the gold price had remained at its current low for 4 years and inflations had increased by 50%, the mines had succeeded in keeping the increase in production costs at 5%. He said that this was also an indication of the extent to which productivity was increased.¹⁵²

The persistently low gold price forced Harmony to retrench again in 1992. It was estimated that the gold price would have to reach 400 dollars per ounce before Harmony would start to make a substantial profit and mining activities could be

¹⁵¹ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1991.

¹⁵² Die Volksblad, 10.4.1992.

expanded. Employees were told that those who were over 50 years old and those who had recently commenced employment on the mine would be the first to lose their jobs.¹⁵³ Harmony, one of the 7 largest mines in the country, was in dire straits after almost 40 years in the industry. Mr Coen Schoonraad of the Mine-workers' Union said that 500 of his union members faced retrenchment and white workers were unhappy because they had been promised job security.¹⁵⁴ The negotiations between mine management and the white union about the retrenchments reached a deadlock and the union applied for a Supreme Court interdict in case workers were retrenched while negotiations were still in process.

Black workers were also unhappy about the retrenchments. Trouble started in June 1992 when more workers were fired than expected. Management announced that unless workers resumed their duties, the remaining 14 000 could also lose their jobs. The general manager, Mr Eick, said that the retrenchments were an indication of the financial chaos in which the mine found itself. Because of the low grade ore and the low gold price the life-span of the mine depended on the productivity of its remaining 14 000 workers.¹⁵⁵

In May 1992 NUM submitted to Rand Mines a detailed memorandum containing a set of tax-neutral proposals it wished to submit to the government to save Harmony Mine. Mr Martin Nicol, the head of NUM's bargaining unit, said that the union did not want limitless state funds to save the mine, but that it wanted assistance for a limited adjustment period. NUM hoped that instead of 8 000 workers losing their jobs immediately, the state would aid a slowing down of this process. Management and the union would then have time to carry out specific tasks such as establishing a retraining programme.

Although a mine operating at a loss did not pay tax, NUM said that its operations benefited the state coffers in the following five respects:

- employees' income taxes

¹⁵³ Vista, 28.4.1992.

¹⁵⁴ Vista, 1.5.1992.

¹⁵⁵ Die Volksblad, 5.6.1992.

- direct taxes such as VAT
- regional services councils' levies on the wage bill
- mining lease taxes
- taxes paid by the mines' suppliers and their employees.¹⁵⁶

NUM's proposal led to a series of meetings between the union and the inter-departmental committee for state assistance to the mining industry, the government mining engineer and the Minister of Mineral and Energy affairs, George Bartlett in June 1992.

Mine management was negotiating a survival plan with NUM. It consisted of an agreement that the annual wage increase would be postponed by three months. In addition, workers would receive a bonus based on their productivity and had to agree to a policy of no strike action.¹⁵⁷

However, in June 1992 a petition was handed in by NUM workers in which they demanded the following:

- a 15% wage increase for 1992
- a holiday allowance of 100% for all workers
- the increase of employer contribution to the Mineworkers' Provident Fund from 5% to 11,75%
- non-members of NUM who share in benefits negotiated by NUM should be obliged to contribute 1% of their basic wage to NUM
- improved compensation for injuries
- medical care for families
- transport, housing, and food allowance for members living in the nearby township of Meloding
- stable jobs and non-retrenchment at all times
- an end to repatriation or dismissal on medical grounds

¹⁵⁶ Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 362.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

The petition was handed to the two section managers of Harmony North, Dan Jordaan and Deon le Roux of Harmony South, before the workers departed in an orderly fashion.¹⁵⁸

The white workers' union also declared that the way in which workers were retrenched was unacceptable to them. They complained about the criteria used for the rationalization. The retrenchment packages of the 6 000 workers amounted to R35,5 million.¹⁵⁹

In the meantime management agreed to accept political stay-aways as a form of legal strike action, while NUM agreed to endeavour to restrict strike action to a minimum. It was the middle of 1992 and time for the annual wage increase. Negotiations were under way with the Chamber of Mines and everything possible was being done to prevent the mine from closing down. Management negotiated low wage increases to assist the mine in the difficult times. Other matters receiving attention were more flexible working practices and the keeping of strike action to a minimum. According to Marcel Golding, secretary of NUM, the management of Harmony offered a wage increase of R25 or between 1 and 4%.¹⁶⁰

At the time of the negotiations the grade of ore extracted at Harmony dropped from 3,40gr to 3,25 gr per ton.¹⁶¹ The total amount of ore extracted underground, dropped from 1,768 million ton to 1,765 million ton. Gold production decreased from 6 012kg of gold to 5 737kg. The total income of Harmony dropped from R208 million to R188 million, while costs increased from R206 million to R235 million.¹⁶²

An agreement was finally reached in August which made provision for a small wage increase, a share in the profits and an agreement that all workers, including

¹⁵⁸ Vista, 26.6.1992.

¹⁵⁹ Die Volksblad, 20.7.1992.

¹⁶⁰ Vista, 8.7.1992.

¹⁶¹ On September 2, 1992 Harmony's shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange also dropped with R2 to R7.

¹⁶² Die Volksblad, 20.7.1992.

non-NUM members, must contribute 1% of their basic wage to NUM.¹⁶³ A wage increase of R30 was granted and the mine had to share 20% of its profit, after expenses were deducted, with its workers.¹⁶⁴

This was a pioneer agreement which made for the first profit-sharing scheme. In turn NUM agreed to minimize the effects of political stay-aways on the mine. The agreement also stated that the introduction of new work practices and new technology would require agreement between the union and management. It required negotiation of enhanced skills training to improve efficiency and formalised the mine's acceptance of an agency shop system.¹⁶⁵

The mine in turn agreed to negotiate, wherever possible, broad-based skills training courses and adult education programmes, paid time off for approved training courses and improved pay for improved skills. The human resources executive of Rand Mines, Richard de Villiers, said that the agreement reflected a constructive attempt by both parties to accommodate each others' interests in the context of securing the mine's survival.¹⁶⁶ NUM commented that it took both parties into areas in which union/management co-operation had never been.

In August, mr Karl Eick said that unless workers and the government agreed to a radical survival plan, the mine would have to close down. The mine had failed to break even in June or July. In addition to this, the gold price had fallen to R929 per ounce in the last week of August, its lowest for many months.

In order to save the mine from bankruptcy and 12 000 workers from losing their jobs, Rand Mines proposed a 7-day work week. This plan involved a proposal to

¹⁶³ According to NUM, 90% of the workers at Harmony Gold Mine were NUM members.

¹⁶⁴ Die Volksblad, 13.8.1992.

¹⁶⁵ In terms of the agency shop agreement non-NUM members would have to contribute 1% of their pay to a collective bargaining fund. Half of this fund would be paid to the union for services provided by the union in negotiations with Harmony management, while the balance would be administered by management to finance the training of shop stewards and meet mediation expenses. This agreement was aimed at eliminating free riders who benefit from union-negotiated deals without paying union dues.

¹⁶⁶ Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 371.

blast underground for 30 days a month which would be in breach of existing mining regulations. These allowed blasting on only 6 days a week and not on Sundays. If workers accepted the plan, the mine would ask Bartlett to allow the mine to work a 7-day week. Mr Eick said that this would enable Harmony to re-organise its mining plan and exploit higher grade ore on a continuous basis. He stressed that it was not designed to make employees work longer hours.

Nicol of NUM reiterated calls for the government to provide financial assistance for Harmony. He said that it was unlikely that the government would agree to such a drastic change in mining policy. NUM believed that it was up to the government to offer assistance as it should revise its policy and support marginal mines. "Workers have been prepared to make sacrifices at Harmony. Now it's the turn of the government."¹⁶⁷

The Mine Workers' Union immediately rejected this proposal, while NUM accepted it.¹⁶⁸ Mr Peet Ungerer of the Mine Workers' Union said that they would do anything possible to keep the mine open, but they would not agree to a 7-day week as it would propose a threat to the workers' health, safety and family life.¹⁶⁹ He also said that his members had made enough sacrifices at Harmony, accepting below inflation wage increases and working extra shifts. The union suggested that production workers should rather work longer hours to increase production and that workers work 26 shifts instead of 24. They said that they would not do cleaning work on Sundays, but only tramming.

Their protest was in vain as the 7-day work week was accepted by the government in September and published in the State Gazette.¹⁷⁰ Mr Greg Kulcard, a spokesperson for Rand Mines said that blasting was now done twice a day and that

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 363.

¹⁶⁸ NUM's go-ahead was conditional on the understanding that it would not involve wage cuts, retrenchments or increases in working hours. The Union had given its support on the basis that the plan was a temporary one for this crises period.

¹⁶⁹ Die Volksblad, 5.9.1992.

¹⁷⁰ NUM and mine management also appealed to the State for help and was granted R30 million in the form of a guarantee for a commercial loan.

between 19-25 September, 20 000 more tons of ore had been produced than during the same period in August.¹⁷¹ A spokesman for the mine said that Harmony aimed to produce an extra 300 kg of gold a year at no extra cost.¹⁷²

The matter was still not resolved and a dispute started about the cleaning up operations to be done on a Sunday. Mine management made it clear that union members who made up less than 10% of the work force, were not going to decide about the future of the mine. The 14 490 black workers agreed to working on a Sunday, and the mine was not going to let the 789 workers of the white union impede its efforts to save the mine. The dispute was costing the mine thousands of rands. Mr Karl Eick said that Harmony was competing with overseas mines and in all overseas mines work was carried out 7 days of the week. The workers who supported the 7 day week were doing voluntary work on Sundays for which they were paid overtime.¹⁷³ Eick also said that, depending on the gold price and production costs, the mine could still have a life span of between 20 to 30 years. Five years ago the mine was the largest in the world under one manager with a work force of 36 000. Today the figure has dropped to 14 000.¹⁷⁴

The 7-day work week had a positive effect on production. Blasting was done twice a day and over a period of three months, 320 kg more gold was produced.¹⁷⁵ The 7-day work week was a drastic step, but also a last resort for the mine which only made marginal profits and faced closing down.¹⁷⁶ If the mine had to close down it would have had a devastating effect on the town of Virginia and the Free State gold mining area. Christo Jonck, town clerk, said that of the R25 million that Harmony

¹⁷¹ Die Volksblad, 10.10.1992.

¹⁷² Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 364.

¹⁷³ Die Volksblad, 26.9.1992.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Die Volksblad, 26.1.1993.

¹⁷⁶ Workers received 5% of their basic salaries for work done on a Saturday and 6% for work done on a Sunday. Harmony was the first mine to implement working on a Sunday. It was done on a voluntary basis. By working on a Sunday the mine was also able to save R400 000 on electricity bills over a period of three months. Vista, 29.1.1993.

paid its workers every month, about half was spent in the Goldfields. The mine also paid the municipality R1 million a month and ESCOM received R6 million. A large percentage of the R17 million that was spent on equipment, materials and goods was also spent in the Goldfields.¹⁷⁷

As part of the agreement with NUM, about sharing in the profits, 15% of the profits for 1991 was paid over to workers and for 1992 the figure was 20%. This was to act as an incentive for workers to increase productivity. It was a historic wage increase as for the first time workers would share in the profits of the mine.

"It is hoped that these agreements will herald a much greater appreciation by employees and their representatives of the difficulties currently facing the gold mining industry."¹⁷⁸

In the beginning of 1993 Harmony showed a sharp turnabout in the December quarter from a loss of R5,7 million to an after tax-profit of R8,5 million.¹⁷⁹ Mr John Turner, chairman of Harmony said, "because of the co-operative attitudes of the employees and their unions in support of Sunday work, the risk of closure on the mine has diminished."¹⁸⁰ He also said that, although the results were encouraging, the mine was still not out of the woods. "In order to maintain profitability, grade and productivity must remain at current levels and Sunday operations beyond March are an integral part of this."¹⁸¹

According to Mahemu, NUM had a very good relationship with the managing director, mr Bernard Swanepoel, and upper management. He said that they have a problem though with middle-management, because by the time information is passed on by middle-management it is often distorted.

Bernard Swanepoel says that management has a constructive relationship with

¹⁷⁷ Die Volksblad, 2.9.1992.

¹⁷⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1991.

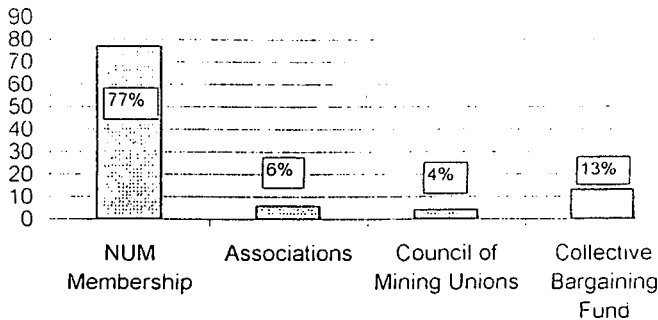
¹⁷⁹ Vista, 29.1.1993.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

NUM in which they respect their opinions, but they have their differences.¹⁸⁷ He feels that the distrust the black workers and the NUM have for management has a historical background and that it will take time before there will be a relationship of mutual trust.

The following table is an indication of the current work force at Harmony and its membership in the different unions:



SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORT OF HARMONY GOLD MINE

NUM feels that they have had a success story in the transformation process of the black gold mine worker. It has improved the living and working conditions of its workers. It has improved education and training of the work force and provide legal services to workers. The union also contributes to dependents of workers, who are injured or killed at the mines and negotiated the provident fund for black workers. NUM was instrumental in achieving a minimum wage level of R1 000 for black workers.

On the topic of AIDS, the NUM feels that the mine is not doing enough for AIDS education. This disease poses a serious threat to the black mine worker and the

¹⁸⁷ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Bernard Swanepoel, Managing Director of Harmony Gold Mine, 21.10.1998.

union is most concerned about the situation. They do not have an estimate of the number of workers who have the HIV virus as it is not compulsory to undergo a blood test. Mahemu said he would take the word of me Kgomo a social worker who was previously employed at Harmony Gold Mine. She estimated that by 1998 approximately 500 workers had died because of the HIV virus.¹⁸³ In a telephone interview with Mahemu she said it was very difficult to make an estimation as so many cases are not reported.

The only way to estimate how many workers have the AIDS virus would be to impose a compulsory HIV test. Mahemu is of the opinion that this would lead to conflict as workers would feel that their jobs would be in jeopardy and they will not be able to work so well with a worker who had the virus. Mahemu feels that the compound system does much to spread the virus, because of the unnatural separation between husband and wife and men staying together in the hostel. It is a complicated problem as these men go back to their women and can spread or contract the disease in the rural areas. What NUM would like to see is a definite Health and Safety Department policy dealing with AIDS, not just a handing out of condoms.¹⁸⁴

Mr Mahemu said that it is a long-term ideal of NUM to get rid of the hostel system and the accompanying migrant labour system completely, but with the gold price being so low at the moment, they are afraid that people will lose their jobs if they push for the elimination of the hostel system. It has been done successfully on the coal mines. Mahemu feels that the migrant labour system has contributed much in devastating the rural areas, because the planting has been left to the women and children. It has also led to marital problems as husband and wife are not used to living together and their marriages often end in divorce.

¹⁸³ Mr Mahemu made a phone call to me Kgomo about the incidence of AIDS on 2.10.1998.

¹⁸⁴ Mr Mahemu says that one positive aspect in the prevention of AIDS is that black workers are more keen to use condoms nowadays where previously they have been very wary and suspicious of it.

On the topic of education, NUM is in a deadlock with management as they feel that the ABET programme and the bridging school accept far too few workers. NUM feels very positive about the night schools where workers are taught to read and write and would like to see a much larger percentage of the workers becoming literate. Mahemu asks the question of how management can preach a world-class mine if they do not educate their work force. He feels that illiteracy affects the every-day life of the worker to such an extent that something must be done about the low level of education. Practical problems include workers who cannot read safety or danger sign, figures on a paper or information in letters.¹⁸⁵

In reply to a question about the standard of the training of the workers, Mahemu said that it was unfortunate that white and black workers were trained separately and not as a team. Blacks are trained at the centres and when they then go underground, they work with the white miners and shift bosses who would often do things differently than at the training centre. He says the ideal would be to train the underground team as a unit.

In answer to a question, why all the workers do not belong to NUM, mr Mahemu replied that there are some mushroom organizations that tell workers that NUM is like a business and that the organization will disappear with workers' money and provident contributions. Some workers believe that since apartheid has been removed they will be protected by the laws of the country, and therefore feel they no longer need NUM.¹⁸⁶

Mahemu mentions a very interesting factor, that since the workers continuously reside outside the hostels, it is much more difficult to organize them into mass action. Compound workers are easy to organize even after hours, but non-compound workers want to return home after hours and feel that they have an obligation to their families. He says that in the past when NUM called a meeting at

¹⁸⁵ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Mahemu of the NUM, 18.9.1998.

¹⁸⁶ At one time NUM was the biggest trade union in the world, but because of retrenchments in the industry it has declined.

the stadium, it was packed, but that in recent years fewer workers attend because of their Westernized culture of returning to their families after work.

He feels that NUM has contributed to better living conditions for its workers, as previously they were crowded into rooms with 16 beds, whereas at present they live in a 4-bed room. Their recreational facilities have also improved and now include pool tables, darts and card games. Wives are allowed to come and visit their husbands. The standard of the food is also very good and food is far better prepared.

Mahemu says that the transformation process of the black gold mine worker has changed the worker into a modernized man with much more confidence, confidence because of his increased skills and better living conditions and because NUM has fought for increased status and prestige of the gold mine worker. His improved training opportunities have also made him realize the importance of education for his children. Moreover, workers are much more conscious of their rights.¹⁸⁷

CHAPTER 6 - WAGES, WAGES IN KIND AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE BLACK MINE-WORKER

The low wages the black gold mine worker received had a retarding influence on his transformation process. The wages paid to black workers were just enough for him and his family to survive on, and the comforts and luxuries of the western world still eluded him. He could not afford housing of a reasonable standard, he could not afford a good education for his children and he could not become self-sufficient. He was largely dependent on the white man's economy and could not become competitive on the labour front. His career options were limited because of his lack of skills and his bleak financial situation further limited his choices.

In 1860 in South Africa wage-paid labour was almost non-existent. A very small number of people were engaged in trade and agriculture supported the people of South Africa, black and white. Africans relied on subsistence farming which was done by the members of the family. Payment generally took on the form of exchanging cattle, grazing rights, permission to erect a hut for the man's family or a piece of land to cultivate. White and black had a relationship of master and servant.

The discovery of diamonds and gold changed this situation. There was a great demand for labour for which the reward was cash wages. Two types of labour were in demand, skilled and unskilled. The skilled labour had to be imported from elsewhere, while the unskilled labour was available locally. The skilled labour was white, whereas the unskilled labourers were black. The white workers were in a privileged position as they had skills and political power and soon organized themselves into trade unions. This led to a consistent pattern of higher wages being paid to white mine workers. It would take almost a century before white and black wages would be evenly distributed.

P.H. van Rooyen has a good summary of the situation, "Werksgeleenthede was skaars en die swartes wat daarin geslaag het om in the witmensekonomie in Suid-Afrika opgeneem te word, het hul bes gedoen om daarin te bly, al het dit dan ook beteken dat hulle vir minimum lone moes werk. Die ondernemers het hulle nie veel gesteur aan die voorspoed en tevredenheid van die werkers nie. As een nie die pas kon volhou nie, was daar altyd baie by die hek wat sy plek kon inneem. Arbeid was ongeskoold en die ekonomie laag gemeganiseerd sodat sonder veel moeite en met die minimum opleiding dieselfde kwaliteit werker verkry kon word in die plek van een wat wou dwarstrek. Die werker was verdwaas en swak georganiseerd, en het mekaar eerder probeer onderspeel as wat daar sprake was van werksolidariteit en groepsopstede."¹

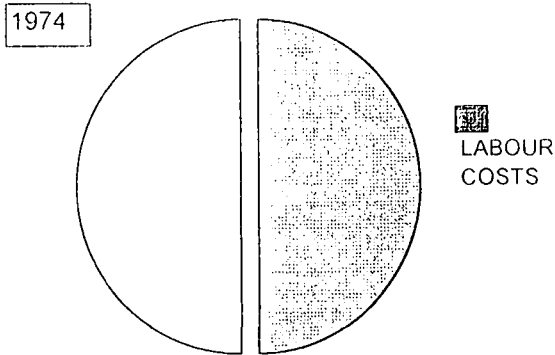
These environmental changes definitely cause mental and personality changes. The African becomes more resourceful, prudent, stimulated and ambitious. It is this ambition that will bring him in conflict with the white man. The black man also becomes more knowledgeable, not from formal education, but through coming in contact with other people in different environments.

There is no doubt that wages make up the biggest expense of the mines. This table of the Chamber of Mines indicates the expenditure of the mines in 1974:

1974	Amount in Rand
Total Gold Working Revenue	R 2 552 583 348
Gold Working Costs:	
Labour Charges	491 242 206
Stores, Material, Elec., Water, Air	408 723 989
Other Charges	84 748 839
TOTAL WORKING COSTS	R 984 715 034

¹ Van Rooyen, P.H., Swart Mannkragbenutting in Suid-Afrika, p. 57.

From the above table it can be assumed that wages made up 50% of the total working costs of the Chamber of Mines in 1974:



SOURCE: CHAMBER OF MINES

There are two characteristics of the wages paid to black gold mine workers over the years. One is the large wage gap between white and black miners, and the other is that in order to keep production costs low the wages of black workers were always sacrificed and kept low. Sometimes the wages of black workers were lowered. D. Innes writes, "The lower the pay limit, the more ore becomes available in the reserves for profitable production and the longer the mine's life-span, conversely the higher the pay limit, the less ore is available in reserves and the shorter the life of the mine. Thus if costs are kept low the pay limit will be low and there will be a greater potential for long-term profitability."²

² Innes, D., Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa, p. 49.

In 1889 the average wage of a black worker was R78, while in 1897 it was R58.³ What makes this drop in wages more phenomenal is the fact that in those years there was a severe shortage of black labourers and the government had to go to extreme measures to ensure that there were enough workers. During the years of the Anglo-Boer War, wages of blacks were reduced even further to R36 a year. The shortage of labour was then so severe that Chinese workers were imported to try to relieve the situation. In 1905 wages for blacks rose to an average of R54 and by 1911 it had risen to only R57 a year.⁴

The other main characteristic is the huge gap between the wages paid to black and white gold mine workers over the last century. The ratio of average cash earnings between white and black workers widened from 7,5:1 in 1889 to 10,5:1 in 1898 and eventually to 11,7:1 in 1911. The gap increased until it reached a ration of 15:1 in 1921. "It was the size of this gap, combined with the fall in the price of gold, that induced the mining industry to try to make the colour bar less rigid."⁵ The mining houses are running a business and were concerned with keeping costs low and paying dividends to shareholders. A relaxation of the colour bar was a good economical decision, but not a very good political one.

The Rand Rebellion of 1922 was the consequence and the Chamber reduced white wages substantially until the ratio between wages for white and black workers reached a low of 11,2:1. The 1922 strike is an excellent example of how far the white workers were prepared to go in order to protect their privileged situation in the mining industry. It again emphasises that politics and economics in South Africa are so intertwined that a rational decision could not be made. The more rational decision would have been to let black workers do more skilled work and increase their pay, but politically this was unacceptable. The Pact government of 1924 would crush any hopes the black workers had of moving a step up in the mining industry.

³ Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold Mines, p. 45.

⁴ Ibid., p. 45.

⁵ Ibid., p. 45.

In 1936 the salaries and wages of 47 090 white workers on the mines in the Union of South Africa, amounted to 16 694 821 pounds or an average of 345 pounds per head. The wages of 394 323 black workers on the other hand were 12 483 258 pounds or an average of 31 pounds. This meant that the average white wage was twelve times the average black wage.⁶

Typical average rates of pay per day underground for white miners were as follow in 1945:

<u>JOB</u>	<u>AVERAGE PAY PER SHIFT</u>
<i>Trammers</i>	25s 3d
<i>Timbermen (shaft)</i>	25s 1d
<i>(stopping)</i>	25s 3d
<i>Pipe Fitters and Tracklayers</i>	26s 10d
<i>Fitters</i>	25s 4d
<i>Pumpmen</i>	20s 10d
<i>Pumpfitters</i>	26s 8d
<i>Engine Drivers</i>	26s 10d
<i>Average pay per shift</i>	28s 3d

The average earnings per shift for white underground workers at the end of 1946 was:

	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Stopping</i>
<i>On Contract</i>	42s 8d	35s 3d
<i>On Day's Pay</i>	28s 9d	28s 3d

Average wages per day per shift for black workers in 1945

	<i>Underground</i>	<i>Surface</i>
<i>Per day</i>	11s 5d	4s 7.5d

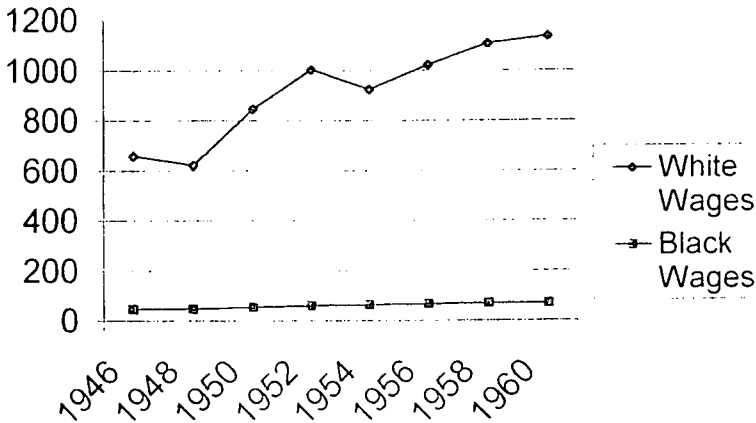
SOURCE: *Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, p. 86.*

⁶ De Kiewiet, C.W., *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic*, p. 164.

On many mines, bonus schemes for officials and day's pay men were arranged by the management in which efficient work was rewarded by bonus payments. The average cash earnings of white employees in 1945 was 540 pounds a month.⁷

For black workers the situation was different. The average pay in cash for underground black workers was 2s 8.6d per shift, and for blacks working on the surface, 2s 5d per shift. The free medical care and hospital facilities for the black workers was conservatively estimated to be worth 2s 2.5d per shift, bringing the total wages in cash and kind to 4s 11.5d per shift underground and 4s 7.5d per shift for surface workers.⁸

With the outbreak of the Second World War the wage gap widened to 12,7:1 in 1946. Five years later it was 14,7:1 and by 1961 it was 17:1.⁹ Graphically the picture looked like this:



SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE CHAMBER OF MINES, 1940-1954.

⁷ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., *Gold Mining in South Africa*, p. 87.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

The wage gap continued to increase and by 1969 it reached a ratio of 20:1. There is no doubt that the lower black wages and higher wages for white workers were politically motivated.

These wages did not include the food and accommodation costs involved for African workers. Even in the 1970s mine management still argued that increased pay levels would lead to labour shortages: "The increased money they now receive has led to many men spending less time on the mines. The labourer can afford to work shorter contracts and he can stay away longer between contracts. Until he has developed more sophisticated tastes and ways of spending money it is felt that further large wage increases will serve as serious disincentives to effective labour utilisation. Each time he returns the worker has to be inducted. Each time he has a period of adjustment before he achieves full productivity."¹⁰

At Harmony Gold mine the amount spent on European wages in 1955 was 337 983 pounds, with a further 208 603 pounds spent on other cash payments and benefits for Europeans. The wages for non-Europeans amounted to 198 540 pounds, even though the black workers were approximately five times more than the white workers.¹¹

These figures actually provide an incomplete picture of the earnings as they contain none of the figures of wages in kind that white and black workers receive on the mines. For instance, the amount spent on housing for an average white worker was much higher than that spent on a black worker. The white worker was also privileged by being rewarded for higher productivity. As F. Wilson writes, "White miners, the men responsible for supervising gangs of black workers at the stope face, were in a special position. Some of them were employed at daily rates of pay but others were paid by results. The earnings of these contractors depend, as we have seen, on the amount of ore that the gang of men under them extracts on the frontiers of the mine. The significance of the contractors lies in the fact that this

¹⁰ Association of Mine Managers Report of 1975.

¹¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold mine, 1955.

method of payment-by-results has enabled them to capture the rewards of increased labour productivity without sharing them with the other(black) men who help to achieve the results."¹² Not only were the black workers paid extremely low wages, but they were also excluded from earning any bonus incentives. From 1936 onwards white workers were paid for overtime work. Black workers had to wait until 1944 before they received any compensation for overtime work.

Hobart-Houghton also agrees that there was a political flavour attached to the low wages of black gold mine workers, "Differences in earning capacity should not be attributed so much to innate inferiority in ability, as to the deficiencies in social environment and educational systems which fail to provide large sections of the population with technical training and the opportunities to develop those qualities of leadership so essential to success in a modern industrial society. Added to this are the customary and legislative restraints upon the vertical movement of non-white people, and Africans in particular, which go under the comprehensive designation of the "Industrial colour bar."¹³ Hobart-Houghton also touches on the lack of education, lack of technical training and the general upliftment of the black population. The differences in wages cannot solely be attributed to racial discrimination alone, but also to the general lack of training and schooling.

Four factors appear to have combined to suppress the wages on black mine workers according to Hobart-Houghton:

First, the powerful position of the Chamber of Mines through its two native recruiting organizations has largely insulated African mine workers' wages from the operation of supply and demand, and has prevented competition for labour between different mining companies from forcing wages upwards.

Second, the rigidity imposed by statute upon the work-spheres of people of different races has greatly restricted the mining companies in making the most effective use of the available labour force.

¹² Wilson, F., p. 47.

¹³ Hobart-Houghton, D., The South African Economy, p. 168.

Thirdly, there were peculiar conditions in the supply of migrant workers who were concerned primarily with the support of their families in the subsistence economy. This gave rise to the belief that the supply curve of such labour was backward-sloping if wages exceeded a given level. Although this proposition is of very doubtful validity, it has made mining companies reluctant to raise the wages and has often been advanced in evidence to commissions of inquiry.¹⁴ Finally perhaps one of the most powerful forces of all is the fact that legislative restricting the movement of Africans into urban areas does not apply to mine workers. Thus general influx control, by diverting to mining men who might otherwise have sought employment in some other field, tends to increase the supply of mine workers and thus to depress wages in mining.¹⁵

Moreover, the black workers had few other prospects in the countries of their birth to earn wages. There were simply no other opportunities and the mining companies were aware of that.

Another factor contributing to the low wages was the fact that the black workers did not have a union to negotiate for better wages. It was against the law for blacks to belong to unions. In the meantime the white mine workers were reaping the benefits and privileges that their union was negotiating for them.

The mining companies also claimed that the food and housing they provided for their workers, justified the lower wages. The black worker did not have to buy food or pay any rent in a nearby location. He also received medical attention free on charge during the time of his contract.

Things were about to change after the Second World War when secondary industries mushroomed. Especially the manufacturing industry proved to be a tough opponent in labour recruitment. The industry offered higher wages and safer working conditions than the mines.¹⁶ The mining industry was unable to keep its

¹⁴ Report of the Witwatersrand Natives Wages Commission, UG 21/1944, p. 16.

¹⁵ Hobart-Houghton, D., p. 168.

¹⁶ Wages in the manufacturing industry moved up from parity to the wages on the mines, to double that.

work force and miners who used to come to the mines seven or eight times, now served fewer contracts and moved on to the manufacturing industry.

In 1949 the Native Recruiting Corporation advocated higher wages for black workers in view of the increased industrialization after the war.¹⁷ An argument against this was that wage increases, would reduce the amount of time the worker would stay on the mine. As soon as he reached his cash earnings target, he would leave for the rural areas. The NRC was having difficulty in recruiting the workers and had to increase their advertising campaign. Film shows like "From Kraal to Reef" were shown in the rural areas portraying an idyllic lifestyle, posters were put on buses and small gifts, covered in NRC logo papers were handed out.¹⁸

The rapid growth of the economy in the 1960s led to an acute shortage of skilled labour. The militancy at Sharpeville and Langa did not go unnoticed by the government and the international world either. Between 1970 and 1976 there was a substantial increase in the wages of the black worker and the gap in the wages of black and white workers was narrowed. This could be attributed to various factors: Firstly, the gold mines increased the wages of their black workers. Secondly, the hostilities of international powers were increasing against South Africa because of the country's political policy and the increase in violence. Thirdly, the mining companies wanted to try to become less dependent on the labourers of neighbouring countries. Labour relations with neighbouring countries were becoming very complicated because of their own plight for freedom and independence, so in order to compete with other sectors of the economy, the mining industry had to offer higher wages. Finally, the higher gold price enabled the mines to do so.

"It gives some indication of how far mine wages lagged behind even the low rates blacks were paid in other areas of South African industries, in that it took wage rises of 455% from 1971 to 1976, as well as a black unemployment rate of over 25% to

¹⁷ NRC, 18 October 1949.

¹⁸ In 1948 South African recruited labour fell below 30% of the total work force, for the first time since 1925.

force any significant number of South African blacks to work on gold mines."¹⁹ Mine management hoped that the increased pay levels would result in higher productivity, which failed to happen. It was calculated that in 1977 the wages of black gold mine workers had increased by 250% over the past 30 years, while their productivity only increased by 15%. The problem lay in the unskilled nature of the black workers. Even though more than half of the black workers had already served more than 4 contracts, they remained unskilled.²⁰

The following table shows the increase in the wages of the black mine worker from 1972 to 1987:

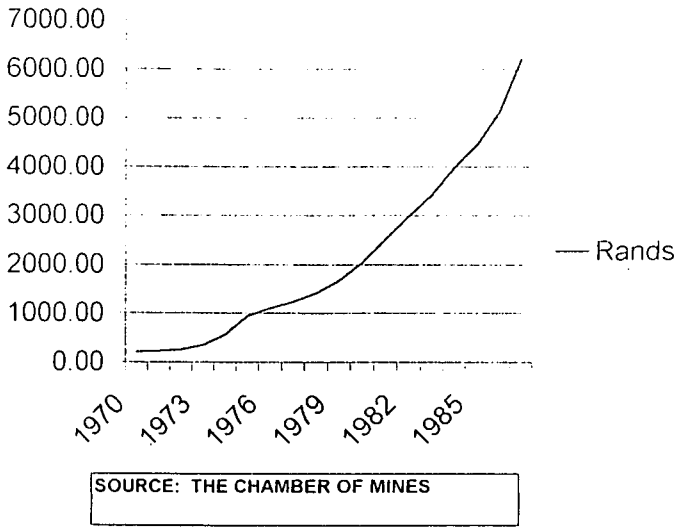
YEAR	RANDS
1970	207.8
1971	221.2
1972	256.7
1973	349.7
1974	564.8
1975	947.9
1976	1 102.80
1977	1 235.00
1978	1 420.50
1979	1 668.60
1980	2 037.40
1981	2 520.00
1982	2 985.10
1983	3 425.80
1984	3 975.00
1985	4 452.00
1986	5 127.00
1987	6 218.00

SOURCE: Hirschohn, P., "Management Ideology and Environmental Turbulence: Understanding Labour Policies the South African Gold Mining Industry". App

¹⁹ Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 165.

²⁰ Hocking, A. p. 257.

Graphically it was a sharp increase:



Wages represented the one incentive attracting workers to the mines. When the mining industry made considerable adjustments to its wage structures, the number of workers on the mines reached its peak as the following table indicates. Working on the mines was still not very popular with workers because of the dangers involved, the low wages and the compound system, but when the wages increased, their numbers on the mines increased. The mining industry was more competitive in the labour market, because of increased wages as the following table indicates.

The higher the wages, the larger the number of recruits:

YEAR	AVER. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
1910	207 414
1920	198 255
1930	224 230
1940	394 678
1950	348 274
1960	437 265
1970	416 846
1980	469 257
1981	478 938
1982	475 769
1983	487 761
1984	498 421
1985	513 832
1986	534 255
1987	530 574
1988	515 739
1989	505 262
1990	473 685

SOURCE: CHAMBER OF MINES

6.1 WAGES AT HARMONY GOLD MINE

Harmony Gold Mine, was part of a history of paying low wages for black, unskilled workers and much higher wages for white, skilled workers. As a new mine, coming into production after the Second World War, the mine simply copied the existing system of labour structures and wage differentiation. The mine was however, not exempt from the economical changes that were taking place in South Africa at the time. It also experienced a shortage of skilled workers and artisans. It was not untouched by the competition for labour from other industries nor by the international criticism against the low wages in the mining industry.

In 1974 the chairman of Harmony Gold Mines writes in the annual report, "Black wages were increased by 80% during the year. Further exceptional increases can be anticipated over the next two years before these wages reach levels that will only change when affected by normal factors such as increases in the cost of living or enhanced skills."²¹ According to the annual report of 1975 the wages for black workers increased by approximately 50%. This immediately had an influence on the availability of workers. Where the mine experienced a shortage of workers in 1974 and the beginning of 1975, its work force reached a high of 95,33% by the end of 1975.²² "The December wage increase undoubtedly had a beneficial influence on the flow of men to the mining industry," according to the chairman of the board.²³

In June 1975, the unskilled labour force at Harmony Gold Mine, totaled 20 429 men and by the end of June 1976 this figure stood at 21 627. The June 1976 total meant that the work force stood at 97,41 per cent of the revised complement, while the underground, unskilled labour force averaged 96,29 per cent of the complement work force for the year.²⁴

²¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1974.

²² The work force stood at 21 430 men in 1975.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1976.

Secondly, the black worker started to move to more skilled jobs, and accordingly higher salaries. P.H. van Rooyen writes, "Breinkrag, vernuf en opleiding om die komplekse masjinerie te hanteer het al hoe belangriker geword. Waar 'n werker in 'n kwessie van 'n dag of twee geleer kon word om met die graaf te werk, het dit hom maande geneem om die werking van die kontrolekamer se paneelbord te begryp en hanteer, om 'n fragmotor of stootskrapeer te bestuur, om ertsmonsters te neem en skeikundige formules toe te pas. Vir die ondernemers het dit al hoe belangriker geraak om hul werkers te behou. Die koste van die arbeidsomset het meervoudig toegeneem. Nie net die salarisse van opleidings-en keuringspersoneel moes betaal word nie, maar geld kon verloor word as gevolg van ongelukke wat nog-nie-opgeleide werkers met duur apparate maak, opgeleide werkers moes van ver gewerf word deur middel van duur advertensies, hervestigingsuitgawes en ander bedrae moes betaal word om opgeleide personeel te werf."²⁵ The colour bar was relaxed, while improved training programmes improved the abilities of black workers.

Thirdly, there was pressure on all companies to improve working conditions and wages, especially after the riots and work stoppages of the seventies. Just as in case of other industries, the mining industry cannot afford the financial burden of strike action as millions of rands can be lost in a day.

At Harmony Gold mine, wage reviews for black workers took place in August 1979 and July 1980. These reviews had the effect of increasing the wage of surface workers by 39,2% and those of underground workers' by 31,7%. The increases came into effect on July 1, 1980 and made the wages paid by Harmony among the highest in the industry.

Minimum wages for both black and white mineworkers are determined on a centralized industry basis through the Chamber of Mines of South Africa. In the case of white mine-workers the minimum wage has for a certain period of time been negotiated annually with the representative officials' associations and trade unions.

²⁵ Van Rooyen, P.H., p. 58.

After formally recognizing the two unions catering for black and coloured mineworkers, these unions participated in the June 1983 wage reviews with the Chamber of Mines in determining the minimum wage for blacks and coloureds.

In 1984 the negotiations with the white Council of Mining Unions and various officials' associations led to an average increase in wages of 10%. Negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and NUM ended in a dispute and in the appointment of a Conciliation Board. Harmony Gold Mine and other mines in the industry, nevertheless granted increases to all black employees from July 1, 1984. The basic wages were increased by an average of 14,4% and 13,5% on Chamber of Mines minimum rates for surface and underground workers. In addition to this, fringe benefits by way of overtime and shift allowance, together with an industry service increment scheme were introduced.²⁶ Seidman comments, "The shift in labour policies means even less-skilled miners can earn reasonable wages, especially if they qualified for Harmony's production bonuses."²⁷

By 1984 the average wage for an unskilled or semi-skilled worker was R350 a month. Skilled workers such as black industrial relations officers earned an average of R1 200 a month. Between 1970 and 1982 the wages of unskilled mine workers were increased by almost 300% in real terms, reducing the skilled/unskilled wage gap from 21:1 to 5,8:1.²⁸

The increase in wages of the largest proportion of its work force, had serious financial implications for the mining industry. By the end of the 1980s South Africa had lost its ability to produce an ounce of gold more cheaply than any of the other major producing countries.²⁹ J. Crush comments, "it will be at least partly because migrant labour costs have risen so much since the 1970s."³⁰ The country was still

²⁶ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1984.

²⁷ Seidman, G., South African Sociological Review, (5) 2, p. 24.

²⁸ "The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker."

²⁹ Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's labour Empire, p. 21.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

the largest supplier of gold in the world, but the increase in expenditure was bound to effect production costs.

Wage negotiations with the white trade unions during 1985 resulted in an 11% average increase for these employees. Negotiations with NUM again broke down resulting in the establishment of a Conciliation Board. The mining industry decided to implement its final wage offer of between 14 and 19%. Other benefits granted included the payment of overtime for all authorized time spent underground in excess of 100 hours per fortnight and varying increases in allowances for shift workers. Moreover, all employees in the mining industry were guaranteed a minimum of 14 days leave per annum, together with an annual holiday leave allowance of 50% of their basic monthly wage. NUM threatened with strike action, but only a small number of employees voted in its favour.

After July 1985 the take home pay of underground workers ranged from R200 to R600 a month. For surface workers it was R180 to R587. The minimum living wage in February 1986 stood at R391, just sufficient for survival. Mining companies argued that the free food and lodging amounted to R100 per worker, which would then make it a living wage.³¹

The following table summarizes the wages for black and white workers at Harmony over a time span of thirty years:

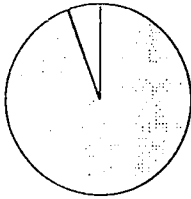
RANDS PER YEAR	1960	1970	1980	1990
Aver. Labour Whites	1 501	2 219	2 593	2 357
Aver. Labour Blacks	9 985	21 732	29 702	24 713
Aver. Earnings Whites	2 397	4 329	13 305	51 030
Aver. Earnings Blacks	143	207	2 037	10 087

SOURCE: THE CHAMBER OF MINES

³¹ Pallister, D., a.o., South Africa Inc. p. 158.

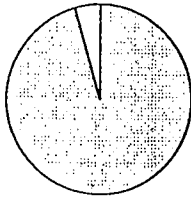
Black workers were getting a larger portion of the wage pie, as indicated below:

1960



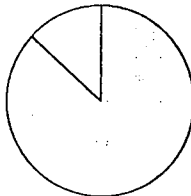
- Aver. Wages of Whites
- Aver. Wages of Blacks

1970



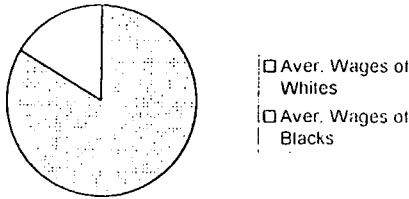
- Aver. Wages of Whites
- Aver. Wages of Blacks

1980



- Aver. Wages of Whites
- Aver. Wages of Blacks

1990



SOURCE: Hirschsohn, P., "Management Ideology and Environmental Turbulence: Understanding Labour Policies in the South African Gold Mining Industry", App. 3.

Because of the fact that free food, accommodation, medical services and recreation facilities are provided by the mines, some migrants are very keen money savers. If it is borne in mind that workers are also supplied with overalls, boots and clothing, a black worker can save a large proportion of his savings. Workers are allowed to make any arrangements that suit them to save money. The TEBA Savings Fund arranges for the mines to deposit any amount into a savings account, and the money is then repaid to the worker on his request.³²

In 1993 the Chamber of Mines transacted amounts totalling R9,3 billion to TEBA-CASH. This includes the platinum mines and some collieries.³³ The ability of employees to save larger amounts can be contributed to the various productivity- and cost containment incentive schemes which have been negotiated with employees supplement annual wage increases. These also include long service,

³² TEBA, is the name used for the Employment Bureau of Africa Limited, the labour arm of the Chamber of Mines responsible for placing semi-skilled and unskilled employees in the South African mining industry. Founded in 1902 as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association or WENELA, it also incorporates the Native Recruiting Corporation founded in 1912. Being a non-profit service organisation, TEBA is believed to be the largest single employment agency in the world. It engages over 350 000 men from all parts of Southern Africa to work on 60 gold, coal and platinum member mines. TEBA's field network of 71 offices are scattered throughout the Southern Africa region, has the important task of supplying direct and indirect services to its workers, their families and communities and even to governments in the region. Workers are assisted by the company's local employees who are familiar with their customs and speak their languages.

³³ Rand Mines, Newsletter 2/6, 1994, p. 5.

provident fund and death benefit payouts.

6.2 WAGES IN KIND

Wages in kind, or the system that workers receive food and lodging as part of their wage package, is nothing new to the South African economy. Farm workers often received their bag of mealie meal, coal, meat and vegetables as part of their payment together with a small amount in cash. Biccard Jeppe writes, "but it must be emphasized that cash only represent a portion of the pay of natives."³⁴

Through the years it has been argued by the mining industry that the cash wages of black workers are low, but when housing and food benefits are added, the remuneration is more realistic. Working underground is physically strenuous work and workers had to be fit and strong. What they eat is important to the mining companies as they strive for increased production.

"One of the main reasons why the gold mines feed their black workers rather than pay extra wages is to ensure that the men remain fit enough for the hard physical work involved in deep underground mining."³⁵

The alternative to this system was that the black migrants came to the mines and earn a higher cash wage, but had to provide their own food. The worker could then save as much of it as possible before he returned home. Some historians are of the opinion that the mineworkers themselves would have preferred the cash and wanted to provide their own food. F. Wilson argues, "It is arguable that, faced with the choice of free food or the cash equivalent of its cost to the industry, men might choose the cash - provided that there were adequate food shops near the mines."³⁶

This would place some responsibility on the black worker as he had to manage his cash properly in order to provide for food as well. Given the long and tiring working

³⁴ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 96.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

hours, the physical claims of the job and the fact that shops also had to make a profit, it is doubtful if such a system would have been practical.

In an article published in "Industrial Review of Africa" in August, 1954, the General Manager of the Native Recruiting Corporation said that each African worker employed on the gold mines throughout 1953 cost the industry an average of 58 pounds 10 shillings in wages 18 pounds and 6 shillings in food supplied and 3 pounds 3 shillings in medical services. The cost of housing was not brought into account.

On the diamond mines black workers are not provided with food but have to fend for themselves. It was estimated that diamond workers spent an average of 13 cents a day on food in 1960 compared with the 12 cents per man which it cost the gold mines to feed their men. Consequently the diamond workers saved or sent home 36% of their wage bill, compared with the 18% saved by gold mine workers. Whether this was beneficial to their health is debatable.

White workers were not supplied with food and had their wives close by to prepare their meals. For officials on the mines, subsidized canteens also provided meals at lunch time at a very reasonable price. Moreover, it must be remembered that there was a big difference in the pay levels of black and white workers. The mines also provided tea for their surface workers twice daily.

F. Wilson comments, "Food, provided by the mines, is scientifically chosen to provide a balanced diet and although huge vats of cabbage that have been steaming for hours strike a visitor as a supreme example of institutional food at its worst the fact remains that the food is wholesome, abundant, and of such a quality that most men leave the mines physically fitter than when they arrived."³⁷

³⁷ Wilson, F., p. 10.

The following is an example of the actual rations per black workers for the period of one month in 1942:

<u>FOOD</u>	<u>QUANTITY IN POUNDS</u>
Mealie Meal(Lambalaza and Porridge)	30.94
Beans	9.48
Whole Mealies	3.79
Vegetables and Tops	13.35
Beef	17.33
"Afval"	3.25
Bones, Heels and Totters	1.21
Fat	1.21
Sugar	3.79
Salt	1.13
Monkey Nuts	1.08
Soya Bean Flour	1.90
Rice	.87
Coffee	.19
Tea	.13
Pepper(ounces)	.22
Curry Powder(ounces)	.26
Oranges,Whole,Juice,Marmalade	26.00
Bread	11.37
Marewu(gallons)	5.80
Beer(gallons)	4.00
PeafLOUR	.95

The total costs per black worker per month for the above was 44s 8d.³⁸ The mines

³⁸ In 1948 a black worker earned 2s 9d a day and in addition to this he also received free board and lodging, free medical facilities and free food rations. This ration included a weekly allowance of 3 ½ pounds of meat a week in comparison with mine workers in Britain who only received 1 pound of meat a week. Rand Daily Mail, 21.10.1948.

also prepared and issued freely the blacks' national drinks "U'Tywala", "Marewu" and "Kaffir(sic) Beer". The total costs to the mines in providing this food to their black workers was 4 173 086 million pounds in 1946.³⁹

In 1948 a black worker earned 2s 9d a day. In addition to this he also received free board and lodging, free medical facilities and free food rations. These rations included a weekly allowance of 31/3 lb of meat in comparison with mine workers in Britain who only received 1 lb a week.⁴⁰

The argument that black workers received low wages, because they were provided with free food and accommodation holds little water if one looks at the following table, which compares the wages of black and white workers, with the added value of food as a form of wages in kind:

YEAR	WHITES		BLACKS	
	Cents	Cash	Food	Total
1911	217	20	4	24
1916	233	20	4	24
1921	348	22	6	28
1926	263	22	4	26
1931	266	22	3	25
1936	283	23	4	27
1941	301	23	5	28
1946	411	29	9	37
1951	587	36	9	45
1956	760	43	13	56
1961	876	48	14	62
1966	1 170	59	17	77
1969	1 488	65	18	83

SOURCE: STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1969

³⁹ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 97.

⁴⁰ Rand Daily Mail, 21.10.1948.

On the Free State mines a close watch is kept in hostels and compounds on the diet of black mine workers to ensure that they receive an average of 4 000 - 4 200 calories a day. The minimum requirements of a diet in hostels and compounds are prescribed by legislation. The mines far exceed these minimum requirements. The basic foods are meat, fish, vegetables and mealie meal, but in addition mahew is available in unlimited quantities.⁴¹ A beer especially for black workers is made and beer gardens are a feature of some of the hostels and compounds.

The mine's central kitchens are under the supervision of trained dieticians. These kitchens are open 24 hours a day and cooked food is available at all times. Some mines also have facilities for workers to cook their own food.⁴²

In 1995 at Harmony Gold Mine balanced meals are provided for the workers in its hostels. The standards of the kitchens are very high. Cooking facilities have been modernized, cooks are fully trained by qualified chefs and smaller dining rooms are provided where meals are available at all hours of the day.

Tons of food are prepared every month. At Harmony approximately 280 tons of meat, fish and chicken are purchased every month and 340 tons of fresh vegetables are prepared.⁴³ It costs the mines R1 million every month to provide food for its work force of 30 000. Approximately 240 tons of mealie meal it used every month.

The monthly food purchased at Harmony consists of the following:

- 150 tons of fresh meat
- 30 tons of "afval"
- 73 tons of chicken
- 11 tons of fish
- 20 tons of rice
- 50 tons of sugar
- 150 tons of bread

⁴¹ Mahew is a refreshing sour beverage made from porridge.

⁴² Forum, 3.10.1986.

⁴³ Ibid.

- 20 tons of fruit.⁴⁴

The electricity used in the kitchens every month amounts to 170 MW.⁴⁵

The dining room of the hostels at Harmony is open from 4 o'clock in the morning, until 8 o'clock and again from 11 o'clock until 7 o'clock at night. For breakfast the workers have bread, tea, porridge and eggs. At midday they are given meat, rice, vegetables and fruit and in the evenings soup, bread and porridge are provided. In addition to this there are stoves in every hostel, so when the men are hungry they can prepare any food to their liking.⁴⁶

During interviews conducted with the workers, they were generally very pleased with the quality of the food they received.⁴⁷ The meat and fruit were very popular with workers. One worker, Peter Letsie, said that the healthy food they received helped to prevent diseases. Another worker, Lejoetso Lejoetso, said that his favourite foods were meat, beans and fruit. Howard Mamhlahloh said that although he sometimes prepared some extra meat for himself, he enjoyed the food.

Housing is also considered as a form of wages in kind. The majority of black mineworkers are housed in compounds. Only 1% of the black workers qualified for family housing and were allowed to bring their wives and children. The compounds differed very little from one mine to another, but there was some measure of difference between the older and newer, more modern mines.

The number of men housed in a compound varied from 2 400 to 7 000 and the number of men in a room varied from 12 (in the compounds built after the Second World War) to 20 (on the mines built during the 1930's) and between 60 and 90 (on the mines built before the First World War).⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The abbreviation stands for Megawatt.

⁴⁶ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Josephine Lebitso, who was a hostel clerk for 30 years, 11.6.1998.

⁴⁷ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcriptions of interviews with Sebitio Mangate, Peter Letsie, Lejoetso Lejoetso, Mahlomola Makeki and Howard Mhlahloh. 11.6.1998.

⁴⁸ Wilson, F., p. 57.

By law, the gold mines were allowed to provide family housing for black workers for no more than 3% of the total labour force, excluding foreign workers. Effectively only 1% of the housing allocation of the mines were for married quarters for black labourers.

The compounds where the other 99% of the workers are housed, have changed from the old pre-World War buildings with rooms housing 50 or more men living like sardines in double-decker concrete bunks, to modern hostels housing between 12 and 20 men. When Harmony mine first started out some of the workers were housed in temporary dwellings as there was a severe shortage of housing. From the first annual report of the company it becomes clear that European housing received priority and then only housing for non-Europeans: "Eighty rooms of the native hostel have been built, and these are sufficient for present needs. At 30 June 1951, the total number of houses for Europeans was sixty, and thirty additional houses were being built. Demands for accommodation however, are still great, and many of the employees on the mine are temporarily in prefabricated houses and in other small houses which will later serve for native married quarters. 45 houses for married natives have been built. These houses are being temporarily occupied by European employees. In the native hostel, 80 rooms have been built providing accommodation for 1280 natives.⁴⁹ 10 other rooms have been built and converted to serve as temporary married quarters for natives.⁵⁰

Rand Mines was not in favour of the suggestion made by Anglo American after the Second World War that a more stabilized work force be housed at the mines. Although the government did not allow more permanent housing, it is questionable if Rand Mines would have implemented more permanent housing structure, because of the tremendous costs involved. Gay Seidman writes about the housing at Harmony, "Its first shaft was opened shortly after the Nationalist Party came to power, and the mine was designed with apartheid policies in mind. Long one of

⁴⁹ On June 30, 1951 the work force on the mine consisted of 154 European workers and 890 natives.

⁵⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1951.

South Africa's largest and most profitable mines, Harmony depended on a large work force of migrants, mining low-grade ore. In fact, Rand Mines rejected proposals to experiment with family housing for African workers in the Free State goldfields, arguing it would be too expensive. Harmony's infrastructure was designed to accommodate migrant workers."⁵¹

Harmony Gold Mine is a post-war mine and the housing facilities were of a higher standard than those provided by some of the older mines. During the 1956 financial year, 249 456 pounds was spent on improving the facilities for black workers. During that year 183 rooms were completed at no.2 shaft hostel for 2 928 blacks. An additional 16 rooms were under construction and the permanent kitchen was almost completed. A dancing arena was complete in no.3 shaft hostel and soccer and rugby fields were constructed.⁵²

The unmarried workers in the Free State Goldfields, of whom there were 83 000 in 1960, were housed in two different kinds of housing. Firstly, the open compound system, in which workers lived in dormitories of 16-20 workers. Kitchens and ablution blocks were conveniently situated and serve all rooms. Food was provided on the cafeteria system and was either eaten in the rooms, which have tables, chairs and coal stoves, or on the lawns under shady trees. Workers could come and go as they please.

The second method of accommodation is known as the hostel system - under which the black workers live in comparatively small dormitories of ten people, in double-storey centrally heated buildings. Adjoining every room in the hostels is a wardrobe alcove, centrally heated for drying clothes and fitted with cupboards for storing clothes. In the hostels, the men eat in dining rooms adjoining the kitchens. The hostels and compounds are situated close to every shaft so that workers have but little distance to walk before going underground or returning from work.

⁵¹ Seidman, G., South African Sociological Preview, (5) 2, p. 14.

⁵² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1959.

In 1966 flats for indunas, classrooms and a canteen were erected at no.3 shaft black hostel. A swimming bath was also built at the married quarters.⁵³

In 1976 television facilities were installed in 2 of Harmony's black hostels. The installation of similar facilities in the mine hospital was planned and completed the following year. Thereafter, the remaining hostels were likewise equipped.⁵⁴

Despite continuous efforts by the mine to provide comfortable accommodation for its black workers, it was severely criticized. Mr Peterson defends the mine, "The mining industry has been criticized both in South Africa and overseas publications for the employment conditions of its black workers. The information contained in these articles is often incorrect and photographs are produced of various phases of life on a mine which are completely out of date and sometimes even show portraits of housing facilities of mines that have already closed down. In common with other mines in South Africa, Harmony has improved the working and living conditions of its black employees considerably over the past 10 years. The modern black mine-worker is still in the main a migrant labourer. He alternates between periods of small farming activities in the home country and cash earning periods on the mines."⁵⁵

Due to the increase in wages in the 1970s, the migrant worker could obtain his target earnings much more quickly than he did before.⁵⁶ The period spent at the mine tended to become shorter, but the worker still left to return to his farming and other activities at home.

When the mines began to contemplate the possible introduction of a more permanent work force, they also considered more permanent housing structures for their skilled and semi-skilled workers. Crush writes, "In the 1980s, the delivery of

⁵³ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1966.

⁵⁴ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1976.

⁵⁵ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1977.

⁵⁶ During the period 1972-1977 the average wage of a black worker had increased five fold.

family housing to skilled and semi-skilled black miners was seen as a way of depopulating the compounds, dividing the work force, and damping militancy."⁵⁷

In the 1980s the mining companies started differentiating their housing facilities. Where they were accustomed to hostels and a small percentage of married quarters, they now run many different housing schemes. There was still the foreign migrant who came for periods of approximately 16 months, who spoke a number of different languages and who had no option open to him except hostel accommodation. Then there was the South African migrant who came from different homelands and could return home for short periods who mostly used hostel accommodation. Some of their families came to live in nearby townships and some of these workers then stayed with them. Then there was the weekly commuter who came from places such as Lesotho and who could return home over weekends. He also used hostel accommodation or stayed with relatives in nearby locations. Furthermore, there were married quarters for some natives(sic) on the mine premises.⁵⁸ The mine started helping married black workers to acquire their own homes in nearby locations. This also presented a problem: "No matter how large a mine is, it must always be remembered that it has a finite life and home ownership in the immediate vicinity of the mine might not be in the long term interests of the employees."⁵⁹

Harmony Gold Mine continued to commit itself to the improvement of the quality of life of all its employees, particularly those in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Mr DT Watt explains, "Remuneration, housing, feeding, recreation and leisure facilities, medical services and retirement benefits are matters which have been under constant review and will continue to be so reviewed and improved where required."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Crush, J, a.o., p. 31.

⁵⁸ Since the 1980s the amenities for the black workers were high on the priority list of the mines. In 1980 Harmony Gold Mine started with the construction of 100 additional houses for married black workers.

⁵⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1977.

⁶⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

In 1981 a further R3,6 million was spent on improving living, educational and recreational facilities for black employees at Harmony Gold Mine. This expenditure included R 2,7 million spent on 100 houses for senior married employees. R291 000 was spent on improving dining and kitchen facilities in the hostels and R173 000 on the construction of 3 churches. R234 000 was spent on the Virginia Primary School, the Malello Senior Secondary School and the Harmony Farm School. R34 000 was spent on leisure parks and R37 000 on improving car parks and hostels.⁶¹

By the late 1980s mining companies, including Harmony were intensifying their efforts to recruit more South African black workers, particularly urban dwellers. The intention was to normalize the living conditions of their black employees. Families could now live together and settle in nearby towns. The living-out allowance was improved and extended to all employees living off mine premises to assist them in obtaining their own accommodation.

In 1992 the mining companies were housing about 1 million people, which included the families of these workers. In view of this it is no wonder that the mines are the second largest supplier of housing, next to the state. The mines revised their policy of offering further financial assistance to employees who wished to purchase their own homes. This was put in practice at Harmony Gold Mine. "Harmony was pursuing a policy that would enable "normal" family living to be enjoyed by its lower paid employees and I am pleased to report that more than 200 employees have purchased their own houses in the neighbouring Meloding township in Virginia in terms of a home-ownership scheme sponsored by the company and adopted during the year under review. This scheme enables prospective buyers to obtain full financing of the purchase price with the company's liability being restricted to providing modest collateral security."⁶²

⁶¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1981.

⁶² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1988.

According to Sam Mahlapa, a senior clerk at Harmony's labour department, the mine's married quarters consisted of the married quarters at Woolaways where 58 houses exist for married black workers and the quarters at Pele Pele where 24 houses were available. That was in 1959. Since 1983 three new establishments have been added, Merriespruit Married quarters with 37 houses, Phomolong with 68 houses and Tikwe with 64 houses.⁶³ The Government agreed to the erection of married quarters for a limited number of black workers who were rated as essential personnel. Black workers who were clerks, team leaders, artisan aids or teachers could make use of the married quarters. A typical house has two bedrooms, a living room, separate pantry, kitchen and bathroom. Water and electricity are provided free of charge.

The category 3-8 workers are still mostly housed in the compounds. Nowadays washing facilities as well as hot and cold showers are available. There are also large basins for washing clothes. On the newer mines there are dining rooms and some mines even cater for better facilities for more senior black workers. In the compounds built before 1939 beds were not supplied and the men had to sleep either on the concrete bunks or construct wooden beds for the short bunks. Some of these bunks could only be reached by crawling in on one side of the bed. The older mines did not have dining facilities and the men had to eat out in the sun or in their rooms. This is in sharp contrast with the modern compounds.

In the nineties, hostel accommodation has much improved. Four workers are lodged in one room. There are carpets, cupboards, beds with mattresses, tables and chairs in the room. This is a tremendous improvement according to Josephine Lebitso who has worked for 23 years as a hostel clerk at Harmony Gold Mine.⁶⁴ She said that when she started working the hostel workers only received soup and cooked-up stews as meals. The rooms were crowded and up to 16 stayed in one

⁶³ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Sam Mahlape, 11.6.1998.

⁶⁴ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Josephine Lebitso 11.6.1998.

room. The workers slept on bunks without mattresses. Now they receive meat 3 times a week, as well as eggs and fruits. They sleep on steel beds with mattresses and even have television. Me Lebitso worked with the money that the workers would remit home and she says that it is quite common for a worker to desert his wife and family after a while and take a new woman in town. The wives would then come to the hostels to find out why their husbands have stopped sending money. The mine would then deduct money for the wives and children.⁶⁵

But what do the hostel dwellers think about their living standards? Gay Seidman conducted a series of interviews with the migrants living in hostels at Harmony in 1992. At first they did not want to speak up as they feared they might lose their jobs and their distrust of mine management was evident. The workers in the hostels belonged to the less skilled category and they were the most vulnerable to retrenchments. Respondents from the Seidman-interviews mentioned the lack of adequate visiting facilities for miners' families⁶⁶, the fact that their families could not be treated at the mine hospital and that only skilled workers were eligible for family housing. It meant that "the mine persists in viewing its African workers as single and temporary."⁶⁷ These hostel residents regarded themselves as career miners and they feared retrenchment. Seidman writes, "The fear of retrenchment probably keeps many workers within the hostel system."⁶⁸

What is interesting about Seidman's interviews is that the hostel dwellers did not appear to feel excluded from the local community, in fact they felt integrated and there was increasing interaction with the communities of Meloding and Mandela Park.

The black miners who were interviewed were very pleased that their wives were able to come and visit them at the hostels for short periods.⁶⁹ The arrangement is

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ According to Seidman there were 5 to 7 visitor's rooms for the whole work force.

⁶⁷ Seidman, G., South African Sociological Review, (5) 2, p. 21.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁹ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Sebitio Mangate, Peter Letsie, Lejoetso Lejoetso, Mahlomola Makeki and Howard Mhlahloh,

that they can come and visit for a week. If she wants to stay longer, the worker must just reapply. From these interviews it is also clear that tribal barriers were very much a thing of the past. Workers from different tribes would befriend one another in the hostels and workers would also befriend township residents.

The compound system has for many years been severely criticized by historians, philanthropists, humanitarians and trade unionists, like Lulu Callinicos. The system was blamed for prostitution, homosexuality, alcoholism and the break down of family ties. NUM feels that the system should also be blamed for the spreading of AIDS and other sexually transmitted disease. It would be very difficult to determine to what an extent it has influenced the life of the black labourers. Fortunately by 1995, the conditions in the hostels have much improved and are of a very high standard. The alternative of accommodating all workers in family housing is not feasible for the mining industry in the nineties. The low gold price will ensure that the system remains in tact for at least the next few years.

The fact that an increasing number of workers are living outside the compounds, has without doubt contributed to the establishment of an informal settlement just outside the town of Virginia - Mandela Park. It includes about 1 750 shacks made of zinc, wood, and flattened oil drums. In interviews conducted with the residents of this area, Seidman discovered that more than half of the households contained a present or former mineworker. In 1992 over 16% of the respondents in their survey were working for the mine, 19% reported that their household included a current mineworker and 32.5% were retrenched mineworkers.⁷⁰ Four workers out of the 80 households being interviewed said that they wanted to be near the mine in case of a vacancy at the mine, where they have worked previously. For most of the respondents, Mandela Park's main attraction was cheap accommodation and possible employment on the mines.⁷¹

11.6.1998.

Seidman, G., *South African Sociological Review*, (5) 2, p. 23.

⁷¹ Tenants in the black location of Meloding paid rents as high as R80 a month, whereas in Mandela Park it was only R15 a month.

That the settlement can be directly linked to the mining industry is also reflected in the composition of the residents, who were drawn to the mines by the migrant labour recruiting system: 21% were born in the Transkei, 10% in Lesotho and 7.5% in Mozambique.⁷² All the countries mentioned were and still are labour sources for the mines, and specifically Harmony mine. More than 50% of the respondents were born in the Orange Free State, either in the local black township or on farms in the area. These people regarded Mandela Park as their permanent home, which emphasises that the migrant labour system are sometimes irreversible.⁷³ The workers are sent home after the completion of their contracts, but they then return spontaneously and out of their free will. When these workers were asked why they reside in the settlement, they argued that there was no work in the rural areas or previous homelands, clinics and hospitals were lacking and very far away and there are no prospects of education for their children.

The establishment of settlements such as Mandela Park was one of the reasons why the mining companies were in favour of the compound system. It was argued by the government and mines that if workers were housed outside compounds and the mines would scale down the work force or even stop production, urban slums would be the consequence. However, urban slums are part of every town in South - Africa and not just the mining towns.

Bernard Swanepoel, managing director of Harmony Gold Mine puts matters into perspective when he says that the situation in South Africa is unique when it comes to the establishment of gold mining towns. In countries like Canada and Australia, all mine workers are housed in temporary housing and they only return home once a month. This is done to avoid the situation that once the mine's life span is over, ghost towns develop.⁷⁴

⁷² Seidman, G., South African Sociological Review, (5) 2, p. 23.

⁷³ According to Seidman 85 % of the respondents regarded Mandela Park as their permanent home. Nearly 50% of the respondents mentioned that they had dependents living elsewhere. The better-off households almost invariably included a working miner.

⁷⁴ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Bernard

Jac van Heerden of Harmony Gold Mine says that over the past few years, a great deal has been done to make the hostels more comfortable and pleasant for the migrant workers. Workers also participate in the decision-making as they choose hostel representatives from their own ranks and then sit down with management to discuss problems.⁷⁵

At Harmony Gold Mine special efforts were made to provide sporting and recreational facilities for workers, as the area was devoid of recreational attractions. At each hostel, facilities were made available for sport, cinema shows and tribal dancing. All the compounds and hostels have dancing arenas where tribes compete in keen rivalry. The newer mines had first class cycle and athletic tracks. Some of the country's best athletes were produced by the mine's athletic clubs.

The most popular pastimes of the mines included soccer, cycling, athletics and dancing. All these activities would draw large crowds of spectators. Mr Jac van Heerden who is in charge of the hostels at Harmony Gold Mine says that the activities that attracts the most spectators are soccer, boxing and tribal dancing.⁷⁶ He says that the tribal dancers practise during the week and then they perform on Sundays at the various mines in the region. The objectives of the sports and recreation committee of Harmony Gold Mine are the following:

- To increase employee participation through advertising in newspapers, pamphlets and on notice boards
- To develop participants in physical fitness, sportmanship spirit, human relations and team work
- To reduce alcohol and drug abuse which impacts negatively on productivity, safety and work attendance
- To entertain employees after hours and over the weekends

Swanepoel, Managing Director of Harmony Gold Mine, 21.10.1998.

⁷⁵ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Jac van Heerden of Harmony Gold Mine, 12.11.1998.

⁷⁶ Of all the sports at the mines, soccer is the most popular. The soccer teams participate at inter-department level, then on an inter-mine level, at provincial level and finally they play in the Vodacom Cup.

- To produce players - teams and administrators of the highest standard⁷⁷

The different sports which are catered for are soccer, rugby, indoor games, Mohobelo and Ndlamu(tribal dancing), karate, body building, athletics, boxing, darts, golf, cycling and wheelchair basketball. The mine also have kombis and trailers to transport workers to the venues.⁷⁸

The following sports facilities are available at Harmony:

- 14 soccer fields
- 73 seating stands
- 4 grand stands
- 2 basketball courts
- 9 tennis courts
- 5 dancing arenas
- 4 skittle courts
- 2 training gyms
- 2 weightlifting facilities⁷⁹

The funding for the sports facilities, entrance fees and travel expenses come from the profits being made by the canteens and beer halls on the mine premises.

Jac van Heerden says that sport at the mines are completely integrated and black athletes are members of the Virginia Striders Athletic Club and black rugby players join the Harmony Rugby Club.

Josephine Lebitso who has 23 years' experience at the mine, says that the recreation activities on the mine has remained much the same. The workers still enjoy soccer and tribal dances. She remembers the movies that the workers were

⁷⁷ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Jac van Heerden of Harmony Gold Mine, 12.11.1998.

⁷⁸ Harmony Gold Mine participates in the following sports events: the Inter-hostel traditional dance competition, the Mining News Athletics event, a Sports day at Harmony stadium, the Mining News boxing event at Iscor, the Comrades Marathon in Durban, the South African Darts Championships, the Mining News Rugby Tournament and the Mining News Soccer event.

⁷⁹ W. Bezuidenhout Personal Collection, Transription of Interview with mr Jac van Heerden of Harmony Gold Mine, 12.11.1998.

shown quite well. Some of them were in their black languages. Nowadays the workers also like to play "Marabaraba" a card game that they play with lids from Coke cans.⁸⁰ The hostels also have television and video facilities and M-Net.

The branch manager of NUM, mr Mahemu feels that the union has also contributed to improve recreation facilities for their workers. Workers now have pool tables and dart facilities in the hostels. The union operates in close co-ordination with the sports and recreation administrators at the mines to cater not only for professional sportsmen, but also for the hostel resident.⁸¹

⁸⁰ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with Josephine Lebitso, 11.6.1998.

⁸¹ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Mahemu of the NUM, 18.9.1998.

CHAPTER 7 - MEDICAL BENEFITS AND IMPROVED SAFETY STANDARDS

7.1 HEALTH SCENARIO OF THE BLACK GOLD MINE WORKER

Over the years, the dangerous working conditions and health hazards have often contributed to the fact that the mines found themselves short of labour. The mines had a bad reputation for accidents, amputations and even death and was the most unpopular form of labour.¹ Workers were often recruited by the mining industry and when they came to the cities they deserted and found employment in other sectors of the economy. It can truly be said that mining safety standards and medical care have come a long way since then.

Western medical care and health programmes have contributed positively to the transformation process of the black gold mine worker insofar as it introduced him to the western culture and he was able to reap the benefits of good health care. Healthy diets, X-rays, immunizations and excellent hospital facilities became part of the daily lives of the black gold mine worker.

F. Wilson agrees, "Although it is organized somewhat differently, medical care for black mine-workers is in general as good as it is for whites."²

The cost of all medical treatment, preventative and curative, is paid for by the mines. According to the law, every mine must have a well-equipped hospital to take care of its black workers. Some of these hospitals even deal with more serious operations and rehabilitation work of those crippled by accidents on the mines. In 1949 there was one medical officer for every 5 000 black workers and 36 hospitals catering for the black labour force.³

¹ Between 1903 and 1973 almost 42 000 men died on the gold mines of which more than 90% were blacks. Guardian, 29.1.1975.

² Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold Mines, p. 49.

³ Rand Daily Mail, 23.8.1949.

It was a tremendous improvement from the pre-World War years. The medical benefit allowance was started in 1936 with the purpose of assisting white mine employees and officials, to pay an amount to the Mines Medical Benefit Society of which they were members. This amounted to R15 a month for every white employee. It included complete health insurance for employees and their families. In 1969 the Chamber of Mines increased the allowance by a total of R1.3 million and it was raised several times over the past years to meet increased costs.

Where the mining companies were reluctant at first to admit that TB in the black workers where a mine-related disease, they now took full responsibility for workers who had contracted TB. Packard describes the situation in the early years of gold mining, "Industry medical experts took the view that blacks were predisposed to TB more by racial and physiological factors than by environmental conditions."⁴

The mines have always paid some form of compensation to workers injured on the job. The Mine-workers Compensation Act of 1911 made provisions in this regard. The act was changed in 1941 when compensation was paid to an injured man or his dependents according to his earnings at the time of the accident. F. Wilson writes, "Under the rules, compensation for an average worker totally and permanently disabled by a mining accident was a lump sum of approximately R1 228 if he was black and an annual pension (paid monthly) of R1 800 if he were white."⁵

One of the most common health hazards on the mines was phthisis. The disease is caused by fine dust particles getting into the lungs, which then become more vulnerable for tuberculosis. After the First World War steps were taken to reduce the amount of dust in the mines.⁶ This has already been discussed in chapter 2.

The Miners' Phthisis Prevention Committee was formed in 1925 to consider the silicosis problem. It investigates causes of silicosis, dust control and other

⁴ Packard, R., Tuberculosis and the Development of Industrial Health Policies on the Witwatersrand, 1902-1932, p. 208.

⁵ Wilson, F., p. 50.

⁶ Before the development of water-fed drills and the introduction of hoses to spray water in areas that had just been blasted, the concentration of dust was so high that the men working on the drills were likely to get bad silicosis within five or six years.

problems affecting health, such as heat and humidity. The incidence of silicosis in white underground workers decreased from 21,95% per 1 000 workers in the years 1917-1920, to 9,19% per 1 000 workers in the years 1946-1947. The corresponding figures for tuberculosis also dropped from 2,6% per 1 000 to 0,76% per 1 000.⁷ The average period of service of all new cases of silicosis in 1946-47 was over 21 years as compared to 9 years and six months in 1917.⁸

By 1956 the Tuberculosis Bureau of the Mines was one of the best in the world. It had the best X-ray equipment in the country and even in the world. In 1956 an amount of 500 000 pounds was spent on X-ray apparatus for the mines.⁹ The improved X-ray apparatus enabled the mines to allow their workers undergo to more frequent examinations, so that the threat of black workers infecting white counterparts at the mines was minimized.¹⁰

In order to compensate workers who had contracted phthisis, the Phthisis Board also made a lump sum award, varying between R600 and R1 700 for ante-primary and primary silicosis. To meet these costs, the mining companies were paying an annual levy of R2 million into the Miners' Phthisis Fund. Black mine-workers did receive some compensation for lung disease, caused and aggravated by working underground in a mine, but it was not nearly as substantial as the compensation of the white workers. In 1943 the Miners' Phthisis Acts Commission recommended that a country-wide system for the adequate compensation and medical treatment of black workers suffering from lung disease be established. By 1967 the

⁷ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, p. 74.

⁸ Ibid., p. 74. In the early years of mining the skilled white workers who came from mines in Cornwall were very susceptible to the disease as they had already inhaled a lot of dust. In 1936 a total of 5 200 white miners had been granted monthly compensation for secondary silicosis or silicosis with tuberculosis. As many as 3 500 of these miners had already died by 1936 as their life expectancy was very low. The average life expectancy of miners with silicosis was no more than 5 years from the time they received their certificates from the Phthisis Board.

⁹ The Transvaler, 8.12.1956.

¹⁰ Nasionale Party Nuus, Augustus 1957, No. 2.

compensation fund was paying out an annual total of R10 million in the form of pension or lump sum benefits. Two-thirds of the amount went to whites and a small percentage of coloured workers and the remaining third went to black workers.¹¹

In addition to the compensation paid to mine-workers suffering from lung disease, the Chamber of Mines also established a lung research unit in 1956. Minister J.H. Viljoen said about the research laboratory, "I fully affirm, Mr President, the statement by you regarding the State's interest in the type of research work performed in these laboratories, as such research is directed towards safe-guarding of the health and well-being of the workers of your great industry and the state is naturally concerned about the health and well-being of workers. It is well-known that the mining industry, in applying its efforts and resources towards the extraction of wealth from the depths of the earth, is also not unmindful of the need to minimize the health hazards connected with mining."¹²

Mining companies have always had as their main aim to make a profit and to pay dividends to shareholders. They were not prepared to lose any number of man hours due to disease or any other factor. When they realized that diseases such as phthisis and TB were affecting production, they were prepared to do something substantial about it. The mines are not medical facilities, they are production companies aimed at maximizing production figures. When the problem of disease arose, they dealt with it accordingly.

The transformation process of the black gold mine-workers is a history of differences, with certain procedures for white workers, and different ones for blacks. There was also a difference in the way white and black miners were treated for lung disease. When white workers contracted TB they were sent to the Springkell Sanatorium on the East Rand where they were well looked after for several months until they were cured. Black mine-workers were sent home as soon as three of their

¹¹ Between 1964 and 1967 the average number of whites who were certified each year as having a compensatory lung disease was 605 while the average number of blacks were 5 930.

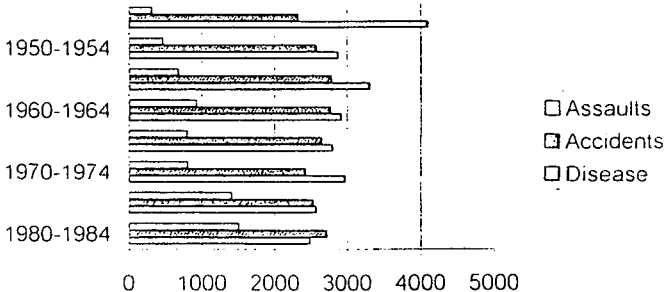
¹² Private Versameling van Minister J.H. Viljoen.PV 508, Leër 3/2/6.

sputa tests were found negative. With the lack of healthy food in the rural areas, the disease often recurred in the black worker. F. Wilson writes, "Thus, Africans who developed tuberculosis on the mines are now kept in bed for three or four weeks before being sent home armed with antibiotics and the address of a rural clinic where they can obtain more. Unfortunately, however, many men fail to keep taking the antibiotics regularly and the tuberculosis recurs."¹³

The following tables indicate how the causes of death and mortality on account of disease declined on the mines, due to improved health and working conditions:

YEARS	Disease	Accidents	Assaults	Totals
1980-1984	2481	2718	1498	6697
1975-1979	2566	2530	1406	6502
1970-1974	2973	2429	800	6202
1965-1969	2804	2655	792	6251
1960-1964	2921	2773	923	6617
1955-1959	3307	2783	670	6760
1950-1954	2873	2576	463	5912
1945-1949	4093	2326	308	6727

SOURCE: THE CHAMBER OF MINES



SOURCE: CHAMBER OF MINES

¹³ Wilson, F., p. 52.

New blasting techniques also contributed to the decrease in the fatality rate. The electric blasting done today from the shaft station, when all the workers are on the surface, is in strong contrast with the hazardous blasting method of the past. In the past the dynamite holes were charged with little sticks of powder about ten centimetres long. A fuse and a primer were then packed into the hole. The miner and the black worker remained behind as the rest of the group departed. When it was blasting time, the black worker lit his stick and the many fuses were set alight. He had to be very nimble as there was no time to waste. It usually took about 3 minutes to light all the fuses and the miner had to stay within sight in case the black worker slipped. The fuses were just long enough for the white miner and the black worker to escape.¹⁴ Since 1970 the mines have also offered specialist medical care at the Rand Mutual Hospital in Johannesburg.¹⁵ The mines have a network of hospitals in mining areas, as well as clinics and stations on the mine premises for emergency treatment. By 1995 medical clinics had been established in the villages on the mine premises with qualified black nursing sisters in charge. They report to the mine medical officers and their duties are to hold clinics, visit the sick and to give advice on feeding and domestic problems.

When a worker is assigned to a mine, he is credited with 42 calendar days' mine accident leave and 42 calendar days' sick leave. Every hostel also has a well-equipped medical station manned by a Medical Station Superintendent. This person is either a qualified male nurse or a doctor. He is assisted by first-aid

¹⁴ Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, p. 211.

¹⁵ The hospital has 504 beds and a full time staff of specialist consultants. It also has a 100-bed trauma unit catering for workers injured seriously at work. The hospital has an enviable reputation both nationally and internationally. It has highly-sophisticated operation theatres, a modern intensive care unit and one of the best burns units in the country. The spinal unit deals with injuries from day one right up to recovery. It runs rehabilitation programmes and operates a field service to ex-patients long after they have returned home. The neuro-surgery unit has academic status, operating as a satellite of the Johannesburg hospital. A helicopter facilitates the transport and reception of severely injured or ill patients.

attendants. Every underground station also has a dressing station and all supervisors are trained in first aid.

All recruits are thoroughly examined when they come to the mines, vaccinated against TB and other contagious diseases and undergo an X-ray examination. A medical record is kept of every worker and chest X-rays are taken every 6 months to ensure a quick assessment of a disease and immediate medical treatment. Workers' eyes are tested by an eye specialist if necessary, and dental care is provided by an appointed dentist. These services are offered free of charge.

The mines have developed a comprehensive insurance compensation for their workers. The Rand Mutual Assurance Company was established to provide relief for the employees of all races in the gold mining industry who are injured in work-related accidents and for their dependents if they are killed.

If a worker is temporarily disabled he will receive an earnings replacement that varies from 60-75% of his monthly earnings, depending on superiority. In cases of serious disablement, a life-long pension is paid according to the salary of a worker. A family allowance is also paid for permanent disabled workers, where the family is larger than a wife and one child.¹⁶ Provision is also made for a constant attendance allowance in cases where a worker, because of his injury, is unable to perform the essential actions of life without the help of an attendant.

Since 1990 another facet of medical care was implemented in the mining industry. Experience in the last few years had showed that emotional and social problems might seriously affect work performance. The mines provided psychological, social work and psychiatric consultations which contributed towards optimizing manpower function.

The most common pathological problems experienced during the year were alcohol-related, anxiety disorders such as depression, family-related incidents and sometimes suicides. Although the number of suicides were small, 12 for the year

¹⁶ "The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker".

1991, it was notable because suicide had not been a factor in previous years.¹⁷ The increase in the number of suicides on the mines, may be indicative of the state of uncertainty, both financial and emotional, of the South African population.

The year 1991 was a milestone in the total health care of the black gold mine worker. It was the year in which the Mines Benefit Society(MBS) became non-racial and admitted non-whites to the organisation. MBS funds all and delivers much of the non-work-related health care required by the skilled employees on the gold mines.¹⁸

The mining industry has had a long history of dealing with the health problems of, and providing first class medical facilities for, its workers. The Harmony Hospital in Virginia is an excellent example. The hospital is currently serving: Harmony Gold Mine, Unisel, Pres. Brand (2,3 and 5 shafts), Masimong Mine (3,4 and 5 shafts) and the mine contractors. The hospital has 290 beds for mine medical fund patients and 40 private beds that are used by the medical practioners in the town of Virginia. The hospital has a staff of 166 of whom 4 are full-time doctors. It has a 24 hour emergency service and offers the following services:

- Maternity Ward.
- Pediatric Ward.
- Adult wards(Male and Female).
- Two Theatres.
- Outpatient department.
- Physiotherapy department.
- Social Worker.
- Medical and Nursing Services.
- Administration and Accounts Departments.
- Laboratory Services.
- Occupational Health Services.

¹⁷ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1991.

¹⁸ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1992.

- Chemist.

The hospital has all the facilities to deal with any emergency or accident on the mines. Intensive care treatment is provided by private hospitals in Welkom and the mine pays for all the costs involved. The hospital also has medical stations on its various shafts and ambulance transport is available to take seriously injured or ill patients from the shafts to the hospital. The hospital is very modern and serves the mines and the whole community of Virginia.

7.2 SAFETY AND PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS

As early as in 1910, the Prevention of Accidents Committee was formed, fully financed by the Rand Mutual Assurance Co. Ltd.¹⁹ The function of this company was to investigate various ways of preventing accidents, to investigate the causes of accidents and to establish safety devices. Safety is marketed through the issue of various printed reports, booklets on safety matters, posters, safety notices and calendars, the publication of a monthly journal, the broadcasting of safety talks and the showing of videos dealing with safety in the black compounds.

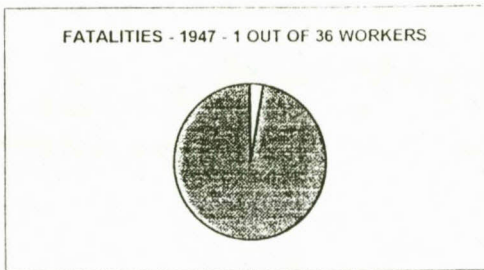
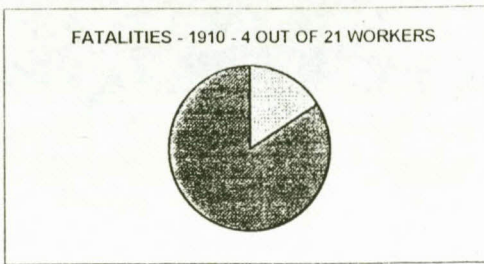
The committee has also initiated inter-mine safety competitions, based on improvements in the accident rates, for which prizes are awarded. In conjunction with the South African Red Cross Society, it also encourages First aid and ambulance work by training white and black workers in First aid.

From 1939 to 1943, 20 444 white mine-workers qualified for various first aid certificates and in 1941, 14 627 white miners, of whom 10 708 were employed underground, had obtained first aid certificates. In accordance with regulations, all mining officials must be in possession of a first aid certificate not more than 3 years

¹⁹ This committee had the following members: Representatives from the Department of Mines, Native Affairs and Public Health, the Mining Groups, the Chamber of Mines the Association of Mine Managers, the Association of Mine Medical Officers, the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Rand Mutual Assurance Co.Ltd.

old. All mining students at a university and any government mining training school apprentices must also pass the requirements to obtain their first aid certificate before completing their course. During the course of 1947, 38 320 black mine-workers passed their First Aid examination, bringing the total of qualified black miners with First Aid certificates, from the time of introduction of these courses until the end of December 1947, to the impressive figure of 401 107. On the mines on the Witwatersrand no black worker can become a boss boy unless he possesses a first aid certificate.²⁰

The consistent campaign for safety by the mines, did succeed in bringing down the fatality rate per thousand persons in service, which decreased from 4:21 in 1910 to 1:36 in 1947 as the following table indicates:



SOURCE: Biccard Jeppe, C.W., "Gold Mining in South Africa", p. 72.

²⁰

In 1947, 1 948 black worker teams, consisting of 5 members per team, competed in the Annual Inter-mine First aid Competition. Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 72.

"This is a great achievement, especially in the view of the fact that the major part of the labour force is composed of unskilled natives(sic): it indicates very clearly the recognized aptitude of the natives to absorb and put into practice safety principles, their readiness for discipline and their natural good sense," argues Biccard Jeppe.²¹ The early mines did not have a very good safety record. During the period 1936 to 1966 no fewer than 19 000 men died as a result of accidents. Ninety-three per cent of these workers were black.²² The high safety standard of the newly developed Free State mines led to a decrease in the mortality rate in 1961. Hocking writes, "The accident rate for the year was 1.29 per thousand - the best yet, and partly the result of an excellent safety performance in the Free State."²³ During 1968, 491 black workers and 18 white workers were killed while 25 000 blacks and 2 000 whites were injured to such an extent that they were forced to stay away from work for more than 14 days. The major causes of death were:

- falling rock and rock bursts;
- truck and tramway accidents;
- accidents because of falling and slipping;
- rock falls;
- and falls of mining materials.

Each individual mine has its own safety officers and staff, and runs on an incentive bonus scheme based on safety performance of underground workers. The government has its own Mining Engineers' department which conducts routine inspections and also investigates any fatality or accident involving the absence of a person from work for more than 14 days. The experienced technical staff of this department has played a prominent part in ensuring the safe operations of mines.

Since starting production in 1954, Harmony Gold Mine has rewarded its workers for saving or endeavouring to save the lives of co-workers. In July 1958 a black worker, Armando Kosa, received a Golden Hat award for bravery, presented to him

²¹ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 73.

²² Wilson, F., p. 21.

²³ Hocking, A., p. 203.

at a special ceremony at the Virginia Gold Mine, for trying to save the life of an electrician, mr J Wessels. An audience composed of 200 white workers and 3 000 blacks was present when boss boy Nolamane Sepolo was presented with a Golden Hat safety award. He received it for outstanding safety work over a period of 6 years, during which time not one of his 35-man stoping gang had suffered an accident necessitating hospital treatment. Nolamane had worked more than 17 000 accident-free shifts. He had worked for the mines for 13 years and had already received 6 other awards for safety. He was a Pondo and came from Libode in the Transkei.²⁴

In May 1960 a black underground policeman, Lebasa Lesuthu, was awarded the Golden Hat award in the presence of 4 000 blacks and 350 white workers for saving lives underground. In his presentation speech the then acting manager of Harmony, mr Waterman said, "We salute a brave man. We thank him for the fine example he set and the lives he saved by his brave action."²⁵

These awards were introduced as an incentive for workers to give high priority to safety on the mines. The fact remains that underground work is an extremely dangerous occupation.

One of the fields in which safety has improved tremendously is in the blasting technique used on mines. The presence of methane gas is a serious threat during blasting operations. Techniques of remotely initiated ignitor cords have been evolved for stoping and development. The blasting now takes place when all the workers have withdrawn from the work place. At Harmony mine a system of centralized electrical blasting is used. It is activated from the shaft station and much safer as it takes place only after the workers have returned to the surface. This system has since been taken over by other mines.

²⁴ Virginia News, July 1958.

²⁵ Virginia News, May 1960.

Stringent regulations with regard to safety are laid down by government. Precautions include the protection of underground workers against dust, provision of adequate ventilation and regulations to ensure safe working conditions.

More recently the Chamber of Mines has been investing R35 million a year to make mining safer and more healthy.²⁶ It is applaudable that, although mining conditions has been taking place in even deeper and warmer places, the injury rate has been reduced by 50% over the last decade. This can be attributed to the following factors:

- the introduction of loss control techniques
- the development of safer underground support systems.
- the use of computer techniques to plan safer mine layouts.
- the improvement of environmental conditions through the development of chilled water cooling systems.
- the installation of seismic networks throughout the gold mines to monitor earth movement and point out potentially dangerous areas.²⁷

These improvements are examples of the high priority the mining industry puts on safety.

In May 1986 Harmony first succeeded in obtaining a 5 star rating from the International Mine Safety Board, the highest achievement in mining safety. When the mine was first graded in 1983, it achieved only 2 stars and the reportable accidents were 29,8 per 1 000 workers. This figure had dropped to 24,1 per 1 000 workers by 1986.²⁸

²⁶ Research to develop safer mining conditions for the unique South African mines has been costly. South African mines function at great depths, in hard rock and narrow seams, so knowledge cannot be shared with other countries. Yet, the individual mines spend millions to ensure the safety of their workers. Safety is one of the highest priorities of management.

²⁷ "South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker".

²⁸ Die Volksblad, 25.3.1986.

Safety blazers were also given to two team leaders, Mr Mapei and Mr Thabau, who managed to obtain 10 stars in the safety programme of the mine.²⁹ Mine management was looking at recognition beyond the 10 star rating to encourage workers even more strenuously to make safety their top priority.³⁰

At Harmony Gold Mine every accident is investigated by a team in an effort to prevent. The circumstances surrounding the accident are examined and steps taken to prevent similar accidents. Communication is also very important and the mine has regular meetings in which safety and the prevention of accidents are on the agenda.

At Harmony Gold Mine videos are also used frequently in a bid to prevent accidents. "Sendile Sam" is a very popular video character at the mine. He shows where mistakes are being made and how to correct them. This character flies around in the mine tunnels showing how accidents are caused and how to avoid them. The videos with "Sendile Sam" as the main character are produced at the mine's training centre and shown at the hostels. The mine uses the most modern equipment in producing the film material.

In addition to the videos every white worker also carries a list of dangerous situations to be avoided underground. Meetings with team leaders regularly take place and workers are encouraged by means of the star programme to improve their safety standards.

The team leader plays a very important role in the safety awareness programmes on the mine. He has to carry out inspections of his area every day. He has to determine spots that can be repaired and barricade off an area that cannot be fixed with red danger tape. Maintenance teams will then deal with these.

²⁹ Mr Mapei, a team leader, started working at the mine in 1974. He was awarded his first star on June 7, 1985 and on December 7, he was one of 26 team leaders on no. 3 shaft who obtained 5 stars. He went to achieve his final goal in 1986.

Mr Thabau started working on the mine in 1979 and received his first star in 1984.

³⁰ In 1983 the death rate in accidents on the mine was 22 for every 1 000 workers. This figure came down to 12 per 1 000 workers in 1986.

The planned inspection system also stipulates that the shift boss may not carry out a planned inspection without being accompanied by the miner and the team leader. More facts are being recorded this way, and thus more action can be taken in the prevention stage. Some accidents are, however, difficult to prevent. Rock falls are feared by all on the mines and in July 1987 two workers at Harmony were killed in a rock fall.

In June 1987 Harmony achieved its 15th million fatality-free shifts. Mr Knobbs, the chairman, commented, "Harmony has increased its safety as well as its production by keeping to the rules and standards and regulations. Working safely has become a way of life at Harmony."³¹

At the annual Mine Safety and Health Congress held in Johannesburg, the chairman of the Mine Safety Division, Mr Colin Fenton, stated that, although the reportable injury rate on South African mines had declined over the past year or so, the fatality rate had not. The only mine which has succeeded in reducing its injury and fatality rate has been Harmony. Its fatality rate declined by 18% and it also succeeded in achieving a 55,6% reduction in its reportable casualty rate. Mr Anthony Gill said that such an outstanding safety record could only be the result of the application of good standards and of proper supervisory commitment from all levels of staff and discipline.³²

In May 1988 a terrible fatal accident occurred at Harmony resulting in the deaths of 10 black miners. The door of the cage struck an object and opened. Ten workers fell out and tumbled to their death. There were 45 workers in the cage at the time. Most of the workers killed were from Lesotho. After a thorough investigation it was revealed that an instrument had been protruding from the cage in spite of the prohibition barring mine-workers from carrying tools in the cage.³³

In 1990 Harmony received the millionaire's shield for the seventeenth time. The mine had the lowest death rate of all the mines in the Rand Mines Group. The

³¹ Die Volksblad, 26.6.1987.

³² Vista, 19.1.1988. See Appendix 3.

³³ Die Volksblad, 17.1.1990.

death rate per thousand workers in 1989 was 9,74. The manager, mr Karl Eick said that in 1989 twice as many workers died in road accidents as in mine accidents.³⁴

TEBA, the mine's savings fund, also administers the rehabilitation centre for paraplegics and quadriplegics, injured at work, in car accidents, sport or any other way.³⁵ The rehabilitation centre, which is based in Welkom, prepares injured men, as well as their families, to deal with these handicaps. Field staff also monitors the health of those at home and arranges for regular visits for treatment at the centre in Welkom.

The Safety Management Services of the mines have started a Rescue Training Service or RTS. The service aims at providing mines with advice and service for the rescue of persons, fire fighting, recovery work and any other operations necessitating the employment of rescue teams trained in, and equipped with, oxygen breathing apparatus. The RTS does not maintain full-time professional rescue brigades, but relies on volunteers who work on the mines. By 1991, there were 53 rescue workers of whom 13 came from Welkom.

A more specific breakdown of the fatalities on the gold mines of the Chamber of Mines, is indicated in the following table:

1990	DEATHS	INJURED
Pressure Burst	147	485
Other Fall of Ground	138	2 015
Trucks and Tramways	71	1 789
Falling Material	15	974
Explosives	48	84

³⁴ The Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1991, p. 60.

³⁵ Die Volksblad, 17.1.1990.

Falling in shafts	37	137
Other Shaft Accidents	17	72
Electricity	3	28
Machinery	3	247
Slipping and Falling	0	547
Explosion of Gas	5	13
Burning and Scalding	1	48
Splinters	0	184
Heat Stroke	3	2
Heat Exhaustion	0	12
Other causes	34	1 418
TOTAL	522	8 055

SOURCE: THE CHAMBER OF MINES

According to Sam Mahlapa, a senior clerk at Harmony's labour department the following procedure is followed in case of an accident: the hostel manager is notified, a relative must identify the body and the death is registered at the Department of Home Affairs. The family of the deceased mine worker can then claim from two benefit schemes. The first one is the Mineworkers' Insurance and Benefit Scheme and the other one is the Fatal and Mine Accident Scheme. The mine pays for any transport and funeral costs involved, which it then claims from the insurance company. A representative of the mine also attends the funeral. The mine worker's wife receives a lump sum of 36 times her husband's monthly salary and she also receives her husband's salary every month until her youngest child is 21 years old. The accident in which a mine worker is killed is thoroughly investigated by the Chamber of Mines.³⁶

The newly proposed Health and Safety Act of the government had severe repercussions for mine management. In the past, there had been official inquiries in

³⁶ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Sam Mahlapa, senior clerk at Harmony Gold Mine who handles fatalities, 11.6.1998.

cases of mine accidents. Where appropriate, mine managers and other parties had been prosecuted and faced heavy penalties when found guilty. Clauses in the new Safety Act implied that from now on they would be guilty until proven innocent. Shortly afterwards there was a freak accident in Merriespruit in Virginia. After heavy rains, the slimes dam which overlooked the suburb was flooded. One of the walls broke and a sea of mud swept through the houses. Seventeen residents were killed and the damage was estimated at millions of rands. Senior mine officials were found criminally liable and punished.³⁷

7.3 AIDS

By the 1980s the mining industry had diseases like TB and phthisis under control, but a new disease, AIDS, was emerging.³⁸ In 1985 the mining industry was the first private sector employer in South Africa to give attention to the occurrence of HIV infection and AIDS in its work force, an admission that the virus was a threat to the industry. Today it plays a leadership role in the fight against the HIV crisis in South and Southern Africa.³⁹ Laurice Taits mentioned in an article in the Sunday Times, "The last time the Free State mining town of Virginia made headlines was in February 1994, when the Merriespruit slimes dam wall collapsed, taking 80 homes and 14 people with it. Now, Virginia established in the 1950s after the discovery of the Free State Goldfields, faces another disaster - being swept away by the AIDS epidemic."⁴⁰

³⁷ Hocking, A., p. 339.

³⁸ The first two AIDS cases in South Africa were diagnosed in December 1982. By April 1990 the figure had reached 386. The HIV epidemic in South Africa demonstrates "Western" and "African" transmission patterns. In the USA and the United Kingdom homosexual, bisexual men and intravenous drug users are identified as the major high-risk group. In Africa HIV infection has resulted principally from heterosexual intercourse and affects males and females in equal ratios.

³⁹ Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1992, p. 34.

⁴⁰ Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

If one examines the AIDS issue in South Africa, it is important to note that unlike TB, AIDS is not a notifiable disease and therefore does not have to be reported. There is a stigma attached to an AIDS patient and the virus is surrounded by a certain amount of secrecy, also in the mining industry. This is partly because of humanity's misconception about the virus and the fear of black gold mine-workers of losing their jobs. The HIV virus is also closely linked to other sexually transmitted diseases or STDs.⁴¹

The risk of contracting the HIV virus depends principally on the number of unprotected sexual contacts of a migrant worker. If a worker has a sexually transmitted disease it increases his susceptibility to the virus and it has been found that the incidence of STDs is high among migrant workers on the mines.⁴² The following table shows the seriousness of STDs among mine-workers as it indicates that its incidence is on the increase:

YEAR	GOLD MINES IN THE OFS %
1978	39.61
1979	50.54
1980	62.22
1981	63.18
1982	60.37
1983	65.21
1984	69.36
1985	76.11

SOURCE: ANGLO AMERICAN MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

⁴¹ STDs include diseases such as gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital ulcer and chlamydia.

⁴² Homosexual Relationships do occur in single-sex hostels on the mines but are unlikely to involve unsafe sex. Research has shown that these relationships tend to be monogamous and men do not have sexual contacts with multiple partners. Moodie, D., "Migrancy and male sexuality on the South African Gold Mines". Journal for South African Studies. p. 228-256.

Moreover, the migrant labour system contributes to the transmission of the disease over a wide geographical area as workers carry diseases to and from their home towns. It makes mining towns very vulnerable. To understand the gravity of the situation, one must realize that in 1986 the mining industry was employing 625 000 black migrant workers. The majority of these workers were not allowed to bring their families to the mining areas and were housed in single-sex hostels.⁴³ Dr Rhet Kahn, a medical practitioner in Virginia with many black patients, also blames the migrant labour system for the high incidence of AIDS, "The mines employ a lot of foreign workers and they come here without their wives and families."⁴⁴ Most of the workers at Harmony Gold Mine hail from Lesotho, the second largest group is Xhosa-speaking and the third-largest group hails from Mozambique.

In 1986 the Chamber of Mines conducted an HIV screening programme during which more than 300 000 blood samples were taken from black and white mine-workers. This was an admission that the mining industry was vulnerable to the disease. It was found that the prevalence of HIV antibody positivity among migrant workers from Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa was low, but very high for workers coming from Malawi⁴⁵ as the following table will show:

POPULATION OF MINE WORKERS		
Country of origin	No. tested	No. HIV positive (%)
Malawi	3165	3.76
Botswana	2603	0.34
Lesotho	2246	0.09
Mozambique	2152	0.09
Swaziland	1885	0.05
South Africa	18450	0.02
Total	29961	4.35

SOURCE: THE CHAMBER OF MINES

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁴⁴ *Sunday Times*, 11.10.1998.

⁴⁵ The HIV virus increased among Malawian workers from 3.8% in 1986 to 10% in 1987 and was 21% by 1989.

On the basis of the 1986 study, the Chamber of Mines estimated that 1 093 mine-workers in 1986 and more than 2 000 in the early 1988 had the virus.⁴⁶

The Chamber of Mines put pressure on President Banda to allow testing of workers in Malawi, before they were to travel to South Africa, but he refused. The Chamber refused to accept untested workers and at the beginning of the 1990s the number of Malawian workers fell to below 1 000. This is reminiscent of the scenario in the 1920s when the workers who were recruited further north than 22 degrees were returned, because of their susceptibility to pneumonia.⁴⁷

The mines have several programmes aimed at curbing the spread of the virus as part of their policy of employee health and safety in general. In 1992 these included epidemiological and other clinical surveys, information and education campaigns counselling services to HIV-infected employees and their families and contributions to knowledge and research about AIDS.

The Chamber of Mines is represented on the AIDS Advisory Group. It is also an active member of the co-ordinating committee of the National AIDS Convention of South Africa and several non-governmental organisations. These organisations aim to co-ordinate a national strategy against the virus and the general awareness of the epidemic.

In 1992, the Chamber of Mines also assisted the AIDS Centre at the South African Institute for Medical Research with a R175 000 donation. Between 1987 and 1992, the Chamber of Mines donated R625 000 for research on AIDS.⁴⁸

Hundreds of industrial nurses, social workers and human resource practitioners have by now received specialised training as AIDS counsellors at the AIDS Centre. The Chamber of Mines also offers routine HIV testing to all patients who visit the sexually transmitted disease(STD) clinics and to TB patients. The average percentage of HIV positives among STD patients rose from 7,1% during the first half

⁴⁶ Business Day, 7.9.1987.; Business Day, 12.4.1990.

⁴⁷ Jochelson, K., Mothibeli, M., Ieger, J., HIV and Migrant Labour in South Africa, p.33.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

of 1992 to 11,8% in the second half of the year. These figures confirm a widely accepted view that South Africa is entering the rapid growth phase of the HIV epidemic.

An industrial court ruling in April 1992 laid down that it was unfair labour practice to dismiss an employee suffering from AIDS on diagnosis.⁴⁹ The court found that an employer should investigate the extent to which the employee is unable to perform his former duties. The employee was entitled to take part in the investigation to protect his interests. The employer had to consult the employee to find out whether he was capable of performing his duties or whether they could be adapted so that he could continue working, either alone or with reasonable assistance. If the employee could not continue with his duties, the employer had to ascertain whether alternative work was available in the organisation.

In 1994 the Chamber of Mines health adviser, dr Izak Fourie, acted as the chairman of a working group tasked with preparing a socio-economic impact study. They operated with the assistance of the World Health Organisation and other international experts. Working with dr Fourie in the special work group were Alan Whiteside, a researcher from the University of Natal and an actuary, Peter Doyle, author of the Doyle Model, which is regarded as the most authoritative statistical model for predicting the future of the AIDS/HIV virus.

It must be stressed that a report published by the Medical Research Council in December 1991 claimed that fewer than 20% of cases of AIDS in South Africa were being reported.⁵⁰ The director of the Bloemfontein HIV clinic, dr Mark Hendricks, said in June 1992 that reporting of AIDS cases was incomplete. He added that the figures were given by the government were a "drop in the ocean" compared to the total number of cases of HIV infection. Dr Hendricks pointed out that since AIDS

⁴⁹ Race Relations Survey 1992, p. 290.

⁵⁰ A report entitled "Changing Health in South Africa" published by the Medical Research Council in 1991 said that by the year 2 000 there could be 4 million people in South Africa infected with HIV. By that time 200 000 people could also have died of the disease. It is said that by the year 2005 the cost of AIDS in terms of additional health expenditure could be between 34% and 75% of the health budget.

was not a notifiable disease, AIDS researchers were dependent on the "goodwill" of doctors for ensuring that cases were reported. He claimed that the AIDS education campaign had failed and that the public was still largely unaware of the extent of the disease.⁵¹

The statistics of the Department of Health does, however, indicate that the incidence of AIDS is higher in heterosexual African men and women and it is in this category that the black mine worker falls.⁵²

The director of the Centre for Health Policy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Cedric de Beer, said in December 1991 that political violence, the price of gold and the success of negotiations were all likely to have as great, or even greater, an effect on the economic future of South Africa as AIDS. He pointed out that there were many myths circulating about the devastating effects of AIDS on the country, which often led to doomsday scenarios. According to him, AIDS was likely to have the following effects:

- the length of time it would take the disease to double would increase from less than a year in 1991 to three years in 1995;
- even if there was no change in sexual behaviour, the epidemic would reach a plateau by 2010;
- however, once a significant number of people began to die of AIDS, changes in sexual behaviour were likely to occur. The plateau was thus likely to occur by 2005, when about 18% of the population would be infected;
- the population would at no stage be reduced in absolute terms by deaths from AIDS, instead it would only grow more slowly.⁵³

It is obvious that the black gold mine worker is facing a tough adversary. This time the enemy is not low wages, the colour bar or racial discrimination, but the HIV

⁵¹ Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 289.

⁵² By 30 June 1992, 50% of AIDS cases were heterosexual African men and women, 27% homosexual white men and 14% African infants.

⁵³ Mr de Beer estimated that by 2005, the population of South Africa would be 53 million. Race Relations Survey, 1992, p. 291.

virus. From interviews with the mine-workers it is quite clear that they dread the disease and that they are well-informed about how you can contract the disease. AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases have moved to the forefront of the public health agenda in South Africa. The incidence of HIV has increased in the country from 10.44% in 1985 to 14.17% in 1996.⁵⁴

There must be no doubt that the migrant labour system contributes to spreading the HIV-virus as Jochelson, Mothibeli and Leger writes, "The migrant labour system has created a market for prostitution in mining towns and geographic networks of relationships within and between urban and rural communities. A section of the migrant work force and a group of women dependent on prostitution for economic support appear especially vulnerable to contracting HIV infection since they are involved in multiple sexual encounters with different, changing partners, usually without condom protection. Furthermore, sexually transmitted disease morbidity is extensive in the general and mineworker populations. Historically, migration facilitated the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases and may act similarly for HIV."⁵⁵ and "Commercial sex flourishes under conditions of migrancy."⁵⁶ Industrialization, particularly the rapid growth of the mining industry with the migrant labour system it created, led to the emergence of new diseases, according to Jochelson. Since the 1930s venereal diseases like gonorrhoea and syphilis have emerged in urban and rural populations throughout South Africa. S.L. Kark links the emergence and prevalence of these diseases directly to the migrant labour system

⁵⁴ Directorate: Health Systems Research and Epidemiology Department of Health, 14 May 1997.

⁵⁵ Jochelson, K, Mothibeli, M., Leger, J., Human Immune Deficiency Virus and Migrant Labour in South Africa, p. 157.

⁵⁶ Jackson, D.J., Rakwar, J., Richardson, B.A., Decreased Incidence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases among Trucking Company Workers in Kenya, p. 903.; Abdool Karim, Q., Soldan, K., Zondi, M., Reducing the Risk of HIV infection among South African Sex Workers, p. 1521.; Chipfakacha, V., "Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The Shurungi sex-workers", The South African Medical Journal, 1993, 83(1), p. 40.

and argues that prostitution resulted from the separation of husbands from their wives and families.⁵⁷

The migrant workers' frequent and lengthy absences from their homes disrupt their familiar and stable sexual relationships and some migrants may be encouraged to seek sexual relationships with women in nearby townships. Migrancy also puts marriages under great strain and encourages divorce and abandonment which deprives many women of financial support. Some women may choose prostitution as their only means of survival. "Local lore has it that sex in Virginia is cheap. With not much else to do, it is also a popular form of recreation."⁵⁸ Tina Fidler who works in a doctor's practice in Virginia says that, "Most domestic workers earn R200 a month, which is not a living wage. They supplement their salaries in the back rooms of suburbia. I've heard sometimes they do it for a bottle of beer. That's the price."⁵⁹ The risk of contracting the HIV virus depends principally on the number of unprotected sexual contacts a migrant workers has. If a worker has a sexually transmitted disease it increases his susceptibility to the virus and it has been found that STDs are high among migrant workers on the mines.⁶⁰ The prevention of STDs can be an effective strategy for reducing the HIV transmission.⁶¹ The following

⁵⁷ Kark, S.L., "The Social Pathology of Syphilis in Africans", South African Medical Journal p. 77.

⁵⁸ Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Homosexual relationships do occur in single-sex hostels on the mines but are unlikely to involve unsafe sex. Research has shown that these relationships tend to be monogamous and men do not have sexual contacts with multiple partners. Moodie, D., "Migrancy and male sexuality on the South African Gold Mines", Journal for South African Studies, p. 228-256.

⁶¹ In Tanzania merely improving STD case management in health facilities using the syndromic approach resulted in a 40% reduction in HIV transmission Grosskurth H., Moshia, F., Todd, J., Impact of Improved Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases on HIV infection in rural Tanzania, p. 346.

table shows the occurrence of STDs in the black work force at Harmony Gold Mine. The workers were tested by means of urine samples just before they went on their annual leave:

STD'S	%
GONORRHEA	4.4
CHLAMYDIA	7.3
GON. AND/OR CHL	10.8
GENITAL ULCER	5.7

SOURCE: PPT FINAL REPORT, p. 16.

The migrant labour system also contributes to transmitting the disease over a wide geographical area as workers carry diseases to and from their home towns. It makes mining towns very vulnerable. "Factors that lead to disruption of communities and separation of couples in stable relationships are known to enhance the spread of sexually transmitted disease. Migrant labour thus carries special risks to the workers themselves, their families at home and their partners in local communities."⁶² To understand the seriousness of the situation, one must realize that in 1986 the mining industry was employing 625 000 black migrant

⁶² PPT Final Report, p. ii.

workers. Almost all these workers barred from bringing their families to the mining areas and were housed in single-sex hostels.⁶³

The HIV virus enters the heterosexual mining communities, like Virginia from other areas. The disease then spreads to the immediate urban area and to surrounding urban areas. From there it will spread into the rural areas and from one rural area to another. Because of migrancy it will even spread across the borders of the country. Jochelson writes, "The government's policy of repatriating HIV carriers is a vain attempt to keep out rather than confront the problem. The virus is already present in the local black heterosexual population, and the migrant labour system is likely to play a part in hastening its spread."⁶⁴

In a survey conducted by Jochelson, Mothibeli and Leger among black hostel dwellers on South African mines, the mine-workers mentioned that the migrant labour system had harmed their family lives. The black workers complained about being locked in like animals, about the lack of privacy and about open showers and toilets. "Hostel living is a world of continuous queuing for showers, for meals, and to wash work clothes, even queuing for drinks before going to sleep."⁶⁵

With the migrant workers engaging for longer contracts since the 1980s the effect the system had on migrants and their sexual relationships was even worse. The workers were faced with the lonely hours of the evening and often resorted to alcohol and even marijuana. Black workers in the Jochelson-survey admitted that it was difficult to stay celibate for the lengthy periods of their contracts and they would wander into town in the evening to find the company of women.⁶⁶

These sexual liaisons are either cash transactions with prostitutes (*matekatse*); casual, short-term relationships with unmarried women (*baratani*) or married or

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁶⁵ Jochelson, K., a.o., p. 163.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

divorced women (linyatsi) or longer-term semi-permanent relationships in which the woman is often referred to as his mosadi or wife.⁶⁷

According to Jochelson, the prostitutes go to the mine premises and wait outside the gates for the workers. They know exactly when it is pay day and on these days a prostitute may accept up to 10 clients a day.⁶⁸ The prostitutes also wait at taxi ranks, shopping centres, mine stores or shebeens. One prostitute in the Jochelson-survey said, "If there were no hostels we would die of hunger. We live because of the hostel system."⁶⁹

According to dr Tony de Coita at Harmony Mine Hospital the situation is one of many males, having sexual intercourse with a small percentage of women. The situation in the mining town of Virginia is 50 workers for every 10 women.⁷⁰ AIDS in Virginia is serious and dr De Coita estimates that 20% of the work force has the HIV virus.⁷¹ "Here at the hospital we have 2 to 3 people dying every week."⁷²

It is a scenario that enhances the chances of contracting the HIV virus as commercial and casual sex is a prominent feature around many South African mining towns. It is regarded as one of the key factors responsible for the high STD rates in mining communities. "Genital ulcer disease due to chancroid, syphilis and herpes, as well as non-ulcerative STDs such as gonorrhoea and chlamydia

⁶⁷ Sometimes the black workers become attached to their new women and would then abandon their wives in the rural areas. There is also the implication that the wife in the rural area will not be satisfied and will take on a lover or a nyatsi, for the company and for the money. When her husband suspects anything she will be beaten or abandoned. She then loses her home and the remittance money. Some women then come to towns to find other means of support. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁷⁰ Central Statistics Services. Population Census 1985, Industry by Development Region, Statistical Region and District, Report no.02.85.02.

⁷¹ The provincial figure for the Free State is that 14% of the population has HIV.

⁷² W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with dr de Coita of Harmony Hospital, 13.10.1998.

infection, are common in the migrant communities surrounding South African mines.⁷³

One of the mining industry's preventative measures to combat the HIV virus and STDs is the use of condoms, which are freely handed out at hostels and at the training centre. In a survey done by the Chamber of Mines, 66% of the workers never used condoms. Their reasons ranged from ignorance and fears that it would interfere with sex, to distrust of mine management. One interviewee explained, "I don't get the satisfaction you get from having sex naturally. The reason why we don't take up the management's advice is because he doesn't satisfy us on many things, but wants us to use condoms."⁷⁴ The interviewees who had used condoms reported that they did so because they distrusted their partners and wanted to avoid STD infections. Dr Vugelwa Manzana who has a private practice in the town of Virginia and also works at local clinics says, "I sit here counselling patients about using condoms and I can see that they can't wait until I have finished. Then there are those who have told me they want flesh on flesh."⁷⁵ Dr Jana Viljoen, from Harmony Hospital mentions another problem, that of the patient's right to secrecy. "It all makes me so angry, the fact that this disease is kept so secret. I know a man in town found to be positive. He refuses to tell his wife and children, and the doctor can't tell them without his consent. How can I sleep, knowing there is a woman who is going to be killed and there is nothing we can do?"⁷⁶

The distrust of management in the matter of AIDS could have severe repercussions. Workers tend to disbelieve the pamphlets and statistics made available by management and sometimes even believe that it is part of the retrenchment programmes at the mines to have workers dismissed. Even attempts from the

⁷³ PPT Report, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Ijsselmuiden, C., Mashaba, W.Z., Padayachee, N., Chamber of Mines. Interview Survey of Black Mineworkers' Awareness of AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases and of Behaviour Patterns Potentially Affecting Transmission of These. Report Project No. G119B(TEO3) IIRL No. 4/89, p. 7. Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

⁷⁵ Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

government to combat the virus has sometimes been met with suspicion, especially before 1994. Blacks associated it with racist population control initiatives.⁷⁷ These factors have retarded the HIV prevention programmes.

Jochelson writes, "If HIV is ignored, the results for individuals, communities, and industry are potentially devastating. repatriation of HIV-seropositive migrants, insensitive education programmes and separation of families due to the migrant labour system do much to ensure that South Africa's path to an HIV epidemic remains unhindered."⁷⁸

The HIV virus is high on the list of priorities of NUM. In 1989 the union decided at its Health and Safety Conference decided to campaign against dismissals, discrimination and retrenchment of HIV-positive workers; to negotiate with management on the nature of its education programme; and to launch a union HIV education campaign.⁷⁹ A NUM pamphlet concludes, "In the long term we have to fight for living conditions which allows us to live in stable communities. Only under these circumstances will we no longer be driven into casual sexual relationships by loneliness and craving for physical affection. We need to fight for an end to migrant labour and for family housing."⁸⁰

After 1995 the management of Harmony Gold Mine, in collaboration with AIDSCAP and the National Reference Centre for STDs, started the Lesedi Project to combat STDs and the HIV virus.⁸¹ This deals with the problem on a dual basis as it provides treatment facilities for STDs to women at high risk and in the process it decreases HIV transmission primarily in these women and secondarily in the work force of Harmony Gold Mine. Virginia is a mining town with a population of 80 000. Harmony Gold Mine employs approximately 13 000 miners of whom 90% live in single-sex hostels. In the past, few efforts to control STDs have taken into account

⁷⁷ Brown, B., "Facing the "Black Peril." The Politics of Population Control in South Africa", *Journal for South African Studies*, p. 256.

⁷⁸ Jochelson, K., a.o., p. 171.

⁷⁹ NUM, *Resolutions. Second Health and Safety Conference*, pp. 1-4.

⁸⁰ NUM, *AIDS! An Issue for All Workers*, p. 1.

⁸¹ "Lesedi" means "We have seen the light".

the sexual partners of the miners. These women have been a constant source of re-infection for the black miners.

It is very important to understand the correlation between the risk of HIV transmission and the incidence of STDs. As much as 83% of HIV transmission in Africa may be attributed to genital ulcers.⁸²

The researchers for the Lesedi-project came to the conclusion that the single-sex hostel system increases the demand for commercial sex. If they treated the commercial sex workers for STDs, it must reduce its prevalence. Research has indicated that the educational programmes, condom distribution and improved STD treatment of black males, initiated by some mines for their workers, have not resulted in a decrease in cases of STD. "Historically, mining companies have concentrated their attention exclusively on their employees and few efforts to control STDs have taken into account the sexual contacts of the miners. Until recently, even identified partners of infected miners were not eligible for treatment in mine clinics."⁸³ In contrast with the black mine-workers who have access to STD care, these women have poor access to STD care, which poses a problem that can lead to an increase in the transmission of the HIV virus. Mobile clinics, with registered nurses and assistants have been established in the Saaiplaas area of the town Virginia. The project makes use of peer educators to teach the women about the dangers involved in having commercial or casual sex. At the clinics the women are educated, treated for STDs and receive condoms.⁸⁴ At the same time when the black mine-workers were educated in the prevention of these diseases, they

⁸² The presence of a genital discharge can increase the risk of HIV transmission from 3-10 times. In the presence of a genital ulcer it increases from 50-300 times.

⁸³ PPT Report, p. 2.

⁸⁴ In the surveys and testing done with 407 commercial sex workers in Virginia the average rate charged for sex was R34, while some women received support in the form of money, rent, food and clothing. Three-quarters of the women had never used a condom, and less than 1% reported frequent use. Only 3% of the women with casual partners said they used a condom during their last working day. Despite having had STD's in the past, these women's knowledge of STD symptoms were poor and only 1 out of four women was able to name two symptoms of STD's.

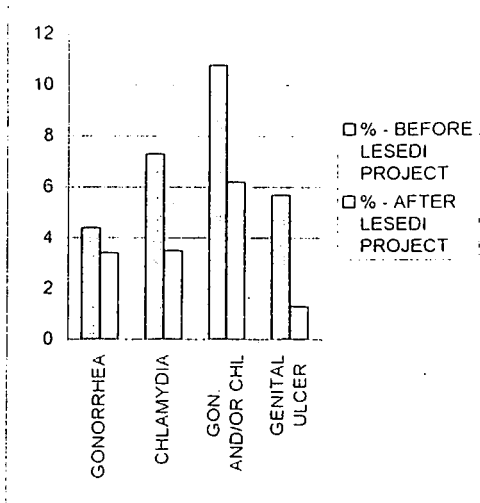
received free condoms and could undergo bloodtests to see if they had the virus. Dr De Coita at Harmony Hospital says that the black miners undergo a STD screening as part of their Occupational Health Examination before they leave after their contracts have expired and again when they return for their next contract. Harmony Hospital contributed medical supplies and logistical support to the community project and their staff carried out the screening examinations and specimen collection from the miners. Because of the education programmes involving the women, the usage of condoms also increased from 13% to 29%.⁸⁵ Surveillance was done on the workers who visited these sex workers. The following table indicates the annualized rates of outpatient STD visits by mine hostel group:

	Harmony 2,3,4 shafts	Virginia 1,2 shaft	Saaiplaas 1,2	Merriespruit 1,2
Distance from				
Lesedi Stations	1 - 2 km	2 - 4 km	2 - 4 km	5 - 6 km
Aver. Miner Pop.	3 665	3634	4759	3183
STD				
November '96	12.30%	12%	18.40%	7.40%
June '97	11%	12.60%	16.70%	10.20%
Genital Ulcers				
November '96	6.50%	6.10%	7.80%	3.50%
June '97	4.10%	5.50%	7.30%	5%

SOURCE: PPT FINAL REPORT

⁸⁵ W. Bezuidenhout Collection. Transcription of interview with dr. T de Coita of Harmony Hospital, 13.10.1998.

The AVERT model was then used to estimate the number of averted HIV infections in the women using the services and among miners in the area.⁸⁶ The following table is based on the data collected from the women involved in the project at the rate of 400 women having had contact with 4 000 miners in the nearby hostels. It is based on the estimate that only 40% of the miners have contact with the women:



SOURCE: PPT FINAL REPORT, p. 15.

⁸⁶

AVERT calculates estimates of averted infections based on user-specified assumptions about parameters affecting the transmission dynamics of HIV. As a simplified model, it is meant to provide policy makers with estimates of the potential impact of interventions and results should be interpreted with caution as estimates only. AVERT's built-in assumptions about transmission efficiency in the presence or absence of co-factors such as STD are based on current knowledge as reported in scientific literature.

The final result was that HIV prevalence rates were 20% for miners and 50% for the women. Similar rates have been reported in comparable populations so these results appear reliable. AVERT calculated that there was a 46% reduction in STDs, which simultaneously reduced the chances of HIV transmission. The Lesedi project represents a cost saving of millions of rands when considering the savings involved in health costs, lost shifts, tuberculosis compensation, labour turnover, training, death benefits and medical repatriation.⁸⁷ Dr De Coita says that the financial implications of an AIDS-infected work force is huge, "A person with HIV will cost a lot, particularly in the last two years of his life. A conservative estimate, taking into account hospitalisation, compensation for TB, medical repatriation, labour turnover and decreased productivity is R35 000 for each infected person."⁸⁸

Dr Tony de Coita says that homosexuality is not a serious threat in the transmission of the HIV virus at Harmony. It does occur in some hostels, but where 1 000 women visited their STD clinics, only 10 homosexuals came with venereal disease. According to dr De Coita, Harmony Gold Mine is in the forefront of HIV awareness and prevention in the country.⁸⁹ He argues, "In Virginia the mines are working together on the problem. We believe that we are on the forefront of a preventative policy. But we need action at the highest level of government."⁹⁰

When asked what happens to the black workers once they are infected with the disease, dr De Coita commented that they continue working until they become terminal, as in the case of cancer. Some workers want to go back home to die there, but others do not want their relatives to see them so ill and prefer to die at the Harmony Hospital. They tend to prefer the services at the Harmony Hospital, as the health facilities at home are very poor. Dr. Jana Viljoen another medical doctor

⁸⁷ An HIV positive worker can lead to increased costs because he is absent from work more often, he is not so productive when at work, he has to be treated for TB and he has to be replaced when he dies, leading to further training costs.

⁸⁸ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with dr de Coita, 13.10.1998.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

at Harmony Hospital comments, "The families come to collect the bodies and take them back home. We try to look after the patients, and we have a system. We put them on the "DI" list - it stands for "dangerously ill" - and we notify the family: Your husband is dying."⁹¹ When they die their relatives receive the same death benefits as in the case of any other disease.

Dr Kahn of Virginia is not convinced that the mines are offering workers a place to die, saying he has seen many infected workers retrenched or dismissed and has fought many battles for workers' compensation. He is also of the opinion that the percentage of HIV infections are 33% of the sexually active people of the town.⁹²

In the 1990s the black mine worker has political equality and equal rights, but a new tougher opponent, in the form of the HIV virus, has emerged. The black miner is no longer fighting a minority government, he is not up against labour restrictions and the white miner, he is up against the HIV virus. He is however, well informed and much more health- and safety-conscious.

⁹¹ ibid.

⁹² ibid.

CHAPTER 8 - TRAINING AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the beginning of the mining industry, labour was divided between skilled and unskilled labour. The black workers did not have any skills or know-how. The limited level of training needed to do the unskilled jobs, was done by watching his fellow workers as language and culture were a tremendous barrier. E.R. Silberbauer writes, "I am amazed how many Africans find out by themselves how to do their jobs, and how often others are taught unofficially by another African worker."¹

Training of the black work force was done on a very informal basis at the work place underground. The more mechanized the mines became, the greater the need became for formal training of the black workers. Informal training was no longer sufficient.

On account of the language barrier, different backgrounds, different education levels and the complicated relationship between black and white miners, it was often a difficult task to train the black mine-worker. Due to the temporary status of the black gold mine-worker it was also not an investment to spend too much on training the workers as they migrated to and fro. Why should a mine in the Orange Free State in South Africa invest in the training of a migrant workers from Mozambique? Once the work force became more localized and permanent, the industry started investing more capital into training its black workers.

In 1995 the mines, did provide training for their workers at training schools. These training centres had a twofold job: one was the induction and acclimatisation of the workers to the working conditions of the mines and, the other was the training of suitable employees for specific jobs or job categories.

The Government Mine's Training Schools scheme was started in 1911 when the first mining trainee centre was established at the Wolhuter Gold Mine on the

¹ Silberbauer, E.R., Understanding and Motivating the African Worker, p. 118.

Witwatersrand. In 1916 the Chamber of Mines, in collaboration with the Government, re-organized this school which developed into the Government Mine's Training School. The training scheme was administered by a board of directors of whom five were appointed by the government and ten by the Chamber of Mines. The latter paid a third of the capital cost of school buildings and equipment and the former paid the balance. Murry writes about the early training centres, "Even though underground training centres are in use, there is almost no on-the-job training practised in gold mining. What little there is, is restricted to what might be called a "polishing up" of techniques learnt in the centre. A certain amount of understanding will, however, always be gained by the trainee watching his colleagues at work."² When one investigates the training facilities and opportunities for black gold mine-workers it is important not to isolate the mining industry from the broader South African perspective.

The lack of skills and education has a national background. The standard of education among black people is so low that employees find it difficult to train them. This is because of poor education system for black people in general.³ The black pupil was only educated to such a level that he was no threat to the white man in skilled positions. He was only educated to carry the shovel in the mines, not do the planning, engineering and blasting. M. Horrell writes, "There are a considerable number of better paid and more responsible posts available, for instance compound and underground boss-boys, clerks, shaft-sinkers, loco and winch drivers and rock drillers, but perhaps 70% of Africans employed do relatively unskilled manual work."⁴ Because of this lack of education employers had the perception that the black man was "slower" than white workers in attaining a certain level of productivity, but that he had more stamina, more physical endurance and that he

² Murry, M.C., Black Labour in the South African Gold Mining Industry, 1966-1974, p. 14.

³ In 1954 there were fewer than 1 million black children at school. By 1972 the enrolment of black children had risen to 3,3 million pupils.

⁴ Horrell, M., South Africa's Non-White Workers, p. 67.

was not fatigued by monotonous repetitive work. It would take many years for this perception to change.

In a speech made by dr Holloway in Philadelphia in 1950 during his term as South Africa's ambassador in the United States, he said "It should be remembered that until a generation ago the Bantu(sic) who could earn a living with the help of brain-power or special skills numbered hardly a thousand persons. All they had to offer the labour market was the strength of their muscles. Although this is changing under the impact of education, the fringe of educated and skilled workers is still remarkably thin and the whole of this class work among their own people as pastors, doctors, nurses, clerks, teachers and policemen."⁵

Already in 1957, Oppenheimer of Anglo American warned that, "We must build up a self-respecting Native middle class as the greatest guarantee against lawlessness and Communist agitation."⁶ He already saw the signs that the black workers would not be satisfied with their second class status on the gold mines forever.

The underground labour force on the mines was divided into different groups engaged in shovelling, tramming, timbering and machine drilling, with a boss boy in charge of a group of 8 or 9 black workers. The boss boys were chosen from the most experienced and intelligent workers and it was their duty to train the inexperienced blacks arriving at the mines. They were in control of their groups, under the supervision of the white miners. The boss boy was responsible for the safety and health of the members of his group and possessed a first aid certificate. Black workers without previous experience were placed in special probationary groups from which they were then selected for the work they appeared to be suitable for. On most of the mines, special training was given to inexperienced workers in instructional stopes, which resemble the workplace underground. The status of boss boy or team leader was the highest a black mine-worker could attain

⁵ Private Versameling van J.E. Holloway, PV 515.

⁶ The Star, 6.8.1957.

and the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926 barred him from any further promotions.

The general unskilled distribution of the black work force in February 1943 was:

<u>JOB DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF BLACK WORKERS</u>
<i>Rockbreaking</i>	35 229
<i>Shovelling and Trammig</i>	87 153
	9 255
<i>Sweeping(reclamation)</i>	9 644
<i>Support of workings</i>	34 416
<i>Pipes, tracks, skips, banks, sampling surveying</i>	36 206
<i>Underground engineering department</i>	14 609
TOTAL	226 512.⁷

After the Second World War an increasing demand for skilled labour arose in other sectors of the economy and the expansion of gold mining to the Free State put increased pressure on the mines to enlarge their black labour supply. The rapid growth of other secondary industries, opened up better wage opportunities for the black worker and the mines' black labour force declined drastically. The pressure was on for the colour-bar to be removed. In 1948 the National Party came into power and the opposite happened. The successive National Party governments of Malan, Strijdom and Verwoerd extended the colour-bar when they adopted a revision of the Mines and Works Amendment Act in 1956.⁸

The 1960s was a difficult era for the mining industry as costs pressed heavily on profits and the mines had to economize wherever they could. The stable gold price and the decline in production of older mines meant that the mining industry had to

⁷ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, p. 92.

⁸ The act made provision for stated groups of work to be reserved for persons of specified racial groups. It prevented black workers from advancement into certain more skilled job categories. Horrell, M., p. 89.

address its labour costs. "Inflationary pressures led the companies to try and change the pattern of labour utilization on the mines."⁹ The mines were losing workers to other industries, and they could not afford that. "Wages in the manufacturing industry outstripped those in mining - as a result the leakage of labour from the mines steadily worsened."¹⁰

During the period 1964 to 1965 the Chamber of Mines experimented with the idea of making better use of their boss boys by giving them more responsibilities in return for a higher salary. In 1968 some mines started to train black workers as rescue workers.¹¹ In 1971 black workers were employed as banksmen and skipmen on an experimental basis.¹² Oppenheimer said, "If South Africa is to advance economically, a change must be made in the way in which labour is used. It has to be used in such a way as to justify additional capital investment."¹³ This brought about strong opposition from the white Mine Workers' Union who still saw the black worker as an adversary who had to be kept out of skilled positions.

In 1971 Mr R.S. Cooke, a past president of the Chamber of Mines, made a strong plea for the relaxation of job restrictions on the mines for the following reasons: firstly, because the shortage of skilled white miners was estimated to reach 4 000 by 1973; secondly, because the potential release of white miners could alleviate the general shortage of skilled labour in the Republic and thirdly, it could lead to a reduction in mine working costs.¹⁴ Mr Cooke said it was basically the opposition of the white trade unions which was the restricting factor and that the government "has been very reasonable with the mining industry in these matters."¹⁵

The government indicated that it could indeed be reasonable when in 1973 the Prime Minister, John Vorster, announced that black workers could be allowed into

⁹ Mining Journal, 24 July 1953, p. 77.

¹⁰ Knight, J., Is South Africa Running Out of Unskilled Labour, p. 31.

¹¹ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 79.

¹² Ibid., p. 81.

¹³ Rand Daily Mail, 5.3.1964.

¹⁴ Financial Mail, 17.7.1970.

¹⁵ Financial Mail, 4.9.1970.

some skilled occupations to relieve the country-wide shortage of skilled labour. The National Party government was not ready to grant any more than that as yet as is evident in the following statement, "The compromise he now offers seeks to reassure the white mine-workers that never will a homeland African: replace a white mine-worker, have authority over a white mine-worker, do the same work in the same mine, except in separate shifts or separate sections of the mine. In addition, exemptions from the colour-bar section of the Mines and Works Act will be granted only on application by individual mines, and not to the industry in general. And the government affirms that in the white areas the Colour-bar will last as long as there is a Nationalist government."¹⁶

Selected black team leaders were now able to undertake some of the safety inspections, mark certain hole for drilling, and charge up for blasting on condition that they work under the direct supervision of a white miner.¹⁷ This meant only a slight adjustment of the colour-bar and the black worker still could not obtain a blasting certificate. The black worker was still held back by racial prejudice and his general lack of education.

The government only did something substantial about the education levels of the black population only after the Soweto riots of 1976, but a few generations of black employees would not benefit from it.¹⁸ Tom Main of the Chamber writes, "The real advance of the next decade may come in increased responsibility for the Africans. We hope to see the removal of job restrictions because we face a real shortage of skilled and managerial manpower. The change, however, cannot be overnight because the South African government's lamentable education for black people

¹⁶ Financial Mail, 16.10.1970.

¹⁷ Rafel, R., Job Reservation on the Mines, p. 271.

¹⁸ During the Soweto riots, black students opposed the fact that they had to receive some of their teachings in Afrikaans. The students gathered at the Orlando football stadium and from there took their complaints to the police station. Shots were fired and blacks were killed that day.

gives them too little training."¹⁹ Whether the black man would be willing to wait for this process to take place over the long term, was another thing.

Dennis Etheridge, Chairman of Anglo America's Gold Division agrees with the fact that the black man's school education was keeping him from taking his position in the semi-skilled occupations on the mines. "We are at a stage now when barriers to black advancement are being removed, but blacks are unable to take advantage of this because of the inadequacy of their basic schooling."²⁰

With the new challenges brought on by the better gold price and increase in black wages, the mines pursued a policy of improving the skills of their black labour force. Politically, this was still out of the question. White mine-workers were not prepared to give up their privileged position on the mines. The same problem that caused the Rand Rebellion in 1922 still existed, as is shown in the following statement by Mr Gert Lombaard of the Mine Workers' Union, when he said that the white miners' exclusive right to have a blasting ticket was threatened by the black workers. He said, "Die Naturelle Mynwerker word by die dag aстранter. Ek vra Sir Ernest of daar 'n deel van die mynboubedryf is wat tans deur blankes bestuur word, wat met 'n mate van veiligheid aan die natuurlik onverantwoordelike naturel oorgelaat kan word." ²¹

The white worker was not prepared to share the semi-skilled and skilled mining work with the black man. In 1959 mr Daan Ellis of the Mine Workers' Union complained to the Chamber of Mines about the gradual inclusion of black workers in positions such as truck- and ambulance-driving, which was previously exclusively done by white workers.²² The colour-bar was still firmly intact on the mines and the blacks were still excluded from some of the higher category mining jobs, but training became more efficient and more extensive. It would take economic

¹⁹ Green, T., The New World of Gold, p. 54.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

²¹ The speech was made at the St Helena Gold Mine in Welkom.
Die Transvaler, 8.1.1954.

²² Die Vaderland, 19.12.1959.

pressure on the mining industry and the government to make amends. Harry Oppenheimer still agitated for a change in the labour structure of the mines, "I have said innumerable times and I say again - a country cannot develop his economical potential if it does not make the best use of its labour force."²³

A year later he made the following statement, "We don't live in the thirties where the white worker is out in the streets, where white and non-white are competing to do pick and shovel work for pitiful wages. We live in times when jobs which are done by skilled white workers can be taken over and done effectively by non-white workers, freeing the white worker to do better work for himself; better work for the country - work which really can carry forward the country economically as it should be carried forward."²⁴

In 1980 it was reported at the Association of Mine Managers that the shortage of blasting tickets was becoming comparable with the shortage of winding engine drivers and the matter was to be taken up with the Chamber of Mines. The shortage of artisans had reached a crisis point.²⁵

Lack of skills in the gold mining industry had a long history of recruiting only the unskilled, illiterate rural populations of southern Africa. Another restriction on job advancement for the black gold mine-worker had been the white miners with their union wanting to prevent any black advancement. "All this has resulted in an chicken and egg situation whereby jobs are structured to accommodate unskilled workers, and we cannot upgrade their skills because we have no semi-skilled jobs to put them in. In such a situation how can we expect to improve labour productivity in a labour-intensive business? Clearly there is a desperate need for a new range of semi-skilled jobs which will permit trained and experienced blacks to use their talents more productively, to gain some degree of satisfaction from their

²³ Rand Daily Mail, 28.4.1970.

²⁴ Progressive Party Fact Sheet, February 1971.

²⁵ Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 92.

employment, and to warrant a wage structure approaching parity with secondary industry."²⁶

Training held the key for the further advancement of the black worker in the mining industry. In 1995 workers were roughly divided into two categories: the workers in the category 3-8 and the workers in the 9+ category. The category 3-8 workers were mainly unskilled and in order to move up to a skilled category a black worker had to obtain a blasting certificate. The laws demanded that a worker had to have a std.5 level of education before he could take the blasting certificate examination. Obtaining a blasting certificate was the key to the skilled occupations on the mines. In August 1987, the government finally approved legislation abolishing the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926. Although it was only put into practice the following year, it opened up a wide range of skilled and semi-skilled jobs to black workers.²⁷ Black workers who had an educational level of std.5 could now obtain the much sought-after blasting certificate and advance even further into the shift boss and mine captain categories. Opposition was still being experienced from the white Mine-Workers Union, even though the industry had decided that black and white miners with blasting certificates be treated in exactly the same manner.²⁸ That was in theory, but practically it was not so easy as Jonathan Crush writes, "Although a colour-blind Mines and Works Amendment Act, has finally passed Parliament, the tortured history of these negotiations, extending over nearly a decade, suggests that progress toward achieving racial integration in the skilled jobs in the mines will be slow."²⁹ Seidman confirms this statement when he comments on the smaller, more skilled, work force of Harmony Gold Mine, "While Harmony has made concerted efforts to create the smaller, more productive work force likely to characterize gold mining in the future, the persistence of pre-existing social

²⁶ Association of Mine Managers Report of 1977.

²⁷ By 1989 there were 14 blacks who had qualified as on setters and 96 who had obtained blasting certificates. Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, p. 105.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 105.

²⁹ Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire, p. 99.

relations has made the shift in labour policies problematic. First, an entrenched racial order - entailing strict segregation, repressive labour relations and persistent discrimination - will not disappear overnight: the social institutions of the mine and the community are proving far more resistant to change than Rand Mines' Johannesburg-based head office might have expected."³⁰

The migratory habit of the black labour force made the training of the worker a repetitive and expensive task. All mines had to keep a permanent training facility in operation as workers were trained repeatedly after every return from leave. Workers also had to acclimatise repeatedly.

All the new recruits at the mines were given basic instructions on the working of the mine in general and on the different types of jobs done. In 1974 this process lasted on average for about three shifts from the time of the arrival on the mine. The next step was to give the novices instruction in the universal mining language, "Fanakalo". This would take on average eight shifts, keeping in mind that some workers already knew the language. If a worker had no previous knowledge of the language, it could take 16 shifts. All workers going underground were required to be heat- and humidity- acclimatised, which entailed exercise sessions lasting four hours per day in heated acclimatisation chambers.³¹ Until October 1975, the length of this acclimatisation process was eight shifts, but research has shown that the state of acclimatisation can be retained for as long as four weeks.³² Similar research done by the Chamber of Mines led to a cut being made in the length of acclimatisation from 8 to 5 days in October 1975.³³ It was further suggested that the period of re-acclimatisation after short periods of absence from work be reduced.

³⁰ Seidman, G., South African Sociological Review, (5) 2, p. 16.

³¹ Murry, M.C., p. 14.

³² Strydom, N.B., Kok, R., Jooste, P.J., Van der Walt, W.H., "Intermittent Exposure to Heat and the Retention, J.S.A.I.M.M., 75 no. 12; p. 315, July 1975.

³³ Murry, M.C., p. 14.

The new periods of recommended acclimatisation were:

Max. Working Temp	Period of Absence	Days in Climatic Chamber
29,9 degrees Celsius	1-7 days	not necessary
	8-14 days	2 days
	15-21 days	3 days
	22 or more days	4 days
33,0 degrees Celsius	1-7 days	not necessary
	8-14 days	3 days
	15-21 days	4 days
	22 or more days	5 days

SOURCE: MURRY, M.C., BLACK LABOUR IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY.
1966-1974. P. 14.

During the acclimatisation period, the second half of the eight-hour shift was usually spent on formal training. In the case of novices, this took the form of instruction in basic mining skills, but experienced miners were then trained for more advanced and specific tasks. The advanced training was given only to men who showed the required physical and mental capabilities, for which they were tested when their contract started.

With the sharply rising costs of mining in the seventies and the changes on the labour front, more emphasis was being laid on increasing efficiency and optimal use of the labour force. Mines introduced a voluntary training scheme, where workers were trained on a voluntary and unpaid basis after hours for as long as four hours. According to Murry this scheme had a two-fold advantage: firstly, a greater labour productivity was achieved in that a larger proportion of the labour force was productive and secondly, the costs of occupational training were reduced. Now the worker was trained, while simultaneously contributing fully to production on the mine.

The length of the various training periods for the various mining occupations in 1974 is listed below:

JOB DESCRIPTION	LENGTH - SHIFTS
Stope Team Leader	9-22 shifts
Dev. Team Leader	9-32 shifts
Group Leader	6-15 shifts
Miner's Assistant	1-3 shifts
Stope Team Leader	3-7 shifts
Winch driver	4-5 shifts
Battery Loco driver	5-8 shifts
Diesel Loco Driver	5-8 shifts
Loader driver	5-10 shifts
Pipes and Tracks	6-9 shifts
Stope machine oper.	3 shifts
Dev. Machine oper.	3 shifts
Induction	2 shifts
Fanakalo	3-8 shifts

SOURCE. MURRY, M.C., BLACK LABOUR IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY 1966-1974, P. 16.

There is a great variety in the lengths of training periods between the various mines. There is clearly a large degree of individualism in the training centres with regards to the method and the depth of training.³⁴

³⁴ Murry, M.C., p. 16.

There was also a difference in the percentage of the labour force being trained at different mines, as the following table will show:

JOB DESCRIPTION	% OF WORK FORCE
Stope Team Leader	2.85 and 3.42
Dev. Team Leader	1.04 and 1.56
Group Leader	5.1 and 7.82
Miner's Assistant	1.8 and 2.76
Stope Team Leader	10.09 and 12.85
Winch driver	3.51 and 8
Battery Loco driver	1.02 and 5.19
Diesel Loco Driver	0.41 and 4.09
Loader driver	0.92 and 1.33
Pipes and Tracks	7.25 and 14.03
Stope machine oper.	9.01 and 11.7
Dev. Machine oper.	4.62 and 10.23
Induction	48.61 and 65.69
Fanakalo	21.52 and 31.05

SOURCE: MURRY, M.C., BLACK LABOUR IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN MINING INDUSTRY, 1966-1974, P 18

If one considers that the training of the black gold mine-workers was a repetitive process, because of their migrant nature the costs involved should get some attention. These costs include fixed overheads of the training centres, instructors and overseers' wages, trainees' wages and stores and equipment. The training of

the black gold mine-worker can be divided up into three categories:

- Recruitment
- Basic Training and Acclimatisation
- Advanced Training.

In 1974 the cost of recruiting of the black worker was 16 cents per shift. This increased in 1975 to 29 cents a shift.³⁵ In 1974 this was 9,5 % of wage costs and in 1975 it amounted to 14%. The total cost of recruitment for the industry was R19,8 million for the period July 1974 to June 1975.

In 1974 the average contract length for a black mine-worker was 12,9 months so it may be presumed that every black worker was acclimatised once a year. The average cost per shift was between R3,50 and R4,50 or 6,5 cents per man shift worked.³⁶

Basic training for novices included an average of eight shifts to learn "Fanakalo". The total cost of acclimatisation and basic training was 7,5 cents per shift or R7,7 million per annum in 1974 for the whole industry.³⁷ This was the price the industry was willing to pay in order keep the political and economic status quo. It could not, however, keep this up because of rising costs and an acute labour shortage in the semi-skilled and skilled job categories.

During the seventies a system of employing black artisan aides was also introduced by the mines. Mr R.A. Plumbridge, president of the Chamber of Mines in 1973, stated, "The mining industry recently instituted a productivity campaign which is seeking advances in the techniques of mining, management organisation, motivation and training and in general in the more productive use of human talents."³⁸

³⁵ Mine Labour Organisation Limited, "Reports and Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June, 1975", p. 3, 1975.

³⁶ Murry, M.C., p. 52.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁸ Presidential Address, Chamber of Mines Annual Report, no. 84 of 1973.

As part of this decision blacks were trained as artisan aides. This scheme opened up new opportunities of job advancement and job satisfaction for black workers. Negotiations with the mine-workers' trade unions also made possible the training of blacks to perform technical jobs of a semi-skilled nature in the electrical and engineering fields, which was impossible before.

The qualifications required to be trained as an artisan aide was:

- a high duodec score (between 1 and 5)
- two weeks' training on the basic equipment used
- a minimum of six months' experience as a mine labourer
- previous training in engineering tasks.³⁹

Not only did the mines save money in using black artisan aides, but the occupational status and the earnings of the black aides were greatly enhanced. The training period for these workers was significantly longer than those for elementary instruction as they had to reach an adequate level of competence. The cost of promotional and technical training was estimated at 3 cents per man shift or R3,3 million for the year 1974 in all gold mines of the Chamber of Mines. This was equivalent to 15% of black wages in that year.⁴⁰

If one examines the cost structure of training migrant workers, it is understandable that the mines wanted to localize their work force and keep them on a more permanent basis.

The improved techniques and mechanization of the mining industry in the 1970s was ideal for allowing more blacks to fill the demands. Some of these developments included:

- improved shaft sinking techniques with the introduction of circular shafts
- improved hoisting techniques as shafts were in excess of 5 000 ft in depth and the introduction of the Blair-multirope double-drum hoist

³⁹ Murry, M.C. p. 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 53.

- pre-stressed timber packs and composite timber and concrete packs for support of workings
- forged detachable drill bit heads and, subsequently, tungsten carbide tipped bits
- mechanical scrapers for the cleaning of broken rock from the stope face
- barricades, to reduce the amount of small chips or rock and rock dust which were often rich in gold, scattered during blasting
- development of relatively safe explosives together with the introduction of electric detonation systems
- the widespread introduction of pneumatically driven shovel loaders used mainly for cleaning broken rock at the development face of tunnels. Even though these machines are only able to operate in tunnels which are flat or of low inclination, they greatly increased the rate of advance in tunnels
- improved ventilation and high powered refrigeration units for cooling of stoping and development areas.
- electrically powered machines.⁴¹

From the above listed mechanizations it is clear that these were to be installed at a tremendous cost and had to be kept in working condition by a much more able work force, which would have to undergo more intensive training. MacConachie says that the mining industry here had the opportunity, "for good use to be made of the increased availability of technically skilled blacks"⁴²

Many mines also started a literacy programme and taught their workers basic mathematical skills. The literacy programme is taught in all the major languages, as well as Afrikaans and English. "The motivation for providing such literacy training extends beyond the humanitarian advancement accorded to the individual, and it is thought that in providing this education, the workers taught will be more suited to the assuming of more responsible and productive positions."⁴³

⁴¹ Electricity is by far the major source of power in the mining industry consuming approximately half of the power produced in South Africa.

⁴² MacConachie, H., "Progress in Gold Mining Over Fifty Years", *Optima*, 17:3, 1967.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The chairman of the board at Harmony Gold Mine stated, "The mine is pursuing a policy of continually training and thereby raising, the skills of black workers. The more highly skilled men obviously earn far more than the less skilled ones and the mine's policy is to encourage the former to become permanent workers on the mine."⁴⁴

A more permanent work force could be trained more effectively, without the interruption of periods of between 3 and 4 months at a time.⁴⁵

The uncontrolled raising of wages of black unskilled workers, had to lead to continued inflation unless it was accompanied by the acquisition of some skill. "The increased wage levels mentioned above provide the unskilled young native(sic) with ample funds for his own immediate needs. His ambition and desire for higher pay must be met by the opportunity given to him to develop into a skilled worker or supervisor. The training programmes offered by the mine provide the means for self-betterment and it is up to the individual concerned to advance through the various grades available to him on the mine", was the argument of mr Peterson of Harmony Gold Mine.⁴⁶

There were, however, still the restrictions from government which still kept some doors closed to the young, ambitious miner. "However, it is recognised that trade union practice and certain legislation present barriers to advancement beyond a certain point."⁴⁷ The policy of Harmony Gold Mine was to press for the lowering of the barriers with the ultimate goal of ensuring equality of opportunity for all its employees.

The chairman of the board in 1978, mr D.T. Watt reports, "The company's labour philosophy is based on the acceptance of the fundamental principles that the key to its future success is represented by its employees. It is accepted that all employees

⁴⁴ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1977.

⁴⁵ During the 1970's at Harmony Gold Mine, the number of South African black workers on the mine has increased from 25,2% to 48,7%. This figure includes the workers from Transkei.

⁴⁶ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1977.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

should have equal opportunities for advancement according to their individual skills. The company adheres to the principle of appointing the best people to match the job requirements. Our philosophy also requires that the best use be made of all employees and that the necessary training and development facilities be provided to enable all employees to progress to the limit of their potential capabilities."⁴⁸

In the 1980s there was a serious shortage of artisans in the country and on the mines. Competition between the various industries to acquire the services of artisans was strong. On the mines, the shortage was more acutely experienced underground.

In the 1980s the gold mines in South Africa continued their policy of training their black employees for higher skilled categories. A liaison committee structure was set up at the mine and meetings with black employees were organized. Representatives of these black employees were trained in committee procedure and organizational techniques. Rand Mines also paid attention to the construction of schools for black employees and their children and provided financial assistance to blacks to improve their own levels of education.⁴⁹ But the potential of the black worker was still limited by the law which prevented him from obtaining a blasting certificate and by his general low standard of education.

The improvement in the training of black workers influenced other facets of their lives as well. It was expected that the training would accelerate and the number of houses where skilled black workers could live with their families on a more permanent basis would also increase. It was the policy of mine management to ensure that where a village for workers was provided on the mine premises, this had to be a centre of stability and security.⁵⁰

The president of the Chamber of Mines, G.Y. Nisbet writes about the black gold mine-worker, "The past year has been notable for a small, but increasing movement of blacks into the more skilled occupations in mining, increasing

⁴⁸ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

⁴⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1980.

⁵⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1980.

unionisation of the black work force, and an increase in the incidence of strikes, which has, however, fortunately remained low."⁵¹ In a survey conducted by the Chamber of Mines in November 1984 it was revealed that the number of trainee black surveyors, samplers and ventilation control officials had reached almost 300; nearly half the number of people in training for these positions.

The mining industry was still experiencing a severe shortage of artisans. The black labour force could easily fill these gaps on the labour front. Mr D.T. Watt confirms this when he says, "There is an urgent need to train increasing number of people in the trades. A sufficient number of trainees would appear to be obtainable only if the avenue of employment is thrown open to black workers. There are promising signs of a relaxation of discrimination in this connection and the company will continue to present the case for the training of black artisans. There is also a growing shortage of engineers and technicians. The positions is further aggravated by the recent increase in military call-ups and very much more attention will have to be devoted to human resources planning in future to alleviate the strain on such resources."⁵²

The increased training levels led to a greater stability in the work force on the mines. The average length of a contract for the year 1980 was eleven and a half months, already an improvement on the previous year.⁵³ In his annual report the chairman, mr D.T. Watt writes, "The various schemes which have been introduced with the objective of stabilizing the mine's unskilled and semi-skilled labour force are now beginning to show positive results. Further development and adaptation of these schemes will be necessary and will be undertaken when opportune, to meet the aspirations of the industry's worker and the requirements of the company."⁵⁴

In the same annual report the chairman expressed his regret that no real progress had been made insofar as the training of artisans had been concerned. The number of vacancies at Harmony's underground artisan category had increased and

⁵¹ Mining Survey, June 1985, p. 45.

⁵² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

⁵³ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1980.

⁵⁴ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1981.

recruitment for this kind of job had to be undertaken in the United Kingdom. Mine management emphasized the critical need to train large numbers of artisans from amongst black aspirants, who were suitably prepared and ready to undergo that training.⁵⁵

By 1982 the average length of stay of the migrant workers increased to 14 months irrespective of the contract periods the individual employee initially undertook when he signed on.⁵⁶ "The increasing stability of the migrant labour force can be attributed to various factors, the most important being better pay, continued improvements of quality of life of employees on the mine and certain re-employment guarantees issued to workers on contract remuneration."⁵⁷

With the sharply rising costs of mining, more emphasis was placed on increasing efficient use of labour. The mine had started a remarkable training scheme where workers were trained on a voluntary and unpaid basis for a four hours at a time, after their normal working hours. This increased productivity while reducing the costs of occupational training.

One of the features of the 1970s in the mining industry was an effort from mine management to stabilize the work force, particularly those workers in higher skilled categories. An incentive was introduced by the mines, whereby workers in skilled jobs were given paid leave at the end of their contracts. If they returned to the mines after a month's leave, they were guaranteed their same job at the same level of pay. This Re-Engagement Guarantee Certificate Scheme had a positive effect on stabilizing the work force. The mining industry also introduced a Stabilisation Scheme, whereby a worker would be paid an early return bonus. This had the effect that workers either remained for longer periods or returned to the mines sooner. They also developed their chosen career paths. In 1981 only 16% of the

⁵⁵ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1981.

⁵⁶ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1982.

⁵⁷ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1982.

work force were newcomers to the industry. This percentage decreased to 10%.⁵⁸ The mines also provided literacy classes for their black workers, on a voluntary basis. This course would last for three months and often 1 000 workers at a time volunteered for it. Adult education classes, where reading, writing and counting were taught to illiterate workers, were organized at the compounds and hostels. Letter writers were available to help those who were unable to communicate with their families at home.

In 1982 the shortage of artisans was relieved by the recruitment of workers from the United Kingdom and Poland. The Engineering Training Centre would only be able to relieve the shortage after a few years as it would take a few years for apprentices to complete their training. In 1982 no black apprentices could be trained as artisans as yet.

In 1983 the average length of stay on the mine of a migrant was 16 months. "However of much greater importance is the fact that currently 85% of all workers whose contracts expire return to the mine after predetermined periods of rest at their homes. The periods of rest vary between two and six months depending upon various factors."⁵⁹ This was putting a strain on mine management and administration as manpower planning, the planning of rest periods, the preference of the worker and the requirements of the company were becoming a very complex operation.

Advancement for the black worker came in 1983 with the abolition of Job Reservation Number 27 on July 6, 1983. This job reservation restricted the employment of non-whites in ventilation, sampling and surveying departments. Progress was also made by the indenturing of increasing numbers of suitably qualified black youths as apprentices. These employees were given exactly the same training and were subject to the same conditions of employment as their white counterparts.

⁵⁸ "The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker".

⁵⁹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1983.

Mine management immediately took advantage of the relaxation of job reservation. By 1984, 38 blacks had been employed for training or appointment in the fields of sampling, surveying and environmental control. The mine also appointed 18 blacks as engineering apprentices.⁶⁰

The removal of job reservation did not immediately open doors for all black employees. An economic principle of almost a hundred years could not simply be changed overnight. There were severe growing pains. Mine management was determined to improve relationships between supervisors and their black employees and to remove the last vestiges of job reservation. "The face to face relationships of supervisors with their black workers will need to be developed more positively. To this end greater training effort is required. The removal of the "scheduled person" restriction must be resolved at industry level. Before this can be achieved, negotiations on an improved industrial relations structure, a security of employment agreement and a system of monitoring and enforcement must be finalized. Talks will resume with the affected unions and associations, but their present intransigence in this area cannot go unnoticed or unchallenged at government level, for much longer", was the argument of C.G. Knobbs of Harmony Gold Mine.⁶¹

It must be understood that although the mining industry was a powerful factor in the history of the country, it was still part of the greater South African economy and had to abide by the laws of the government. It could not operate separately from other industries and was still at the mercy of the government when it came to regulations and legislation. It could advocate change, but the real change could only be brought about by government.

There was still a stumbling block in the removal of job reservation on the mines. It was the term "scheduled person" in the Mines and Works Act which still favoured some white employees and white unions were doing much to retain this form of privilege. In 1985 the chairman of the board of Harmony mine, C.G. Knobbs

⁶⁰ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1984.

⁶¹ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1984.

writes, "The imminent removal of the "scheduled person" will do much to reduce black tension over lack of promotion opportunities. The replacement of the term "scheduled person" by a non-racial "competent person" definition in the Mines and Works Act will open the way for the appointment of the most able person for the job, regardless of race."⁶²

In 1985 the Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs announced that the term "scheduled person" would disappear from the Act during the next session of Parliament and that employees and employers would have to agree on the new definition of the substituted "competent" person. In addition, both parties had to agree on security of employment arrangements to protect white workers from indiscriminate and unfair replacement by blacks.

In 1986 an agreement was reached with the majority of the unions and associations to establish an Industrial Council for the mining industry to deal with this aspect of securing employment for white workers. Mr C.G. Knobbs writes, "This should assist the Minister considerably in finally scrapping this last vestige of statutory job reservation without introducing new measures which would preserve the old order under a different disguise. I believe that attention should be focused on commitment and training, particularly in conflict handling and this will go a long way to changing attitudes and developing the empathy that is needed by all to promote a healthy industrial relations climate."⁶³

It is clear from this statement that the removal of job reservation did not come without conflict. For a hundred years, white workers had been protected by law against the competition of black employment. It is understandable that they would react against the removal of these laws. Their reaction came at a time when inflation was high, there was a severe drought, the economy was struggling and

⁶² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1985.

⁶³ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1986.

political turmoil and violence erupted.

It is easier to change laws, than to change people's minds and attitudes and this is where the problem for the mining industry lay. "Unfortunately the general socio-political scene prevailing in the country at present does militate against these efforts and supervisors will increasingly have to deal with problems from their labour force which fall outside the scope of "normal" industrial relations and are clearly "political issues".⁶⁴

The last remnant of job reservation contained in the Mines and Works Act Regulations, that of the term "scheduled person" which prevented blacks from holding certain certificates of competency, was amended in 1988. This is what had kept the black worker backward for almost a century. It is what kept him from becoming a miner, shift boss or mine overseer. It is what kept him from getting a three-bedroomed mine house with electricity in town and a much higher salary.

New regulations called for the establishment of an Advisory Committee to examine and report training needs and mining educational qualifications for certain certificates of competency. Harmony Gold Mine immediately started negotiating changes in work practices with the white trade unions so that the mine could begin to make full use of its manpower resources to fill the many vacancies in the skilled ranks.

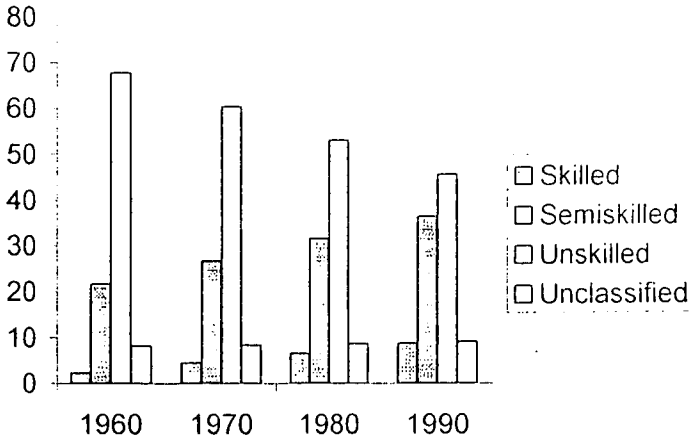
True to its policy of improving the education and skills of its black employees, Harmony Mine also started an after-hours voluntary training programme in certain skills. Between shifts black workers could sign up for these training programmes and try to improve their skills, and consequently their expectations. By 1985, 1 385 employees were participating in this scheme.

In order to improve safety standards the mine also trained its workers in first aid.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ ibid.

⁶⁵ In 1992 mr Siphuro Stenela, a worker at Harmony Gold mine was the recipient of the 4 millionth Mining First Aid Certificate issued since 1928. This figure represents an average of 62 500 certificates a year awarded by the Red Cross to workers in the mining industry.

The following table show the improved skills levels of black workers in the mines by the nineties:



SOURCE: Pillay, P., "Future Developments in the Demand for Labour by the South African Mining Industry", p. 7.

8.2 THE DIFFERENT TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN PLACE AT HARMONY GOLD MINE

In the race to increase productivity on the mines, education and training received top priority. Black and white workers theoretically had the same career possibilities and job advancement opportunities. For a worker from the Category 3-8 levels to advance to a 9+ level did, however, require a minimum education level of std.5 In

practice, the low level of education of black workers could still keep the black workers from moving into the skilled categories and claiming the benefits that it included such as, living in a 3-bedroomed house with paid electricity and water bills. One of the main aims of NUM, therefore, was to improve the skills levels of its union members as this would mean improved pay levels and better working and living conditions.

According to Sam Mahlapa, a senior clerk at Harmony, there are black workers in some of the highest job categories at the mine.⁶⁶ Since 1993, Harmony has employed 4 black shiftbosses and a mine overseer. Blacks are also allowed into jobs such as hostel superintendents, accountants, human resource officers and social workers.⁶⁷ The mine also employs a number of teachers to teach at mine schools, and who are responsible for the adult education programmes that the mine offers.⁶⁸

The training of black workers takes place on two levels: that of training the Category 3-8 workers and that of the Category 9 +.

8.2.1 CATEGORY 3-8 WORKERS

The category 3-8 workers, who still make up the largest part of the work force at Harmony Gold Mine, receives training at the training centre at Virginia no. 2 shaft. In the nineties methods and techniques at the Harmony Training Centre have improved greatly. The centre is an exact replica of conditions underground. If a worker arrives for the first time at Harmony Gold Mine, he will go to the offices of

⁶⁶ Sam Mahlapa came to the mines from Lesotho in 1975 and started working as a general labourer underground. In 1977 he returned to Lesotho to finish his standard 10 and also studied for a 3 year teacher's diploma. Because of the poor salary he got in Lesotho he came back to the mines and started working as a clerk. He is quite happy with his working conditions and his salary.

⁶⁷ Here the pay levels are between R5000 and R7000 a month.

⁶⁸ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Sam Mahlapa, senior clerk at Harmony, 11.6.1998.

the manpower division where he will have his eyes and hearing tested and he will undergo an X-ray examination of his lungs.⁶⁹ He will then be supplied with a red ticket to show that he is fit for work.

The average training period of a worker in Category 3-8 takes approximately 4 weeks, of which two weeks are spent at the training centre and two weeks are spent underground, to obtain all the practical experience. The worker does not complete an aptitude tests before starting training at the centre. If he shows any talent or inclination for a certain job, he is identified by his teachers.

A worker in training in Category 3-8 spends his first day at the training centre in Hall 1 where induction training is being done.⁷⁰ This lecture last for one working shift or one day at the mine. After this lecture the workers will have a good knowledge of the following aspects of mining:

- **Leave and Sick Leave Procedures.**
- **Acclimatisation.**
- **Basic Business Principles.**
- **The Structure of Harmony Gold Mine.**
- **Functions of the Human Resources Department.**
- **Aspects of Safety.⁷¹**
- **Security Awareness.**

⁶⁹ The workers are recruited for the mine by TEBA, the Employment Bureau of Africa, in their homelands or rural areas and then transported to the mines in buses or trains. When they arrive they are asked how much of their money they want to save and send home and then TEBA deals with this.

⁷⁰ Training at the centre starts at 6 am in the morning and lasts until 2.30pm in the afternoon, during which the workers break frequently.

⁷¹ This includes the Mine Health and Safety Act, Industrial Theatre, Radiation, Aids Awareness and TB. The Industrial Theatre was introduced to the mines to make the workers more aware of the importance of safety underground. The actors being used are all workers, who have been recruited from the different departments of the mine. All underground workers are from time to time given the opportunity to see the play with their shiftboss and miner also present. After the play the workers are taken to the mock-up stope, where they are divided into small groups and discuss the play and what they have learnt from it.

- Adult Basic Education and Training.

The second day workers are lectured on Risk Management at the mines and this also takes 1 day or 1 shift of 8 hours. Risk Management instructs workers on how to:

- **Travel safely to and from their respective underground working places.**
- **Adhere to and follow crush and lamproom procedures.**
- **Be Aware of the importance of personal safety at the workplace.**
- **Be able to identify common workplace hazards and associated risks.⁷²**
- **Be able to differentiate between relevant barricades and barriers.**
- **Be made aware of all relevant Minerals Act, Manager's References and Codes of Practices applicable to this training manual.⁷³**

Workers are made profoundly aware of all hazards in the workplace such as unsupported areas, brows, faults and dykes, bad ground conditions, tips without grizzlies, unventilated areas, damaged cables, dust, abandoned explosives, heat, machinery and the accumulation of water.

According to Mr Koos van der Berg, who has been working at the training centre for the past eleven years, the black workers are trained very well. He says that the benefits of extensive training for the workers include increased production figures, fewer accidents and a better understanding by the black worker of what is expected of him. He continues that indirectly it also leads to better salaries for the workers as they are all connected to a bonus incentive scheme - the better the production, the better the pay levels.⁷⁴

⁷² Workers are taught the following signs so that when it is necessary they will be able to identify them and act accordingly: No Entry, Waiting Place, Refuge Bay, Drinking Water, No Smoking, Methane and Hearing Protection.

⁷³ After the worker has attended the training lecture and a tour through the underground mock-up, he must obtain a pass rate of 80% in an oral examination before he can go on to the next phase of training.

⁷⁴ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Mr Koos van der Berg at Harmony Training Centre, 19.9.1998.

NUM would like to see a situation where the black workers and their white supervisors are trained as a team rather than inseparate units, who meet after 4 weeks to continue production. The white miners and shift bosses are permanently employed at the mine itself and while the returned recruits are touching up on their training, the white miners and shift bosses are continuing production with other teams of black workers.

Every worker at the Training Centre is issued with a C-more card. This card contains the employment history of a worker and is a record of his past training experience.

If a surface worker, black or white, wishes to study at a college or university, the mine will pay for the classes and the books. There is an adult literacy programme being run at Tikwe where the workers are taught to read and write. These classes take place from Monday to Friday from 16:30 until 18:00. The course is given free of charge and all workers may attend. There are still some shortcomings in the system. In an interview, Sebitio Mangate, a 52-year old Mozambiquan worker, said he could not attend the adult classes as he worked the late shift and only arrived from work at 2:00 in the morning. His job is to check after the blasting has been done, whether the charges did explode and he also does the fire patrol. He can only read and write his own name and earns about R1 500 a month.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Sebitio Mangate belongs to the Shangaan tribe and he still has a piece of land and some cattle and sheep. When he is working at the mine, his wife looks after it. He also has eleven children. He says that he spends his money on cattle and sheep as he does not drink. He admits to having had a woman in town, but says that she ran away. He still follows his tribal traditions. He says he has heard about AIDS and the dangers of it. He started working at Harmony Gold Mine in 1957. Sebitio says that his favourite food at the mines is meat, eggs and bananas and that it is much safer now to work on the mines than in the early years. When asked if he would like to bring his wife and children to the mines, he said it would make him happy. His brothers could then look after his livestock. In his free time he works in the garden.

8.2.2 ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING - ABET

It is policy at Harmony Gold Mine that every worker has the right to try and better himself in life and that is why the Adult Education Programme was inaugurated. ABET is a national course started by President Mandela as a Presidential Lead Project. It focuses on communication and numeracy and is offered at government organizations, private companies, municipalities, religious groups and the mines.

As previously mentioned, the general level of education of the black worker was still an obstacle in his further job advancement. Workers who wished to advance to the category 9+ jobs, had to obtain a blasting certificate for which the minimum qualification is a std. 5 certificate. A very large percentage of the workers at Harmony is still illiterate, hence the importance of the ABET programme. It assists workers in obtaining a std. 5 qualification from the Independent Examination Board in order to make use of further training facilities at the mine.

Every employee at Harmony has the opportunity to apply to attend this course. Every hostel has its own education representative, who is part of the education committee and these representatives may be approached whenever an employee wants to attend the ABET centre. Me Gillian Lackenby, the co-ordinator of the ABET programme at Harmony, says that it is a slow process to introduce workers to the advantages of the literacy programme. Workers fear that they may lose their jobs unless they are mining underground.⁷⁶ The staff of the ABET centre at Harmony consists of three personnel members, Lackenby who is the co-ordinator, Shadrack Mokoena who teaches Mathematics and who has a matric certificate and Synthia Mpelwani who teaches English. She also has a matric certificate.

The ABET programme consists of three levels, Level 1, 2 and 3.⁷⁷ Upon completing each level the employee receives a certificate. While workers are

⁷⁶ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Gillian Lackenby, 19.9.1998.

⁷⁷ Level 1 is the equivalent of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 in school education. Level 2 is equal to grades 4 and 5 and Level 3 is the equivalent of grades 6 and 7.

following the ABET programme, they still receive their monthly salaries, but without any production bonuses. The workers are then housed at Harmony No. 2 shaft, which is situated near the learning centre and take their main meal at that hostel at night. During the day they are provided with refreshments.⁷⁸

The ABET centre sends out several application forms to workers inviting them to join the ABET programme. According to Lackenby, the level of education of the black work force of Harmony Gold Mine has not yet been determined, but she did a similar assessment while working for the GENCOR group of mines and found that 94% of the work force was illiterate or semi-literate and only 3% had the potential for functional literacy.⁷⁹ Me Lackenby says that until May 1995 the old Department of Education and Training system was followed, but because of the low standards there was no progress and the workers were returned to their different shafts.

It was then that the ABET programme was applied at the mine. The applications received for the programme are assessed and workers have to write a aptitude test.⁸⁰ According to the results of this test, the worker is enrolled in the different levels of the programme.

GRADES	STANDARDS	ABET
1	Sub A	1
2	Sub B	1
3	1	1
4	2	2
5	3	2
6	4	3
7	5	3

⁷⁸ It must be noted that it is a fulltime course. The hours at the centre are from 7.30 am to 4.25 pm from Monday to Thursday. On a Friday the classes are until 12.00 so that the workers may finish their homework before going home for the weekend. Workers also receive homework every day.

⁷⁹ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Gillian Lackenby at the ABET centre at Harmony Gold mine, 19.9.1998.

⁸⁰ The criteria of the Independent Examination Board are applied.

The workers selected at Level 1 are illiterate and have to be taught to read and write. At level 2 the workers are basically able to read and write and they are then instructed in reading and mathematics. Workers at Level 3 are given further instruction in English and Mathematics. After completing the different courses, they are tested by Shadrack Mokoena. A worker is only allowed to fail once. The second time he fails, he is sent back to work. Me Lackenby says that the workers at the centre are committed and loyal and have a tremendous amount of self-discipline. After finishing a level they are filled with a sense of pride. If one considers that there are currently only 10 workers in the programme and the total work force is about 10 000 it is a very small percentage of the work force who are involved. Lackenby says that educating the whole force is an idealistic proposition, not a realistic one. The mine is not a charity organisation and still has to make a profit. The ABET centre develops those workers who have the potential, to give them a better quality of life so that they can add value to the company. They are taken up to a certain level of education, so that they can realize the importance of education and sent their own children to school.⁸¹

After a worker has completed the Level 3 he is given an opportunity of getting a blasting certificate and can then become a miner. The blasting certificate was the one barrier that took almost a century to overcome. It was the right to obtain a blasting certificate that white workers defended for all those years. Once the law was amended, the black gold mine-worker became eligible for promotion in the mining industry.⁸² In 1987 Harmony Gold Mine had only two black Category 9+ workers on the pay roll, by 1990 this figure increased to 24 and by 1995 it totalled 52.⁸³

⁸¹ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Gillian Lackenby at the ABET centre, 19.9.1998.

⁸² The law stipulates that a worker must at least have a std.5 certificate if he wants to obtain a blasting certificate and that is why the ABET training is so important if a black worker wants to advance in the mining industry.

⁸³ Payroll of Harmony Gold Mine.

In 1997 the ABET centre of Harmony Gold Mine was among the first 25 centres out of 669 in the country.⁸⁴

After finishing his ABET training, the worker proceeds to the blasting certificate stage. It takes 6 months or 110 shifts to complete a blasting certificate. The worker starts out with a two week induction period where it is explained to him what will be expected of him in the next 6 months. He then goes underground for his practical training. During this time he has to perform duties such as drilling, filling a hole with dynamite and doing support underground. Two weeks before his examination, he spends time being trained on surface where he is prepared for the blasting certificate examination, which is an oral examination that a worker has to take in Welkom. According to Mr Piet Welthagen, who is responsible for the training of these workers, an oral examination is quite sufficient. He says that because mining is largely based on manual labour and practical demonstrations, a written examination is inadequate.⁸⁵ Mr Welthagen says that Harmony Training Centre has a very high pass rate at these examinations and are regarded very highly by the inspectorate. When asked why he believes they are so successful, he says that its staff is very enthusiastic, innovative and filled with new ideas and techniques.

After a worker has obtained his blasting certificate he is signed on as a miner and enabled to go into production at a shaft at the mine. The workers who have further potential are identified by their coaches and are able to return to the training centre for further training after 12 months. These workers then follow the domestic learner official course, after which they can become shift bosses. From the position of shift boss, black workers are able to apply for their mine captain's ticket.

⁸⁴ Me Lackenby attributes this success to the following factors: that their facilitators are well trained, committed and able effectively to implement their training in the classroom; they are not book-bound and use a variety of material; there is excellent rapport between management and NUM; ABET is done full time at Harmony; they aim at a very high standard.

⁸⁵ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Mr Piet Welthagen at Harmony Training Centre, 19.9.1998.

The training centre also offers a 21-day course during which black miners can be trained to perform the duties of a shift boss. The workers write an examination after the three week period and must obtain 80%.⁸⁶ They are then issued with a certificate. Workers who fail, receive a certificate for attendance.

Harmony Mine also offers further opportunities for their workers with potential. The mine has instituted the Learner Official Programme where workers can attend Wits Technicon fulltime and do a Higher Diploma in Mining. If a worker successfully completes this course he can already be in possession of a mine manager's ticket.⁸⁷

Training opens up many opportunities to the black gold mine-worker. When he becomes a miner or shift boss he becomes eligible for a mine house and may get his family to live with him, with the advantages of paid electricity bills. He has the opportunity of earning more in production bonuses. He not only benefits financially, but also gains respect, ability and prestige.

8.2.3 THE BRIDGING SCHOOL

At the bridging school of Harmony Gold Mine, young black students are given the opportunity of doing a post-matric year in order to improve their Mathematics and Science marks. At the end of this year, they write the Senior Certificate Examination of the Independent Examination Board and are enabled to continue their studies at a Technicon or University.

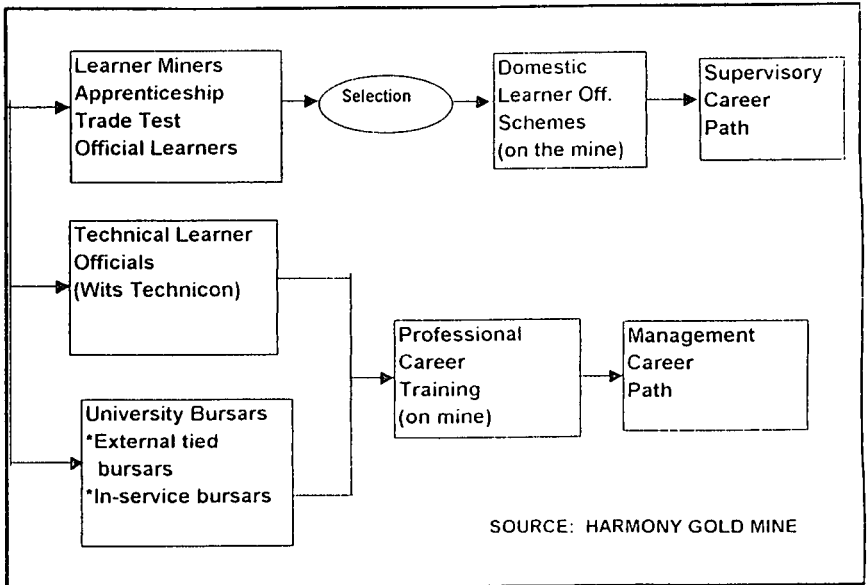
⁸⁶ In fact the pass rate at all the different classrooms at the Training Centre is 80%. If a worker cannot obtain 80% he is sent back for further training.

⁸⁷ The mine has 2 black workers at the moment who are attending Wits Technicon. The mine pays for their classes, lodging and food. The worker also gets a salary and is visited by mine officials once every term to ensure that he is doing well. The workers are encouraged to do well and if they pass their names appear in the mine's magazine to encourage them even further.

Students are allowed into the programme on the following grounds:

- the education takes place in English, so the students must have a good knowledge of the language
- they must be in possession of a matric certificate
- they must preferably be from the Goldfields region
- children of workers at Harmony mine are given preference
- they must be South African citizens.

The following figure shows the career options open to the students at the bridging school:



Once the student has applied for admission, he has to write an aptitude test, the results of which determine whether he is accepted. The students live on the premises of the bridging school in well-decorated double apartments with showers, a central kitchen and a recreation hall.

According to Ammie van der Walt, the co-ordinator of the programme, the students are not only taught Maths, Science and basic Technical Drawing, but also life skills.⁸⁸ Their programme includes personal development, leadership development, management skills and financial management. The students are responsible for the management of the school and every student has a specific task to fulfil. Some are responsible for the maintenance of the grounds, some for the kitchen and others for recreational activities. This teaches the students responsibility and life skills.

The mine pays all the expenses of the students such as meals, lodging, books, equipment and students are even supplied with pocket money.

Currently, NUM is in a deadlock with management about the ABET training programme. NUM feels that a larger portion of the work force must be educated and more students than 35 must be taken on. ABET, does not want to lower its standards and feels that it would rather take on fewer workers and instruct them properly, than take on many without giving individual attention.

The training programmes on Harmony are quite impressive and in gear with outcome-based education. If it is taken into account that not even 1% of the black work force is involved in the category 9+ training programmes, it is a very modest start. Harmony mine is a low-grade ore mining company, which cannot afford the luxury of educating an inordinate proportion of its workers. The success of the ABET and Bridging School operations lies in the fact that it can be done full time, while the workers still receive their monthly salaries. It is neither practical nor realistic to involve the entire work force in this programme. The mine has the after-hours night schools to teach workers to read and write. It is the responsibility of the state, and not the mines, to increase the level of education of the designated groups in the country.

⁸⁸ The programme was started in 1996 and so far the Bridging School has had a 100% pass rate. In 1996, 15 students passed, in 1997, 29 and in 1998 there are currently 10 students in the school.

CHAPTER 9 - EVALUATION: FROM SUBSISTENCE FARMER TO CAREER MINER

The hypothesis of this Ph.D was to determine whether the status of the black gold mine-worker has changed and to determine the different roleplayers in the transformation process. This thesis is not concerned with finding a culprit and blaming any of the parties involved. It is not concerned with making criticism or giving praise. It is an investigation of the different parties involved in the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker, with specific reference to Harmony Gold Mine in the Free State, and how his life was eventually transformed.

The complete transformation process of the black gold mine-worker, started out very slowly over several decades. In the beginning of this painstaking process, the black worker himself played a very passive role. The image of a puppet on a string comes to mind. The transformation process would only gain momentum in the 1970s when the work force became more permanent and workers' rights could no longer be ignored. Black workers would only become equal with white workers once the colour bar was completely removed and they were able to obtain a blasting certificate in the mining industry. Only then would they hold their future in their own hands.

Before the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa there are many words to describe the economy of the country - low productivity in agriculture, lack of capital, lack of skill and technical knowledge, poor transport, limited internal markets, a small volume of exports and very little to attract foreign investments. The severe critics of the mining industry's black labour policy, must bear in mind - without the mining industry there would not have been an industrialization of the country and South Africa would have resembled other African states. South Africa became the heartbeat of Africa because of the glamour of gold.

The discovery of gold in South Africa brought on an economic and labour revolution that would change the whole character of the country and the sub-continent of

Southern Africa. Initially differentiation on the labour front was made according to skill and labourers were divided into skilled and unskilled labourers. The skilled labourers received the higher wages and the unskilled ones, the very low wages. It was not just a question of race, but also of ability. Once the "more able" workers began to feel threatened by the "less able" workers, as the latter were gaining new skills, new emphasis was placed on race.

There are four major role players in the history of the mining industry and the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker. Firstly, the South African government, which set the rules in the beginning and changed these as they went along. In the process they delayed South Africa's integrated economy and the transformation of the black gold mine-worker for a century.

Secondly, the mining companies with the support of the Chamber of Mines, which recruited and regulated the work force and produced the gold. "It would be true to say that the great industry of the Witwatersrand has been built upon the twin foundations of black labour and white capital and enterprise."¹ Lanning writes about the symbiotic relationship between the mines and the government, "the white government and companies built their growing economy on the basis of a massive exploitation of cheap black unskilled labour force in the mines, in industry and on the farms. The mining companies were willing participants in the economic and political exploitation, for it was the cornerstone of their wealth and influence."²

Thirdly, the white mine-workers who did the skilled labour and wanted to protect their privileged position against the opposition of the black labourer. After 1948 when the National Party came into power, the white mine-worker gained a very tough accomplice.

Fourthly, the black gold mine-worker, who became involved in the mining industry on a temporary and involuntary basis and whose life was changed for ever.

¹ Geen, M.S., The Making of South Africa, p. 186.

² Lanning, G., Mueller, M., Africa Undermined: Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, p. 497.

To understand the important role the government played in the entire transformation process of the black gold mine-worker, one must take a look at the importance of gold mining to the government and the economy of South Africa as a whole.

The gold mining industry generated income and contributed to the national product of South Africa. The value of the gold output in 1910 was R64 million. By 1974 it had risen to R2 620 million.³ The vast amount spent on wages put a large income into the hands of South African consumers, even those in the poorest parts of the country. The African rural areas were also largely dependent on the cash earnings of the migrants working on the mines. Even neighbouring countries relied on the income which their migrants generated on the mines. It puts money in the pockets of many poor whites, rich whites, poor blacks and almost every citizen in South African benefited from the industry.

The mining industry and the secondary industries that support the mining industry were the biggest employers of labour in the country. Initially mining was the only other alternative to agriculture. Mining subsequently opened up the doors to other industries e.g. the manufacturing industry and railway and harbour services. The mines needed electricity, transport, equipment, clothing, food and medical supplies to name but a few of the industries that originated on its account.

The recruiting organizations, WENELA(Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) and NRC(Native Recruiting Organization), developed transport networks that ranged from fleets of barges on the great rivers, road services and an air service. Where public and private transport existed, they made use of them, but where it did not, they had to pioneer for themselves, building roads and bridges, cutting canals through reed-blocked river swamps, creating landing strips for aircraft and maintaining a network of radio communications where the tribal drums used to beat out their messages. The infra-structure these recruiting organizations created was to the benefit of the whole southern continent. They had, however, one major retarding factor on the transformation of the black gold mine-worker in that it

³ Hobart-Houghton, D., The South African Economy. p. 109.

prevented any competition for their labour and they were recruited at the lowest possible wage.

The mining industry in South Africa has been the major attraction for capital from the money markets of Europe. Large amounts of capital have also been invested in the Free State Goldfields. The inflow of foreign capital has enabled the country to channel its domestic savings into other industries and expand the economy. The gold mines of South Africa attracted men with drive, energy, vision and skill from overseas countries who played a major role in the development of the country. "Some may have been mere adventurers, but others were not; and as a group they brought new vitality, enterprise and progressive notions; and these qualities have been perpetuated in the modern generation of South African industrial leadership. Whether this enterprise would have arisen without this injection from abroad is doubtful."⁴

The mining industry was also one of the largest sources of revenue for the government and a provider of foreign exchange to the country. W. J. Busschau writes about gold, "The possession of an export article, particularly one with the attributes of gold, which all the world wants, is a great advantage to a young country. Gold as the final means of settling international indebtedness can enter through doors which import controls close against other commodities."⁵ Gold has financed the imports without which industrial expansion would have been impossible.

The gold mining companies were pioneers when it came to technical advances and managerial skills. It has flourished because of careful costing, sound labour management and advanced technical and modern scientific developments. The industry has set an example for other industries in South Africa. The mining companies undertook new ventures in other industries, to which they brought the standards of efficiency that they had developed.⁶

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁵ Busschau, W.J., *The Glamour of Gold*, p. 2.

⁶ Hobart-Houghton, D., p. 114.

Some industries owe their origin and development to the mining industry. The coal mining industry was developed in order to provide electricity for the mines, the railway and harbour network for transportation, explosives manufacturers, engineering, cable manufacturing, clothing suppliers and pipeline manufacturers. The tremendous number of workers involved also helped to provide a market for agricultural products. The magic of the mining industry is that it could bring whole new towns into existence. Towns that needed schools and teachers, policemen, nurses and doctors, municipal authorities, attorneys and lawyers, small business men and shop owners. It helps to understand the magnificence of the industry if you live in a mining town and witness the effects it can have. The effects of the magic wand of the mining industry are tremendous, particularly in the Free State with its limited business opportunities.

The mining industry has had an educational and uplifting effect on the indigenous people of the country. Hobart-Houghton comments in this regard, "One of the greatest tasks in the economic development of Africa is to replace subsistence agriculture with one which is more productive, and in order to bring this about it is essential to change the outlook of the African himself and orient him towards modern society. In this process the gold-mining industry has been a powerful influence; and it has affected the lives and cultural boundaries of millions of African peasants. It has tended to break down traditional tribal isolation, for workers from some forty different tribes live and work shoulder to shoulder in the mines. If one considers that even a new language - "Fanakalo" - arose to assist in inter-communication, the different dimensions of the work force becomes clear. In the mines millions of Africans have had their introduction to the world of modern industry, with its concepts of punctuality, large-scale organization and modern machinery, and its routine of regular labour. They have also, incidentally, been subjected to modern ideas of diet, health, hygiene, housing, transport and to all the bandishments of modern manufactured products of all varieties. "In short the traditional African tribesman who has once worked in the mines, like Plato's

caveman who has seen the light, can never be quite the same simple tribesman again."⁷

A good example of the change which has taken place is that more than 1 million Red Cross Certificates have been issued to black workers who have received training in first aid on the mines. These certificates include the most modern advances in medical aid, in comparison with a culture of witch doctors and herbs. The mines also have adult schools after hours where workers can learn to read and write and even do post-graduate study.

Again the mining industry was a pioneer - this time in bringing Western civilization, education and capitalism to the doors of many of the black tribesmen in the country. The positive effects the mining industry had on all South Africans should not be overlooked. These effects also serve as a means of comparison and one can draw the conclusion that no matter what negative effects the industry had on the black gold mine-worker, these were preferable to having no influence at all. Doxey agrees, "without the gold-ming industry the country as a whole would have long remained a relatively poor agricultural country, would have postponed the emergence of the Africans and prolonged his backwardness."⁸

In view of the above factors it is clear that the government would wisg to keep the mining industry in a healthy and profitable condition to reap the utmost benefits from it. If it meant to force black labourers to the labour markets by means of laws and regulations, then so be it.

The mining industry not only transformed the black gold mine-worker, but a whole country. Although this sounds very impressive, the people's factor should not be overlooked. In the process, people's lives, for many generations, would change for ever. It was an uphill struggle for the black gold mine-worker, but for some it proved to be worthwhile in the end.

⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

⁸ Doxey, G.V., The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa, p. 59.

It was also an irreversible phenomenon and things could not just be undone and black workers retreat behind the mountains to the reserves once their contracts had expired. It would take the South African government many years to realize this and try to deal with the situation. The government had to take responsibility for the black workers and their families, not just in working hours, but after hours as well. Not merely for the duration of their contracts, but also for the periods they stayed at home. Beneath the glamour and glitz of the gold mining industry, with its international stock exchanges where billions exchange hands, lies the sweat and the struggle of the black labourer who was not given the credit or the rewards he deserved.

The second role-player in the transformation of the black gold mine-workers, is the mining companies. Development of the mining industry covers a century of achievement. From the very beginning, the mining industry had to overcome the difficulties of underground water, heat, dust, lack of ventilation, different rock formations, labour shortages and other technicalities. Fortunately it had most competent people dealing with it.

Mining in South Africa is organized in the group system, which consists of the formation of a large mining house, which has a lot of mines under its control. This provides each mine with the best technical, engineering and scientific advice and provided the vast sums of capital needed to get the mines into production. When gold was discovered in the Free State the mining companies had the benefit of having their structures already in place. Their recruiting system was working smoothly, artisans knew their jobs very well and valuable experience had been gained. It was a time to learn from the past and move into top gear. It had the assistance and knowledge of the Chamber of Mines at their disposal. The gold discoveries in the Free State were rich, greater mechanization led to increased effectiveness and living and working conditions for mine-workers were about to improve.

The mining companies should not just be portrayed as opportunists who gathered like a group of parasites around the black man. They are deserving of the credit. When their achievements are taken into consideration, it must be conceded that they possessed initiative, courage, vision⁹ and expertise. They brought whole towns into existence, initiated power companies and railway lines and dictated the economy of a whole country. One can only wonder what this country would have been like if they did not get involved at all.

Conditions for the black man in the Free State mines in 1995 are up to standard and quite rewarding and comfortable. The mining industry was one of the first companies to initiate medical services for its workers, which in 1995 compared with some of the best in the world. The hostel accommodation is modern and comfortable and workers' diets have been scientifically designed. It is regrettable that this situation took a century to achieve.

Admittedly, mine management included English, Germans, Scots and Americans so it was as much their policies as those of the white Afrikaners that influenced the labour situation. "The origins of institutionalized racism in South Africa are bound up with it. Apartheid cannot be understood merely as the product of Afrikaner nationalism, Calvinist prejudice, and frontier wars. It is as much, or more, the legacy of the English and German financiers, Scots and American engineers, British and Australian trade unions and British civil servants."⁹ South Africa has received much criticism because of its apartheid regime. Yet, apartheid was witnessed, accepted and practised by the overseas investors in the country's gold mining industry.

The symbiotic relationship between the mining companies and the government also needs some attention. The mines needed the government to help them regulate and control the huge work force and the government needed the mines for their revenue. Crush writes, "During periods of crisis, mining executives invariably looked to government to suppress labour militancy and to insulate them against

⁹ Crush, J., a.o., South Africa's Labor Empire, p. 3.

competition from other employers. The authorities rarely disappointed them.¹⁰ The government made laws, amendments to laws and kept the colour bar in place for nearly a hundred years. When the mining companies wished to relax the colour bar and allow more black workers into skilled positions, however, this was unacceptable to the then National Party government. The mining industry could not operate in isolation from the government or the other industries in the country - it was part of a larger economy and could not set the rules of the game. There is no question that the mines could have functioned much more economically and profitably if blacks were allowed into more skilled positions. Mine management knew it, and the government knew it, but the latter continued to protect the white workers from black competition.

Another major role-player in the transformation of the black gold mine-worker was the white miner. At first overseas immigrants made up a large part of the white work force, as they had to be imported to do the skilled work. They quickly taught the white South African miners their trades and also introduced them to trade unions, strike action and wage negotiation. The white miners were swift learners and used their skills and trade union membership to protect them from the competition of the black worker.

By 1910 South African whites made up a larger part of the work force and things could only deteriorate for the black worker. There was an increase in the ratio of South African born-miners. In 1907 prejudiced white miners made up 17% of the work force, and by 1918 this figure had risen to 50%. Things were only going to get worse for the black worker, as Beinhart writes of the South African white gold mine-workers: "they tended to rely even more than immigrant workers on racially based agreements and legislation" ¹¹

White workers had the vote after the Anglo-Boer War and were prepared to take militant action and industrial strikes to back up their privileged situation. They

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹ Beinhart, W., Twentieth Century South Africa, p. 80.

continually pressured both the government and their employers to help them maintain their position.¹² The combined efforts of the government, mine management and the white miners had a retarding effect on the transformation process of the black miner.

The mining companies realized the financial implications of keeping the status quo of the white workers, and their efforts to alter it led to the 1922 strike.¹³ During the great expansion of the 1930s, white employment kept pace with blacks so that by 1937 there were over 37 000 white miners, more than 11% of the work force.¹⁴

The white miners were in a very comfortable position as they had their skills, trade unions, and the vote in political elections to empower them. They transformed their own future. In the beginning it was not necessary for white workers to resort to any formal procedures to exclude blacks, since black workers were totally incapable of competing with white workers. They were illiterate and lacked even the simplest job-related skills and techniques. They were disorganized, came from different tribes and backgrounds, spoke many different languages and they were no threat to the white worker. The situation, however, was set to change.

White miners laid the foundations of the South African labour force late in the previous century and then defended it for the next 100 years. The attitude of the white miner that he was above certain manual tasks and regarded it as the work of a black man, would make him very dependent on the black man. The presence of the white miner was one of the largest retarding factors in the transformation process of the black worker. The joint forces of the government and the white miner were a major obstacle.

The fourth role-player in the transformation of the black gold mine-worker is the worker himself. At first he played a very passive role in his own transformation. He

¹² In 1911 a white worker cost on average twelve times more than a black worker. Beinhart, W., p. 80.

¹³ In 1922 the white mine-workers made up 11% of the work force. After the strike it dropped to 8%, but when the Coalition Government came into power, it went up to 10% again.

¹⁴ Beinhart, W., p. 31.

was restricted in so many ways, where he could go, where he could work, how long he could work, what type of work he could do, that he was merely transformed by his surroundings. He was transformed by external factors like his white superiors, mine management, the government and their laws, his new surroundings, urbanization, the colour bar and the migrant nature of his existence. Other people were dictating his history and determining his future. In the post-World War II era, the black worker indicated that he wanted to take up his rightful place in society. He was more skilled and more Westernized and wanted his rewards. He was no longer content to play a part-time role.

It was mentioned that if it had not been for the labour of the black man, the mining industry in South Africa would never have materialized and South Africa would be a totally different country today. The reverse is also true. If it had not been for the gold mining industry, the economic progress of the black man in a large part of southern Africa would have been non-existent. The mines brought development and progress, not only for the white man, but also for the blacks. It introduced them to Western culture and Western labour practices. It is ironic to think that it was exactly these influences which would in the end bring him into direct conflict with the white worker, the industry and the government.

Initially, black workers did not think of mining as a career. When the Goldfields of the Free State were discovered during the Second World War, the black miner was not a career miner even then. He was more dependent on the industry, but did not consider it as a full time career. The mine was only a place, far away, where they could earn money to supply their farms with live stock, seeds and implements. It was a place where they could earn cash wages and expand their subsistence farming. It was not a career they took seriously. They were serious about their land and cattle. They made all the sacrifices and suffered the inconveniences to support their farming activities. It was not a career, but a sacrifice. They used the mines, and the mines used them. When their farming activities diminished, their attention shifted to mining as a career, but they realized that they were up against many

opponents. The government was a very tough opponent, the mining companies and the Chamber of Mines had so much power that they controlled their lives completely and the white man did not want to give up his privileged position in skilled occupations.

The mining companies were not philanthropic organizations, but companies aimed at making profits, getting dividends for their investments and, in the process, expanding their companies. They were not very interested in the human relations factor of the black mine-worker. As long as he produced, they were satisfied. The black gold mine-worker was regarded simply as a pair of hands which had to dig as much ore per shift as possible. He was faceless, and only a number on a production sheet. He was the dark, nameless figure in the background of the early photographs of the mining industry. The fact that he had a family and other needs was disregarded. It would take the black mine workers' economic powers, such as strikes and work stoppages many years later, to convince the mining employers that he was a family man, with desires and ambitions. Crush writes, "Much of the blood and sweat will never be chronicled because the remarkably comprehensive data and statistics kept by the industry throughout its history have focussed on production rather than the producers."¹⁵

The black worker was not completely ignorant of the fact that he was being ignored when the dividends of the gold mining industry were being handed out. They were dissatisfied with their situation, but still lacked unity and organization in their labour disputes.¹⁶ Previously their problems were solved by the headman of the tribe, but the latter had no place or authority on the mines. He would have to turn to white management to solve his grievances. This was something he did for almost a century before he would finally be heard. By the late 1980s he could also turn to the National Union of Mineworkers, which tried to improve the working and living conditions, safety standards, wages and the status of the black gold mine-worker.

¹⁵ Crush, J., a.o., p. 3.

¹⁶ Shillington, K., History of Southern Africa, p. 151.

There was power in numbers for the black gold mine-worker. While the workers only stayed for short periods of a few months, they could grin and bear the conditions, but once their contracts became longer and mining was their only career option, their discontent would increase.

Tribal barriers first had to be broken down, before the black gold mine-workers were able to unite and negotiate better living and working conditions. It was not an easy process as workers came from different countries, tribes and spoke many various languages. The following quotation illustrates the diversity of the work force, "The Chopi, from the Mozambique coast, with his filed teeth and his tradition of music-making, mingles with the red-blanketed Bomvana maker and wielder of battle-axes and tribal daggers, from the Transkei territory of South Africa's Cape Province. The Barotse river-man, from the crocodile-infested stretches of the upper Zambesi, works with the Swazi, who usually arrives wearing a baboon or leopard skin loin cloth, with his long hair bleached by clay. The Zulu, ornamented with colourful discs in the enlarged lobes of his ears, shares the gold mining experience with a Nyasa from the shores of Lake Nyasa, where Arab dhows sail - a thousand miles from the oceans."¹⁷ Interviewing the mine-workers reveal the diversity of the work force and the complicated task of communicating and inter-acting. Even with interpreters, who are proficient in more than one black language, this is a difficult task.

The workers arrive for different periods ranging from 4 to 18 months, they speak many different languages and their home environment and their tribal customs vary vastly. What they have in common is the desire to seek work on the gold mines and earn cash wages. In the process they make their first contact with Western civilization.

Initially mining was an extra income to support their subsistent lifestyle, but later on it would become their only source of income. Once the black worker realized that mining was his only option in the labour market, he became increasingly dissatisfied

¹⁷ Mining Survey, p. 9.

with his backward position in the industry. He could accept the low wages and poor living and working conditions on a short-term basis, but not in the long run.

Mine owners would seek the least skilled workers, who demanded little in the way of employment, insurance, accident compensation, medical benefits or old age pensions. The mining companies knew that if they were sick, they would be cared for by their family at home, if they were unemployed for periods of time, they would be fed by their relatives. If they were old, a roof would be provided by their relatives.

These tribesmen were not just a never-ending stream of faceless workers, but human beings whose needs, feelings and aspirations had to be taken into account. Their way of life changed along with the times and their contact with civilization and this created many problems for themselves and their employers.

The black workers only played a quantitative role in the mining industry, not much of a qualitative one. The managerial, design and innovative input came from the whites workers in the mining industry. Hobart-Houghton agrees, "The leadership, drive, capital, skill and administrative ability, which have transformed South Africa into by far the wealthiest and most industrially advanced nation in the continent of Africa, have in the past come almost exclusively from the white group."¹⁸ All the black workers had to give at first was their "muscle" power. Towards the 1980s and 1990s they started giving some of their mental power as well. They did not have the educational background and skills to perform the decision-making on the mine, but they had their numbers and could no longer be ignored.

The black townships are like labour reservoirs, and serve the white cities during the day. At night their occupants return to their poor living conditions. It would seem that the black labourer could not have it both ways. He could not have a rewarding job at the mines and profitable farming practices. Some of the blame for this, must be accepted by the black man himself.

¹⁸ Hobart-Houghton, D., p. 256.

Their farming activities were aimed only at subsistence farming and not at farming for any markets. Even if there were 400 000 black workers at one time involved in mining, there were still a large majority at home. The latter became so dependent on the cash wages earned by the black miners, that their own activities declined. The history of the mining industry is filled with statements that the workers left the mines when it was planting or reaping season and only came back once they had performed these activities.

It was not often that all the males in a family were recruited by the mining industry and the industry is not solely to blame for the deterioration of the rural areas as some historians claim. On the contrary, the mining industry sometimes provided the only income for a family in a certain area.

The transformation process of the black worker is one of restriction and constraint. The black mine-worker not only found himself restricted in the work place, but also away from work in his free hours. There were so many laws restricting him away from his work-place that this, too led to frustration. Basically, his labour was needed, but it denied him the right to build a home and raise a family in the place where he would spend the best years of his life. He was only offered housing in single-sex hostels. In nearby townships his prospects were likewise bleak, because he could only rent a house in a black township. This he could only do if he had a job. The black gold mine-workers were segregated from the white man in the working place, and they found themselves separated from his family in the free hours he had after work.

At first the workers had to be drawn and out from their leisurely existence in the reserves through the deliberate efforts of the government and the mining companies with the very attractive carrot of cash wages. Later they would come spontaneously. At first they would be single, but later they would bring their families and their children would be born in the towns and cities. Then it was not just the black worker who was transformed, but also his wife and children. They would then

exchange their huts in the rural areas for shacks in the towns and be introduced to the Western culture of schools, churches, music and clothes.

The mining industry was not solely responsible for inventing the migrant labour system. Migrancy existed in the history of the black people long before gold was discovered. Wars caused mass migrations in their history and black people also migrated for agricultural and grazing reasons. It also existed in other countries and still sometimes take place in the world. Migrancy suited the black workers in the early decades of the industry. They did not want to stay in the towns, but wanted to get back to their cattle and their land as soon as possible. In the beginning the black mine-worker wanted to return to his place of birth. He longed to get home to his family, his land and his cattle. "From an early date the government and the mines were keen to see the mineworkers return home at the end of their six month or year-long contracts. This meant that they did not have to provide for workers' families and could pay lower wages. And they did not want Africans living permanently in the towns." ¹⁹ At first the black mine-workers were farmers with temporary jobs on the mine, but later they became miners who tried to farm on a temporary basis.

What occurred in the mining industry of South Africa was a deliberate uprooting process of the black man, structured by laws and regulations, strictly controlled and punishable when transgressed, with far-reaching effects on the black people of the country. Migrancy took place over a period of a hundred years and is still taking place so it may confidently be asserted that it has affected more than 3 generations of families.

Migrancy revealed its shortcomings as early as in 1896 when the Chamber of Mines agreed, "In other parts of the world when you start a mine and equip it you can probably go on for years and the men employed in the mining operation become skilled in their work. Here I may say, when you start a mine you have 25% of the

¹⁹ New Nation, p. 28.

boys who are proficient and if you add 25% to them the first 25% go home. The result is that you are continually teaching these people."²⁰

This would never have been practicable in the skilled labour section. It was the unskilled nature of the work that made the system practicable. The lower wages paid to migrants as compared to a skilled labour force, together with the welfare and subsistence available in the rural areas, acted to make the migratory labour practice increasingly viable. There was just not an alternative that suited both the government, the mining industry and the workers.

Despite the deficiencies of the system and the inadequacy of the supply, the migrant pattern was retained as the alternative that was economically the most viable. According to Webster, migrancy had two major advantages for the mining companies:

- "The existence of the reserves where Africans allegedly have an alternative source of income to substitute their mine wages has provided the mine owners with a justification for subsistence wages."
- "Oscillating migration prevents effective class mobilization. For effective trade unions to arise there must be a body of life-long wage earners free to sell their labour, wholly dependent on wages without prospects of becoming independent producers and aware of the benefits of collective bargaining."²¹

The waste of man-hours, transport costs and skill acquisition and the huge demands on labour management were never enough to reverse the migrant pattern. They became part of the cost structure. "In the circumstances the Chamber found itself under increasing pressure from the mining managements to relieve the situation as managers persistently complained of the difficulty of securing and retaining a sufficient number of Kaffirs(sic) to carry on the works. In the event the Chamber was led to explore a number of expedients to overcome its crises in

²⁰ Levy, N., p. 29.

²¹ Webster, E., "Background to the Supply and Control of labour in the Gold Mines", South African Labour Bulletin, 7 November 1974.

human energy, but none of them were to alter the established institution of migrant labour."²²

The Chamber's response was not to replace the system but to deal with the disadvantages and shortcomings of the system. One of the most severe of these was the inadequacy of the supply. There was rivalry between the different recruiting companies which resulted in a three-fold problem. There was a steady rise in wages, increasing bribery of potential recruits by competing companies and desertion by disillusioned workers occurred frequently. The fundamental issue at stake was that the migrant labour system gave the black gold mine-worker temporary status and retarded his transformation process. This made it increasingly difficult for the latter to convince the government and mine management that he wanted more permanent status.

Again it must be remembered that the mines operated for the benefit of the shareholders and were not philanthropic organizations which could pour out streams of gold for the benefit of the underprivileged in this country and other Southern African countries. According to Biccard Jeppe it is estimated that there were between 150 -250 million blacks in Africa. If it is borne in mind that there were about 200 000 involved in migrancy, it must be concluded that it could not have had such a devastating effect on the areas of recruitment.²³ There were economically active people in the reserves, even after the mines had done their recruiting, but it is not their transformation that is under discussion.

It did transform the black worker and the family of the black worker of every one of the 400 000 migrants to an extent. Not only were the initial wages of the black man very low, but the dynamics of Western cultures and a Western economy were hard to keep up with. "Our African takes a long journey from his tribal culture towards Western culture. The journey will take him his lifetime. He will never be free of the

²² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²³ Biccard Jeppe, C.W., p. 93.

impact of new physical experiences, because the Western culture is a restless dynamic culture of change. Change, endless change."²⁴

Some of the changes that he had to confront were new types of transport, clothing, food, medical care, western medicines, hospitals, sports, entertainment, books, pictures, radios, banks, building societies, clubs, drinks, western laws and justice, governmental disciplines and township life with its gangsterism.

These environmental changes causes mental and personality changes. The African became more resourceful, prudent, stimulated and ambitious. It was this ambition that was to bring bring him into conflict with the white man. The black man also became more knowledgeable, not from formal education, but by coming in contact with other people in different environments.

E.R. Silberbauer sums up the transformation that takes place in the black man, "He will be individualistic, and very self-conscious of his own personal dignity and importance. He will have developed ambition to achieve in areas that previously he did not even know about. Very likely he will be an insecure person, because the change from the stable kraal life to a world of constant change that he does not understand, must bewilder him and make him insecure. This insecurity very likely makes him anxious. He must become time-conscious in terms of the White man's concept of time, otherwise he will never keep a job. He will have a new outlook on family life. In the townships he cannot keep to the tribal concepts of closely interwoven families. He chooses a woman to live with, whom he may marry sooner or later. He is no longer part of a tribal society that will care for him in old age, nor of a large family group who will look after his children if he dies. These responsibilities must be his and his alone."²⁵

There is a monotonous routine about the lives of the black migrant workers in the gold mines of the Free State. Their daily activities have been dominated by a pervasive sameness. Their reasons for entering the mining industry have remained

²⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

unchanged. They need to earn cash wages on the mines, which they cannot do in the rural area. In an interview with Mahlomola Makeki, a 29-year old black mine-worker from Lesotho, he said that there is no work for him inside Lesotho and he has to come to the mines in order to survive. He still owns a piece of land in Lesotho that his wife looks after during his absence. This is the 1990s and not much has changed for the migrant.²⁶ His motives for coming to the mines have remained unchanged. The organizations for recruiting mine-workers are virtually the same as they were this century, only the names have changed.

The negative features of urban life, such as crime, liquor abuse and women, had a strong demoralizing effect on black migrants and ultimately a certain percentage of them abandoned their roots and became permanently urbanized. The moral and social implications of the process would take on major proportions in the twentieth century. It is also true that despite the destructive effect migrancy had on tribal life, if migrants had not brought their labour to towns, the mines would have been forced to close down and the effect on tribal life then would have been even worse. The opinion of the official mine labour recruiting organization WNLA, on the question of blacks' personal feelings towards migratory labour on the mines is, however, different. According to WNLA in 1959, "the mining industry has always been dependent on migrant labour and this system of employment suits both the industry and the native labourers themselves. The opportunity to work for short periods on the gold mines and then to return home enables the tribal native, essentially agriculturist, to preserve his traditional way of life, and at the same time, provide himself with the wherewithal to withstand the vicissitudes of farming, which are common the world over but more particularly in Africa,"²⁷ For most workers the tribal areas have long ago ceased to provide any income and they have had to come to the mines to survive. J. Duffy agrees, "As far as South Africa itself is concerned

²⁶ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Mahlomola Makeki. He goes home once a month to visit his family, 11.6.1998.

²⁷ WNLA, "Organization of Migrant Labour in the South African Mining Industry, Bulletin of the Internal African Labour Institute, no. 6 of 1959.

"there is no doubt that whatsoever it is the economic necessity which drives men from the reserves to seek work in town"²⁸

The agricultural productivity of rural South African blacks is so low that it increases the incentive to supplement their meagre income with cash earned on the mines. Reporting on the source of income of Ciskei residents, Hobart-Houghton states that "remittances from emigrant workers in the industrial centres support the economy of the reserves to the extent of almost fifty percent of it's total cash income. Without the earnings of the emigrants the population in the district would starve."²⁹

This was further stressed in the report of the Native Economic Commission where it is stated, "The Native(sic) is satisfied and happy in his simple tribal life, and he would not go out to work if his Reserves provided enough for his needs. This, however, the Reserves do not do. During periods when there is no shortage of food the supply of labour is low: on the other hand when food becomes scarce, or need for money for taxes and other cash requirements begins to press, the flow of labour increase."³⁰

It is true to say then, that the primary motivation for migration is the need for cash earnings, both to buy food in times of scarcity and particularly in current times, for the purchase of farming implements, raw materials and luxuries.

It was not just an economical shock for the black workers as they emerged from their birthplace, but also a cultural and psychological shock. There was no time to allow the workers to adapt to their new surroundings gradually, they had to adapt as quickly as possible in order to influence the production levels as little as possible.

The years between the two world wars were a time when Africans became more alienated from tribal life and the reserves. The mines, as well as secondary industries, the railways, factories and farms sought their labour and they flocked to towns in their thousands. It is ironic that the black workers who had to be forced

²⁸ Duffy, J., *Portuguese Africa*, p. 130.

²⁹ Hobart-Houghton, D., "Life in the Ciskei", South African Institute of Race Relations, p. 56. 1955.

³⁰ Report of the Native Economics Commission, UG 22A, p. 118. 1932.

and dragged out of the rural areas, but when they came spontaneously, the towns were not ready for them and they were not welcome. Then measures were taken to strictly control them and repatriate them to the rural areas.

Before the Second World War the physical, mental and social well-being of a black mine-worker was his own concern. He was considered a "visitor" and could not claim any benefits.³¹ Actually he was just considered as a pair of hands, a number on a work sheet that had to drill and shovel. This would change after the war when a new urban proletariat would emerge. As J.A. Brown states, "The migrant African was no longer considered an unsophisticated man. This savage in wonderland had his eyes open."³²

One of the biggest problems with migrancy was that it hindered the black man in acquiring any job skills. His temporary status and short-term contract did not make him a very favourable candidate for training and kept him backward for many years. The moment their contracts became longer and they could return to the same mine, they started acquiring skills and techniques. In the beginning the only gains the black mine-workers received were their cash wages. They did not benefit politically, educationally or socially. On their balance sheet they could only put down cash earnings. Towards the end of this century it is a completely different scenario. The worker now undergoes specific training than can lead to his advancement in the labour hierarchy.

The low wages the black worker received was another retarding factor in the transformation process. These kept some of the opportunities of Western culture away from the black man for many years. He could not afford better housing, schooling, books, a car, a radio and a television set. He had heard of them and seen them, but he could not afford them. The wages were just enough to survive. Wages in kind had to make up for the low wages paid to black workers. Workers

³¹ The Urban Areas Act of 1933 specified that Blacks were not allowed permanent residence in towns. The Native Service Contract Act of 1932 made it a criminal offence for Africans to leave the mines or farms without their employers' consent.

³² Brown, J.A., So Rich an Inheritance, p. 82.

were provided with food to keep them in good physical condition for the strenuous work underground.³³ The government and mining companies argued that wages in kind compensated for the low wages of the black workers.

Wages in kind were not invented by the mining industry, but were borrowed from agriculture where they were common practice. White miners made use of the labour of black farm workers. In exchange they gave them meat, mealie meal and sometimes a piece of land to plant for themselves. White workers, on the other hand, did not receive wages in kind, but earned higher salaries and had to make their own provisions for food. For officials above the ground the mines also provided subsidized canteens.

The mining industry arrived at a crossroads after the Second World War, when the new goldfields of the Free State were discovered. It had the choice either to keep up the same labour practices of the previous fifty years or it could transform the labour market and create better opportunities for the black workers. The migration system was operating smoothly, but with the implication that the black worker could not gain any skills. The black worker only had temporary status on the mines, and the increase in trade union activity after the Second World War indicated that he wanted more. Mining companies had the opportunity of starting over, of creating whole new towns, housing facilities and labour structures, but political pressure forced them to continue in their old ways. "Indeed 62 years after the first mines became operative, the Chamber of Mines showed that its attitude towards cheap migrant labour had not changed in the least, when it rejected a stabilized urban African work force and calculated that the extra cost of stabilizing the percentage of married men in the Free State mines would prevent them from maximum profits. As they put it, it would "make the survival of the mines doubtful."³⁴

Some mining companies, like Anglo did indicate that they wanted an adjustment to the housing system, but more conservative mining groups such as Rand Mines,

³³ Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911-1969, p. 57.

³⁴ Innes, D., Anglo: Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa, p. 22.

wanted no adjustment. When one considers their decision, one must bear in mind that the mining industry could not function in isolation from the other industries in the country. It was part of the South African economy, one that was closely linked to the political situation in the country and a government of segregation.

It is a feature of the history of the gold mining industry in South Africa that the government has looked to the mines to provide housing and training for its work force. The government has relinquished certain of its responsibilities, like providing housing, social services, health services and a decent education for all South Africans, to the mining industry.

The vast majority of black mine-workers are housed in the very controversial compounds or hostels. Previously only 1 % of black workers were allowed to bring their families along and live in married quarters on the mine premises.³⁵ The quality of housing differs between the various mines. The number of men housed in hostels varies from 2 400 to 7 000 and the number in each room varies from 12 to 20.³⁶ Today at Harmony Gold Mine the hostels are very comfortable and only house 4 workers in a room. These rooms with their beds and mattresses, tables and chairs and are a long way from the concrete bunks used in former years. Washing facilities are available in the form of showers with hot and cold water, kitchens where they can prepare food, television and even family housing units if their wives want to come and visit. Hostels are well ventilated and workers can come and go as they please. The hostel workers are very much a part of the local town community, whereas in the past they remained in the hostels during their free time. Since 1966 blacks were beginning to perform more skilled work on the mines. This came about due to the installation of more advanced machinery which required semi-skilled operators. The more senior black employee was ideal for this technological advancement and steps were taken to upgrade the status and responsibility of the black worker. One reason why the search for better machines

³⁵ Wilson, F., p. 57.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

in the mining industry only started relatively recently is that , historically, it was cheaper to send ten Africans down a mine rather than invent a machine.³⁷

From 1970 the mining industry and South Africa's labour structures in general, was entering a new phase. It was not mere coincidence that this process took place at the same time as the political change in the country. The mining industry and government have always been closely linked. The government has always been sensitive to the needs of the mining industry, and the latter has produced the wealth expected from it.

South Africa has always been accused of pursuing a deliberate policy of cheap labour and exploitation. The supply of local and foreign black labour is practically unlimited and unskilled and this phenomenon tends to keep wage levels low. The fact of the matter is that cheap labour is very expensive because of its poor performance. Towards the 1970s and 1980s, the emphasis shifted towards training and other means in a bid to improve black workers' productivity. This new emphasis based on improved training skills would enhance the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker. Better training and acquiring skills provided the key to the black man's economical liberation. When it came about in the late eighties, it is ironic that it was improved productivity which lead to large scale down-scaling of black labourers on the mines. Thousands of black workers lost their jobs, because the mines were able to function with a much smaller work force. During the 1970s there was a growing tendency of recruiting workers from inside the borders of South Africa. It was felt that the mining industry was too reliant on foreign workers. An incident such as the crashing of a WENELA flight which was transporting Malawis back home, led to a drastic shortage on the mines as migrant workers did not want to return to the mines. T. Green writes, "the mines do not wish to be dependent on other African governments who have on occasion refused to let their people go to work in South Africa."³⁸ The independence of many Southern

³⁷ Green, T., The New World of Gold, p. 49.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

African countries such as Zambia and Mozambique also affected the industry negatively. The migrancy pattern changed consequently. The migrants hired by TEBA, fell dramatically from 100 000 men usually coming from Malawi, to 14 000 by 1980. Of the 130 000 recruits from Mozambique, only 40 000 came by 1980.³⁹ More workers now came from within the borders of South Africa and the independent homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. T. Green comments, "Because they do not come from so far afield, they form the nucleus of a more permanent labour force, which ultimately ought to become more highly skilled."⁴⁰

When the mining industry was ready to contract more local workers, quite the opposite happened. The substantial lowering in the percentage of local workers from 1966-1972 was brought about by two factors. The first was the increased labour demand by the industry as a whole, and the second was the reduction in the supply from the South African homelands, caused by competition with the local secondary industries. These industries attracted labour away from the mines by offering better opportunities and higher wages.

In addition to the higher wages paid, an incentive scheme was introduced, whereby workers in skilled jobs were given paid leave when their contracts expired. If they returned to the industry after a month's leave, they were guaranteed their same job at the same level of pay. Workers were encouraged to stay for longer periods at the mine, and to shorten their stay in the rural areas between contracts.

The mines still had a bad reputation when it came to low wages, and living and working conditions. They had to offer more than a desire to localize their labour force in order to attract more workers.

This did not mean that workers were permitted to live on, or close by, the mines with their families. Even the workers from South Africa who signed contracts of 9

³⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

months at a time, stayed in hostels on mine premises, still separated from their families.

But the more local the work force, the more it would speed up the transformation process of the black miner. Local workers were affected by the politics of the country they worked in. This factor would assist workers in becoming unified and act against the government and the mining companies that kept them excluded from many of the privileges of wealth in the industry. A unified work force could be organized more efficiently into trade unions to negotiate for better wages. E. Webster agrees, "The large migratory labour force effectively prevents any formation of industry-wide bargaining."⁴¹

Since the 1970s, Harmony Gold Mine intensified its efforts to recruit South African workers and particularly urban dwellers. The intention was to employ people who could enjoy "normal" family living and to move from single accommodation in hostels as far as this was feasible. The so-called "living out allowance" given to certain categories of employment was improved and extended to all employees living off the mine property to assist them in obtaining their own accommodation.

The work force on the mines took on a more permanent nature. Workers tended to stay for longer periods, followed by shorter periods spent at home as noted in the annual report of Harmony, "an increasing number of workers from both South Africa and neighbouring states, are now returning to the mine after comparatively short periods spent at their homes. This change is certainly leading to a greater retention of skills, and perhaps most important of all, greater satisfaction for the individual in being able to retain his own particular job with service benefits. It is hoped that this development is the precursor to the emergence of a more contented, stable and motivated labour force in future."⁴²

"There is a growing trend for increasing numbers of employees to return to the same mine, after periods at home. A variety of schemes have been introduced to

⁴¹ Webster, E., p. 6.

⁴² Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1978.

foster this trend and simultaneously to meet the mutual requirements of the individual, his family and the mine. It is our objective to enable the mine to establish a dependable supply of trained and experienced labour via the operation of these schemes, or such variations of. These schemes, as may be indicated by future operating experiences and which may be necessary to meet the changing requirements of our worker and the company. The successful attainment of this objective will enable the worker to enjoy all the benefits of job security, while the company gains the advantages of a more stabilized and controlled labour force, albeit of a type which rotates between periods at work and periods at home."⁴³

This had a positive effect on production and the training possibilities of black workers. In the 1980s workers were staying for longer periods. The moment the labour force of the gold mining industry in South Africa became more domesticated and more permanent, that was the moment when the transformation of the black gold mine-worker would gain momentum. That was the moment when their knocking on the door could be heard the loudest. "A few decades ago South Africa's black labour force was predominantly migratory, unskilled, illiterate and ill-nourished. Today blacks are transmitted into an increasingly modern, skilled and stable industrial labour force."⁴⁴

Mechanization increased the demand for more highly skilled workers. There was an increase in the demand for artisans to install and maintain the machinery used in the mines. The removal of the colour bar in the 1980s allowed black people into the skilled job categories and they could become artisans and obtain their blasting certificates. "New technology will thus enable the industry to move into the 1990s with more mechanization, higher production, a leaner work force, and a better safety record", says T. Green.⁴⁵ Better training meant less mistakes and improved the standards of safety on the mines. It did not mean that the black worker had now reached a utopia with his improved skills, political acceptance, better living and

⁴³ Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1980.

⁴⁴ Breytenbach, W.J., Vreemde Bantoewerkers in Suid-Afrika en Rhodesië, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Green, T., p. 26.

working conditions and safety standards. In actual fact it meant that the mines could retrench many workers and still improve production. Retrenchments were common practice at the mines in the 1990s and at Harmony Gold Mine the labour force was reduced by 50%.

Communication on the mine in the early years consisted of the white supervisors giving orders. The mine language, "Fanakalo", only contains words to communicate in the work place. This shows how limited the communication between the two races was. There was only communication underground and not on the surface, between management and the black labourers. With the establishment of NUM in the 1980s the black workers became unified and started playing a more active role in their own transformation process. It was a very militant role and led to confrontation, but the bottom line was that management had to set up communication channels between them and the workers. It was more a matter of two-way communication to replace the one-way communication of previous years.

Black workers' needs and grievances were taken more seriously. Mr D.T. Watt writes in 1978, "The company is continuously endeavouring to improve the already good relationship which exists between employer and employees. The Mine Management is aware of the changing aspirations of employees and is continuously striving to provide job satisfaction and security for all persons employed on the mine."⁴⁶ The white miner was still racially prejudiced and not willing to give up his superior status. People's attitudes would have to change and this is much more complicated than changing overalls, mine lamps and boots.

The wage-gap between black and white workers was narrowed over the years. It was decreased from 20:1 to 7:1 in 1980. The Africans still received wages in kind, in the form of free board and lodging, medical care and the use of recreational facilities. Better wages opened some doors to the black man and improved the living standards of himself and his family.⁴⁷ Jamieson comments, "In real terms the

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 26.

⁴⁷ It is estimated that the average mine-worker has about 5 dependents.
Die Volksblad, 22.10.1987.

whole wage structure has been tilted. There has been a major redistribution of wealth."⁴⁸

The mining industry did not just provide for the physical needs on their workers any more, but also strived to fulfil their emotional needs and aspirations. Right at the beginning the black gold mine-worker was only regarded as a pair of hands by management. He had to be clothed and fed with the bare minimum, and the emphasis was on production. Years later he was seen as an individual, with a family, who did not only have physical needs but also dreams and aspirations. Black workers came to be regarded as people with personalities, sensitivities, values and aspirations not just mere numbers attached to figures of production.

Schumann summarizes the future labour pattern of the South African gold mines, as follows, "The general approach to black labour policy in the future will comprise a pyramid structure. The peak of the pyramid will represent the positions held by key supervisory or production workers. These jobs entail costly training which will be beneficial both to the person trained and to the mines. Therefore, the top of the pyramid must be stabilized and it is accepted that these workers should be living with their families on or near the mines."⁴⁹

Gold production in South was on the decrease in the 1980s. South Africa's output declined from 683 tons in 1984 to 619 tons in 1988.⁵⁰ The mines were functioning with a smaller labour force who were far more productive. T. Green writes, "New technology will thus enable the industry to move into the 1990s with more mechanization, higher production, a leaner work force, and a better safety record"⁵¹

The entire wage structure of the mines has also been altered. "In real terms the whole wage structure has been tilted. There has been a major redistribution of wealth. Lower profits seriously threaten the future of the industry on two fronts. first, less profit can be retained to keep existing mines in operation, second lower

⁴⁸ Jamieson, B., Goldstrike: The Oppenheimer Empire in Crisis, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Schumann, A., "Mine Labour, the Fast Changing Scene, Mining Survey, April 1975

⁵⁰ Jamieson, B., p. 28.

⁵¹ Green, T., p. 26.

dividends reduce investor confidence."⁵² The mining industry is facing new challenges, not on the labour front but in finding ways of making a profit. The lower gold price and world-wide inflation has led to gold losing some of its glamour.

The mining industry is still very important to the government of South Africa. This is why the government defended the existing labour practices on the mines for so many decades. In 1980 Harmony Gold Mine made a profit of R233 484 000 of which R120 133 000 was paid to the government in the form of taxes. In 1983 Harmony was paying between R45 and R50 million in tax a month.⁵³

The black mine-worker was the most vulnerable of all the major role-players in the gold mining industry. Firstly, because his wages were kept low to ensure that a profit was made. Secondly, he found himself politically rightless and restricted in numerous ways. Thirdly, he was faced by a lack of alternative opportunities, because of this low level of education and training. It would take the change of attitude of the government and the establishment of his own trade union to empower the black gold mine-worker. Today he is able to bargain for better wages and play a more active role in the gold mining industry.

The transformation process of the black gold mine-worker started off very slowly and only gained momentum over the past 10 to 15 years. The early black miner stagnated on the mines and had little opportunity to develop as a person or as a labourer. Not much was expected of him, except doing his repetitive manual tasks and no mental challenges were put to him. In 1995 much more is expected of the black workers and they contribute in the fields of management and planning and that has transformed not only the black worker as a labourer, but also as an individual. He is treated with dignity and respect, treated as a partner in the production process and not as an adversary any more.

Training opportunities have made the black mine-worker more positive and dedicated in his duties. All the co-ordinators at the various training facilities

⁵² Jamieson, B., p. 30.

⁵³ Vista, 7.9.1983.

mentions that the students are very committed and hard working. This gives rise to the perception that they have been waiting for this opportunity for almost a century and they are not going to waste any more time.

There is however, another side to effective training and improved production, and that is down-scaling. Over the past few years, there has been a tremendous change in the labour structures on the mines. Formerly, the mines made use of a large number of low-paid, relatively unskilled migrant work force, but now it has shifted to a smaller, more stable, more skilled work force with an emphasis on increased production. Basically, the position is that fewer workers are now getting a larger slice of the cake. Retrenchments and unemployment over the past years have grown tremendously as a result of Harmony's change in labour structure. In 1988 Harmony Gold Mine had a work force of 32 000. By early 1993, it had cut its work force to about 14 586, more than fifty per cent. Along with the retrenchments went efforts to raise workers' productivity through improved training and bonuses.⁵⁴ In 1992 the gold price dropped to about half its 1980 level and changes on the international front reduced gold's strength as a speculation commodity.⁵⁵ The impact this had on the South African gold mining industry was tremendous. Like 12 other mines in the country, Harmony is a marginal mine which means that its gold may cost more to produce than the current gold price justifies.⁵⁶ Down-scaling the work force is one adjustment a mine can make to reduce capital costs. Indeed it has been in practice since the origins of the mining industry in this country.

After an agreement with NUM, Harmony instituted productivity bonuses, Sunday blasting and narrower stopes to raise the productivity of its workers, which it in fact did. In 1990 the productivity of its work force was increased from 27.5 tons of rock being removed per worker, per month, to an estimate of 35.4 tons.⁵⁷ This had an

⁵⁴ Seidman, G., *South Africa's Sociological Review*, (5) 2, p.15.

⁵⁵ There is an international shift from gold's traditional position backing currency, to that of a mineral used in making jewellery. Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines 1991.

⁵⁶ Harmony is faced with low grade ore of about 3.25 grams per ton of rock, compared to the South African industry's average of 5,2 grams per ton.

⁵⁷ Seidman, G., *South Africa's Sociological Review*, (5) 2, p. 15.

overwhelming effect on the size of the black labour force, always the hardest hit by retrenchments as Gay Seidman writes, "the burden of down-scaling falls hardest on those with the least resources to bear it. Paradoxically, in a context where rural African households throughout the region have become dependent on migrant remittances, the medium-term effects of the shift to a more humane labour policy may create a deepening crisis for the very people who suffered most from the migrant labour system."⁵⁸ It does not affect the white and black population of a town such as Virginia, but reaches far outside the borders of the Free State.⁵⁹

Virginia in the 1990s is a town with roughly 15 400 white residents, with 30 000 blacks living in the black township of Meloding. The population of the town includes approximately 14 500 black workers in the mine hostels. In this town, Harmony Gold Mine is the town's major employer, ratepayer and home owner. Seidman writes, "In late 1992, Harmony paid about R25 million per month in wages, of which half were paid in Virginia; it paid R6 million to Escom, and spent about R17 million for stores and materials, mainly in the Free State. Harmony pays about 17% of Virginia's rates, about R1 million per month, and the mine owns 32% of the town's houses. Although there are several smaller mines in Virginia, including an Anglo-American gold mine, the town's fat is inextricably linked with Harmony's."⁶⁰

Businesses had to close down at a ever-growing rate and residents have to go to Welkom for most of their purchases. During interviews conducted by Seidman in the black community in relation to its dependence on the mining industry, they experienced distrust among the hostel residents who refused interviews out of fear that they would be retrenched. Many black residents of the town expressed disbelief in the fact that the mine was becoming unprofitable and that management was honestly trying to prevent retrenchments.⁶¹ "Most interviewees had worked at

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵⁹ Harmony's management estimated that in 1992 workers' remittances made up almost 9 % of Lesotho's Gross National Product. It even reaches as far as Mozambique.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

the mine at some point, and few could imagine the town without Harmony Gold Mine, yet they had little faith that the mine could or would act in the interests of the black community. Many respondents, especially those who had been active in the union or political groups, argued that the mine had historically exploited blacks, and believed this history created obligations to the community who have grown up around the mine. Several respondents expressed genuine bitterness over the mine's failure to negotiate with NUM before 1989, and many expressed some belief that retrenchments were used to remove union militants.⁶² Seidman particularly mentions the degree of distrust with which Harmony Gold Mine's management is viewed. Most respondents during their interviews revealed that they regard the mine as the centre of economic life and expressed concern about their future if the mine had to close down.

Because of the improved wages of the black workers and modern technologies in banking facilities, the black worker has to take responsibility for his own financial management. His wages are paid directly into a bank account and he has to learn to use automatic bank tellers and deal with interest rates and expenditures. On the whole the black gold mine-worker of today is much more "street wise" than his predecessor was a few decades ago.

Improved wage levels also lead to improved living standards for the black man and his family. When Harmony Gold Mine first started locating some of its black labourers in the black township, Meloding, the mine did much to help them settle. Topics such as how to be a good neighbour and home decorating were discussed.⁶³ Black workers could now settle down with their families and take their rightful place as head of the household. It also has a ripple affect on their families as their children were exposed to modern schools, sports facilities, Christian churches and the like. The families now have access to medical facilities, family planning clinics, electricity and running water. A familiar sight at some hostels is the second-hand

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶³ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mc. Anmic van der Walt, 19.9.1998.

cars parked outside. Workers in the hostels are exposed to visual material about other countries and happenings all over the world. They wear Western clothes and have accounts at clothing stores. The black mine-worker becomes more family-orientated in the Western context and tribal traditions are broken down even further.

When one compares the early family life of the migrant workers and the effect his absence from home had on his family, one must not compare it to the Western concept of a family with the father, returning from work at five o' clock, reading the newspaper and watching television with his family. The early family life of the black man was quite different, with the father at times absent look for grazing and dealing with the matters of the tribe, while the women tended to the children and elders. The women also did the cultivating while the males of the tribe discussed tribal matters. This has changed and the black man has become a more Westernized father.

The better training opportunities for the black man and the wide variety of uplifting courses offered at the mines have transformed the black worker into a more able and more competent worker, who makes fewer mistakes and who returns to his own community of which he is a respected member.

There is, of course still the negative side of his contact with a Western lifestyle - health hazards such as sexually transmitted disease (STD) and AIDS. Alcohol abuse is quite common among black people in the mining industry and this often leads to more serious offences like violence, assault and rape. The black worker also suffers from stress in the round-the-clock Western society, where delay means less profit. Western culture with its adapt or die philosophy will take some time for the black worker to get use to.

According to me, Ammie van der Walt, who has worked at Harmony mine's social department for ten years, alcohol abuse often stems from boredom. The workers who take part in sport at the mines, do not smoke or use alcohol. They use their

free time to stay fit and healthy, but the workers without a hobby, often resort to alcohol abuse when they miss their family and become bored.⁶⁴

Harmony mine has various AIDS awareness campaigns and supply the workers with free condoms. The black gold mine-workers do have an understanding of the disease and how one can contract it. They all fear the disease, but it is difficult to change sexual behaviour patterns.

Bigamy and homosexuality do exist⁶⁵ on the mine, but it is not a popular topic with mine-workers. It is also difficult to determine a percentage of how many men take part in this practice. Sam Mahlapa, a senior clerk at Harmony, is of the opinion that homosexuality is on the decline since workers have more freedom of movement into towns and other areas. Thirty years ago workers were more restricted in the compounds and had to carry passes, which encouraged homosexuality in the hostels. Now workers are free to go into towns and locations and find lovers of the opposite sex.⁶⁵

After visiting the different training facilities of the mine, the hospital, the manpower department and conducting various interviews, it is clear that there exist a good relationship between black and white workers. Racism does still exist on the mine, and it is not easy to change attitudes and perceptions, but black workers all agreed that there is a much better relationship between the races on the mines. Ammie van der Walt even mentioned a specific humour that exists between black and white on the mines.⁶⁶

Accidents do still happen, but when it happens the family of the black worker is well cared for financially and the mine makes the funeral arrangements. G. Wheatcroft makes a very interesting statement in this regard, "Conditions in the mines have

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with Sam Mahlape, 11.6.1998.

⁶⁶ W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of interview with me. Ammie van der Walt, 19.9.1998.

improved from the early days. The level of fatalities remains high, but black workers are no longer simply "wastage" if they are killed"⁶⁷

It is arduous for a white female who has been underground once only to ascertain the most important changes of a century-old industry, changes which have taken place slowly and painstakingly and altered people's lives forever, changes which have been postponed for many years, because of figures on a balance sheet. When the interviewed black workers were asked what important changes had taken place at the mines that had affected their lives, they came up with the following:

- higher wages, so that they could improve their standard of living.
- better training opportunities for themselves and their children.
- improved and specialized medical care for themselves and their families.
- funeral benefits.
- the possibility of belonging to a provident fund.⁶⁸
- improved conditions in hostels, where they are now accommodated in furnished 4-room apartments with television.
- that the hostels now have family units where their wives can come and stay with them for periods of up to a month.⁶⁹
- that the mines run large stores for them on the premises where they can buy their daily necessities.
- workers are able to be promoted, a situation unheard in the early years.

Another important change mentioned by interviewed workers was better safety standards and less hazardous working conditions. The workers were unanimous in their conviction that they feel far safer going down the mines, than they did in the early years. They are aware of the dangers and have been taught how avoid major accidents. This is the result of continued and persistent safety campaigns by

⁶⁷ Wheatcroft, G., The Randlords: The Men who made South Africa, p. 189.

⁶⁸ This was started after NUM was recognized in 1989 and they campaigned for black workers to also belong to a Provident Fund.

⁶⁹ Black workers must apply at the hostel manager for their wives to come visit. Wives sometimes bring sick children from the rural areas so that they can be taken care of at the mine's hospital.

Harmony mine, which encourages, motivates and rewards safety conscious workers.

Howard Mhlahloh, a 48-year old mine-worker from the Transkei, says that conditions in the hostels and safety on the mines have been vastly improved. When he began working on the mines in 1968 he stayed in a 16-bed room and his salary was 30 cents a day. At the time the mines were very dangerous and un popular choice with workers. Now he stays in a 4 bed- room and his wife can come and stay with him occasionally. He says that the food is much better on the mines, but that he does sometimes buy extra meat and cooks it for himself. According to Howard, the communication between blacks and whites on the mines is vastly improved, and when there is a problem it is solved by talking, where as previously there was fighting and verbal abuse.⁷⁰

Workers also reacted positively to the idea that there are networks available to help them deal with personal and domestic problems. Social workers, hostel managers and NUM stewards are on call to help them deal with some personal problems. The black workers still have to get use to the Western culture of individualism, as they were accustomed to tribal life with its large family structure to deal with problems. When the black workers were asked how they spent their money they mentioned liquor, women, soap to wash their clothes and clothes for their families.⁷¹

Mr Bernard Swanepoel, managing director of Harmony Gold Mine, says that although restrictions for the black gold mine-worker have been removed, some difficulties remain. To obtain a blasting certificate one must be in possession of

⁷⁰ A typical day in Howard's life start at 3.20 am when he gets up and washes himself. He then goes to the kitchen for breakfast and at 5.15 he goes underground where he works as a machine operator. He returns to the surface at 4.30 pm and then goes to eat. After his meal he may visit the bar for a while or he goes into town. His basic salary is about R1 000 a month. Overtime is paid for work done on a Sunday and bonuses are handed out for production targets.

⁷¹ The beer halls at the hostels at Harmony mine close at 9 pm, but some workers then go into town or the black township to visit beer halls there.

std.5 school certificate. This prevents many black workers from reaching that achievement. He feels that some black workers have the experience to become a miner, but are prevented from doing so by the law.⁷² He would like to see a future where all differences will disappear and where lack of school qualifications will not restrict the black workers.

Presently, the black mine-workers are still transported freely to the mines. Some of them still live in compounds. They are still put through a medical examination, induction period and acclimatisation. They still learn "Fanakalo" and how to use a shovel, load a truck, or haul ore out of a stope that has been blasted, just as they have been doing for the past century. But they have the prospect that they can determine their own future. If they want to become a shift boss they can follow the stepping stones and achieve their ideals and ambitions. If they arrive at a certain job category, they can bring their families to live with them in a subsidized three-bedroom mine house. They have more choices and job satisfaction in the work place. They are no longer puppets on a string, but form part of the show.

In the beginning of this century the mining industry was shaping its own future and in the process transforming people's lives. A hundred years later the workers were transforming the industry.

The mining industry of a hundred years ago was an expanding industry which dominated the economy of an entire country for many years. What is amazing about the mining industry is that it can overcome any setback. No disease, law, labour shortage, drop in the gold price, increase in production costs, can bring it down. The labour structure on the mines was constantly transformed, with workers signing on and off, with Southern African governments releasing and then again recalling their workers. The mines simply adapted and overcame these problems.

The industry faces new challenges with the consistently low gold price. The industry has scaled down and marginal mines have closed down. The labour force

⁷² W. Bezuidenhout Collection, Transcription of Interview with mr Bernard Swanepoel, Managing Director of Harmony gold mine, 21.10.1998.

is much smaller, more permanent, more involved and much more efficient. It still contributes to the revenue of the country, but not to the same extent it did in the past. Where the mines were constantly short of labour, they now have a labour surplus and are able to choose their workers at their doorstep. Recruitment, which has been such an integral part of the industry, in such a large area and for so many years, has been scaled down.

In a document by NUM, entitled "Life Beyond Gold in the Free State Gold Fields", NUM sketches a picture of the future of the mining industry, "We must all accept that in the Free State Goldfields there is an economically active population which grew because Goldfields was an economic area that provided opportunities. Many of these people grew up in this area and know very little outside of this area. Many do not believe that there is a decline in economic activity of the region, they think that it is just a ploy. We must accept that mining is a depleting industry. Every shaft has a lifespan linked to the mineral ore-body of its mining. When a shaft is opened today it will be closed at a determinable point in time. Any economy, therefore, dependent on mining is bleak in that it can provide opportunities and have these opportunities destroyed at one point or the other. Mining skills have a limited application outside mining, and are, therefore not as portable as one wishes. This restricts labour mobility for mineworkers."⁷³ It is a reality that the future of the industry is not as promising, but it has always adjusted.

The black mine-worker has not reached a utopia. He is economically and politically liberated, he is paid a better salary and his benefits have improved tremendously. He is much more modernized with the benefits of education and better medical care. But world-wide trends and inflation are putting a damper on his painstaking transformation process.

It has been a rocky road for the black mine-worker. It has been a century of hardship and discrimination and a time of change and adjustment. The transformation of the black gold mine-worker has only gained momentum since the

⁷³ NUM, "Life Beyond Gold in the Free State Gold Fields", p. 3.

1970's with the increase in trade union activity. Pressures from the unions forced mine management to take note of the aspirations of their workers.

There are no indications that the future will be without setbacks, but the black gold mine-worker is on the road to take up his rightful place in society. The biggest obstacle in the transformation process of the black miner was the political system of the country. Once this had been transformed, he could become a career miner with equal opportunities.

The motto of the Mine Managers' Association for the past century has been "VI VIRTUTEQUE", which means "With Courage and Integrity". Courage, they have always possessed. In the 1990s the ingredient of integrity have been added, because of the improvements and equal opportunities the members of the Association have established for their black labourers.

SOURCE LIST AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. UNPUBLISHED ARCHIVAL SOURCES

1.1 UOFS, BLOEMFONTEIN

- Institute for Contemporary History, Hertzog, A., PV 451.
 Institute for Contemporary History, Holloway, J.E., PV 515.
 Institute for Contemporary History, Verwoerd, H.F., PV 93.
 Institute for Contemporary History, Viljoen, J.H., PV 508.

1.2 NATIONAL ARCHIVES

- Archives of the Department of Justice, file Series JD 3/527/17. National Archives of Pretoria.

2. PERSONAL COLLECTION

2.1 Transcriptions of Interviews

- Transcription of Interview with me. Gillian Lackenby, co-ordinator of the ABET programme at Harmony Gold Mine, 19.9.1998.
- Transcription of Interview with Josephine Lebitso, a clerk at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.
- Transcription of Interview with Lejoetso Lejoetso, a 42-year old Lesotho worker at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.
- Transcription of Interview with Peter Letsie, an 42-year old Lesotho worker at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.
- Transcription of Interview with mr Sam Mahlapa, a Senior Clerk at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.
- Transcription of Interview with Mahlomola Makeki, a 29-year old Lesotho worker at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.

Transcription of Interview with Sebitio Mangate, a 36-year old Mozambiquan worker at Harmony Gold Mine, 11.6.1998.

Transcription of Interview with Stefan Meyer, a shift boss at Harmony Gold Mine, 4.11.1998.

Transcription of Interview with Howard Mhlahloh a 48-year old worker from Transkei, 11.6.1998.

Transcription of Interview with mr Bernard Swanepoel, Managing Director of Harmony Gold Mine, 21.10.1998.

Transcription of Interview with mr Koos van der Berg, at Harmony Training Centre, 19.9.1998.

Transcription of Interview with me. Ammie van der Walt, co-ordinator of the Bridging School at Harmony Gold Mine, 19.9.1998.

Transcription of Interview with mr Jac van Heerden, hostel manager at Harmony Gold Mine, 12.11.1998.

Transcription of Interview with mr Piet Welthagen, mine captain in charge of training the Category 9+ workers, 19.9.1998.

2.2 Correspondence Received.

Statistics from the Chamber of Mines Statistical Services in Johannesburg, 1996-1998.
Statistics from the Central Statistical Services in Pretoria, 1996-1998.

3. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

3.1 Government Gazettes

Government Gazette, 1956.04.27.

Government Gazette, 1956.04.27.

3.2 HANSARDS

Cape of Good Hope Hansard, 1884.

Hansard Vol. 80. Columns 8030 - 8031, 1947.

3.3 Reports by Commissions of Inquiry

Commission of Socio-Economic Development of the Native Areas within the Union of South Africa, Record of Evidence, vol XII, 20 May 1952.

Dyke, H.W., "Basutoland Annual Medical and Public Health Report for 1942, 1 May 1943.

Gold Producers Committee Memorandum on the Mortality Amongst Tropical Natives, 21 April 1938.

Gold Producers Committee Statement to Minister of Mines and Industries, 21 June 1928.

Report of the Miners' Phthisis Acts Commission 1941-1943, Pretoria UG, 22-43.

Report of Sir Walter Johnson on Medical Administration of the Bechuanaland Protectorate, July 1937.

Report of the Witwatersrand Mine Native Wage Commission, 1943, UG 21-1944, Pretoria, Government Printer.

Report of the Low Grade Mines Commission, UG 34/1920.

Report of the Witwatersrand Natives Wages Commission, UG 21/1944.

UG 28/1948: Verslag van die Naturellewette-kommissie, 1946-1948.

3.4 YEARBOOKS AND STATISTICS

Official Yearbook of the Union of South Africa, number 4, 1950.

Union Statistics for Fifty Years, Jubilee Issue, Pretoria, 1960.

4. PERIODIC PUBLICATIONS

4.1 Daily Newspapers and Weekly Publications

Business Day, 7.9.1987, 12.4.1990.

Die Transvaler, 8.1.1954, 8.12.1956.

Die Vaderland, 9.12.1959.

Die Volksblad, 25.3.1986.

Die Volksblad, 4.2.1987.

Die Volksblad, 23.2.1987.

Die Volksblad, 22.6.1987.

Die Volksblad, 26.6.1987.

Die Volksblad, 27.7.1987.

Die Volksblad, 16.5.1988.

Die Volksblad, 17.1.1990.

Die Volksblad, 19.7.1990.

Die Volksblad, 29.10.1990.

Die Volksblad, 7.11.1990.

Die Volksblad, 7.1.1991.

Die Volksblad, 8.1.1991.

Die Volksblad, 10.4.1992.

Die Volksblad, 5.6.1992.

Die Volksblad, 13.8.1992.

Die Volksblad, 2.9.1992.

Die Volksblad, 5.9.1992.

Die Volksblad, 26.9.1992.

Die Volksblad, 10.10.1992.

Die Volksblad, 26.1.1993.

Financial Mail, 17.7.1970.

Financial Mail, 4.9.1970.

Financial Mail, 6.10.1970.

Financial Mail, Supplement, "Gold", November 1972.

Financial Mail, 30.8.1974.

Financial Mail, 13.12.1974.

Financial Mail, 18.1.1991.

Forum, 3.10.1986.

Industrial Law Journal, no 7 of 1986.

Rand Daily Mail, 21.10.1948.

Rand Daily Mail, 23.8.1949.

Rand Daily Mail, 5.3.1964.

Rand Daily Mail, 28.4.1970.

Sunday Times, 11.10.1998.

The Star, 21.2.1958.

The Star, 6 August 1957.

Totus Tuus, 4.10.1957.

Virginia Nuus, April 1957.

Virginia Nuus, Julie 1958.

Virginia Nuus, Augustus 1958.

Virginia Nuus, April 1959.

Virginia Nuus, September 1959.

Virginia Nuus, May 1960.

Virginia Nuus, October 1960.

Vista, 24.11.1981.

Vista, 29.10.1984.

Vista, 19.1.1988.

Vista, 24.7.1990.

Vista, 24.7.1990.

Vista, 31.8.1990.

Vista, 13.11.1990.

Vista, 24.1.1992.

Vista, 28.4.1992.

Vista, 1.5.1992.

Vista, 26.6.1992.

Vista, 8.7.1992.

Vista, 29.1.1993.

4.2 Pamphlets, Leaflets and Brochures

Delfstowwe van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 5de uitgawe. Departement van Mynwese, Pretoria, 1976.

Fleischer, M., Welkom: The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker.

Goodyear, S.P., Mondigwordingsfees van Meloding in 1975.

Harmony Gold Mine Prospectus of 1950.

Harmony Gold Mining Company Ltd.

Harmony and Its People.(1995)

Memorandum of Association of Harmony Gold Mine.

Mondigwordingsfees van Meloding in 1975. Goodyear, S.P.

NUM, "AIDS. An Issue for All Workers."

NUM, "Life Beyond Gold in the Free State".

NUM, "Resolutions. Second Health and Safety Conference."

Rand Mines Newsletter, 2/6 of 1994

The South African Mining World.

The South African Mining Industry and the Black Worker.

The Golden Free-State, 1854-1954. Hundred Years of Progress. A Centenary Souvenir, Bloemfontein, 1955.

Union Statistics for Fifty Years, Jubilee Issue, Pretoria, 1960.

Welkom: Treasure House of the Free State. Issued jointly by the Village Management Board of Welkom and the Publicity and Travel Department, Cape Town, 1957.

4.3 Periodicals and Reports

- American Journal for Public Health, "Reducing the Risk of HIV infection among South African Sex Workers: socio-economic and gender barriers", 1995; 85:1521.
- Annual Report of Harmony Gold Mine, 1951 - 1995.
- Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1894.
- Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1991.
- Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1992.
- Annual Report of the Native Recruiting Corporation, 1969.
- Annual Report of the Native Recruiting Corporation, 1970.
- Association of Mine Managers of South Africa, Centenary Issue, 1892-1992, Johannesburg, 1992.
- Chamber of Mines Research Organization, Consultancy Report Project No. G119B(TEO3) HRL no 4/89, Interview Survey of Black Mineworkers' Awareness of AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Disease, Johannesburg, June 1989.
- Encounter, 3 August 1962.
- Fact Sheet, February 1971.
- Guardian, 29 January 1975.
- Historia, November 1990.
- Mining Journal, 24 July 1953.
- Mining Survey, June 195, April 1975, June 1985.
- Native Recruiting Corporation, Memo on Medical Examinations, 2 March 1923.
- Native Recruiting Corporation., Mine Recruiting File, Report of a Conference of NRC District Superintendents in Johannesburg, 10, 11, 18 October 1949.
- New Nation: New History, Volume 1, Johannesburg, 1992.
- Optima, March 1956, 1967, 1982, 1986.
- Pirow, H., Government Mining Engineer to the Secretary of Mines, 9 January 1936.
- Race Relations Survey 1992/93.
- Rand Mines Health Department, Annual Report, 1935.
- Reilly, R., Acting Resident Commissioner to High Commissioner, 3 April 1935.
- South African Mining and Engineering Yearbook, 1979. Johannesburg, 1979.
- South African Coal, Gold and Base Minerals, October 1985.

South African Institute of Race Relations, 1955.

South African Labour Bulletin, (7) 11, 1974, (4) 5, 1978, (12) 1, 1986.

South African Mining World, January 1986.

WNLA, Statement to the International Labour Office: "Dealing with the Restrictions placed on the Spontaneous Flow of African Migrant Labour", 27 September 1951.

5. PUBLISHED WORKS

5.1 Articles

Chipfakacha, V., "Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases. The Shurugwi Sex-workers project", South African Medical Journal, 1993, 83(1).

Grosskurth, H., Mosha, F., Todd, J., "Impact of Improved Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases on HIV infection in rural Tanzania", Lancet, 1995; 346; 530-536

Kidd, B., "Economic South Africa", Christian Express, 1903.

Marks, S., Anderson, N., "Issues in the Political Economy of Health in South Africa", Journal of Southern African Studies, 13, 177-186.

Packard, R., "Tuberculosis and the Development of Industrial Health Policies on the Witwatersrand, 1902-1932", Journal of Southern African Studies, Kingston, 1987.

Read, M., "Migrant Labour in Africa and its Effects on Tribal Life", International Labour Review, XIV, 1942.

Ramaphosa C., "Organising on the Mines", South African Institute of Race Relations, Opinion Paper, 1987.

Williams, J.C., "Lesotho: Economic Implications of Migrant Labour", SAJE, 5, 1971.

5.2 Books

Allen, V.L., The History of Black Mine Workers in South Africa, Volume 1: The Techniques of Resistance, 1871-1948, Johannesburg, 1992.

Baines, T., South Eastern Africa, Bulawayo, 1968.

Barker, F.S., The South African Labour Market, Critical Issues for Transition, Pretoria, 1992.

- Barry, R. G., e.a., Swart Ontwikkeling in Suid-Afrika: Die Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling van die Swart Volke in the Tuislande van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria, 1976.
- Beinart, W., Twentieth Century South Africa, Cape Town, 1994.
- Bendix, S., Industrial Relations in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1989.
- Bekker, S., Humphries, R., From Control to Confusion: Changing Role of Administration Boards in South Africa, 1971-1983, Johannesburg, 1986.
- Berry, B.J.L., Comparative Urbanisation, Johannesburg, 1979.
- Biccard Jeppe, C.W., Gold Mining in South Africa, London, 1948.
- Bozzoli, B., Labour Townships and Protest. Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1979.
- Bradlow, E., The Cape Government's rule of Basutoland, 1871 - 1883, Archives Year Book for South African History, Volume 2, Pretoria, 1968.
- Breytenbach, W.J., Vreemde Bantowerkers in Suid-Afrika en Rhodesië. Reëlings in verband met Werwing en Indiensneming, Pretoria, 1970.
- Brown, A. N., More se Uitdaging vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Mynboubedryf, Pretoria, 1981.
- Brown, G., Hard Labour: A Pictorial Survey of Labour Relations in South Africa since 1979, Johannesburg, 1985.
- Brown, J.A., So Rich an Inheritance, 100 Years of Mining, Johannesburg, 1987.
- Bryce, J., Impressions of South Africa, New York, 1897.
- Buell, R. L., The Native Problem in Africa, Volume I, London, 1965.
- Bunting, B., The Rise of the South African Reich, London, 1969.
- Busschau, W.J., The Glamour of Gold, Johannesburg, 1963.
- Callinicos, L., A People's History of South Africa, Volume 1. Gold and Workers, 1886-1926, Johannesburg, 1981.
- Callinicos, L., Working Life, Volume 2. Factories, Townships and Popular Culture on the Rand, 1886-1940, Johannesburg, 1987.

- Campbell, A., Ambrose, D., Johnson, D., A Guide to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland: A Comprehensive Companion for Visitors and Investors, Pietermaritzburg, 1983.
- Cartwright, A.P., Golden Age. The Story of Industrialisation of South Africa and the Part Played in it by the Corner House Group of Companies, 1910 - 1976, Johannesburg, 1968.
- Cartwright, A.P., Gold Paved the Way, London, 1967.
- Cartwright, A. P., The Gold Miners, Johannesburg, 1962.
- Coetzee, C.J., Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland: Politieke Verwikkelinge, Potchefstroom, 1986.
- Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa, The Gold Fields, 1887 - 1937, London, 1937.
- Churchill, R.S., Men, Mines and Animals in South Africa, London, 1892.
- Crush, J., Jeeves, A., Yudelman, D., South Africa's Labor Empire. A History of Black Migrancy and the Gold Mines, Cape Town, 1991.
- Davenport, T.R.H, African Tribesmen? South African Natives(Urban Areas) Legislation Through the Years, London, 1969.
- Davies, R., Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa, London, 1979.
- De Kiewiet, C.W., A History of South Africa. Social and Economic, London, 1941.
- Denny, G.A., The Deep-Level Mines of the Rand and their Future Development, London, 1902.
- Dommissie, E., Ries, A., Broedertwis, Cape Town, 1983.
- Doxey, G.V., The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa, Cape Town, 1961
- Du Rand, J.J.F., Swartman, Stad and Toekoms, Kaapstad, 1970.
- Du Toit, M. A., South African Trade Unions: History Legislation, Policy, Johannesburg, 1976.
- Emden, P.H., Randlords, London, 1985.
- Farrel, J.D., Swart Arbeid - Knelpunt in Arbeidsbetrekkinge, Pretoria, 1987

- Feinberg, B., Odendaal, A., (ed.), Apartheid: The Facts, London, 1991.
- Finnemore, M., van der Merwe, R., Introduction to Racial Relations in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1989.
- First, R., The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant, New York, 1983.
- Fourie, J.J., Die Koms van die Bantoe na die Rand en hulle posisie aldaar, 1886-1899, Archives Yearbook for South African History, Volume I, Pretoria, 1979.
- Frankel, S.H., Capital Investment in Africa, Oxford University Press, 1938.
- Franklin, N. N., Economics in South Africa, Cape Town, 1954.
- Fraude, J.A., Two lectures on South Africa, London, 1880.
- Friedman, S., Building Tomorrow Today: African Workers in Trade Unions, 1970-1984, Johannesburg, 1987.
- Geen, M.S., The Making of South Africa, Pretoria, 1982.
- Gemmill, J. A., Native Labour on the Gold Mines, Johannesburg, 1961.
- Gerhardt, G.M., Black Power in South Africa: the Evolution of an Ideology, Los Angeles, 1978.
- Giliomee, H., The Parting of Ways, Cape Town, 1982.
- Gray, J., Payable Gold, Johannesburg, 1937.
- Green, T., The New World of Gold. The Inside Story of the Mines, the Markets, the Politics, the Investors, London, 1981.
- Green T., The Prospect for Gold. The View to the year 2 000, Braamfontein, 1988.
- Gregory, T., Ernest Oppenheimer and the Economic Development of Southern Africa, London, 1962.
- Greyling, D.J., South African Progress, Pretoria, 1972.
- Have, G. Le Roux, P., Transforming the Economy, Policy Options for South Africa, University of Natal, Durban, 1922.
- Herd, N., 1922: The Revolt on the Rand, Johannesburg, 1966.

- Hobart-Houghton, D., The South African Economy, Cape Town, 1964.
- Hobson, H.A., The Evolution of Modern Capitalism, London, 1975.
- Hocking, A., A Court of Kings: The Story of South Africa's Association of Mine Managers, Cape Town, 1997.
- Hocking, A., South African Mining, Cape Town, 1975.
- Hofmeyr, J. F., The Rise in African Wages in South Africa, 1975-1985, Durban, 1990.
- Horwitz, R., The Political Economy of South Africa, London, 1967.
- Horrell, M., South Africa's Non-White Workers. Their Organizations and the Patterns of Employment, Johannesburg, 1969.
- Horrell, M., South Africa's Non-White Workers, Johannesburg, 1956.
- Howe, G., Le Roux, P., Transforming the Economy. Policy Options for South Africa, University of Natal, Durban, 1992.
- Innes, D., Anglo: Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa, Johannesburg, 1984.
- Jacobson, D., Maize Turns to Gold, London, 1967.
- James, W.G., Our Precious Metal. African Labour in South Africa's Gold Industry: 1970-1990, Indiana, 1992.
- Jamieson, B., Goldstrike. The Oppenheimer Empire in Crisis, London, 1990.
- Jeppe, C. B., Gold Mining on the Witwatersrand, Volume 2, Cape Town, 1946.
- Jessup, E., Ernest Oppenheimer: A Study in Power, London, 1979.
- Johnson, P., Consolidated Goldfields. A Centenary Portrait, London, 1987.
- Johnstone, F., Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa, London, 1976.
- Katzen, L., Gold and the South African Economy. The Influence of the Gold Mining Industry on Business Cycles and Economic Growth in South Africa, 1886-1961, Amsterdam, 1964.

- Keegan, T.J., Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: The Southern Highveld to 1914, Johannesburg, 1986.
- Knight, J., Is South Africa Running Out of Unskilled Labour?, Cape Town, 1977.
- Kowet, D.K., Land, Labour Migration and Politics in Southern Africa: Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Sweden, 1978.
- Lanning, G., Mueller, M., African Undermined. Mining Companies and the Underdevelopment of Africa, New York, 1979.
- Lacey, M., Working for Boroko: The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1981.
- Levy, N., The Foundations of the South African Cheap Labour System, London, 1982.
- Lewis, G., Between the Wire and the Wall: A History of South African "Coloured" Politics, Cape Town, 1987.
- Legassick, M., Gold, Agriculture and Secondary Industry in South Africa, 1885-1970, London, 1977.
- Liebenberg, B.J., Spies, S.B., (ed), South Africa in the 20th Century, Pretoria, 1993.
- Liebenberg, I., (ed), The Long March: The Story of the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa, Pretoria, 1994.
- Liebenberg, P.W., Die Worstelende Wêreld. Knellende Internasionale Vraagstukke van die Huidige Tydsgewrig, Potchefstroom, 1976.
- Lipton, M., Capitalism and Apartheid: South Africa, 1910-1984, Ottawa, 1985.
- Lodge, T., Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, Johannesburg, 1983.
- Long, J., Bullion Johannesburg. (Men, Mines and the Challenge of Conflict), Johannesburg, 1986.
- Murry, M.C., Black Labour in the South African Gold Mining Industry, 1966-1974, Johannesburg, 1978.
- Macnab, R., Gold: Their Touchstone, Cape Town, 1987
- Marquard, L., The People's and Politics of South Africa, Cape Town, 1960.
- Maree, J., (ed), The Independent Trade Unions 1974-1984, Johannesburg, 1987

Marks, S., Rathbone, R., Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa. African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870-1930, Essex, 1982.

Mashabela, H., Mekhukhu., Urban African Cities of the Future. South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1990.

Maylam, P., A History of the African People of South Africa: From the Early Iron Age to the 1970's, Johannesburg, 1986.

Mc Canville, B., The Role of Trade Unions, London, 1986.

Mc Clellan, G.S., Southern Africa, New York, 1979.

Millen, S.G., The People of South Africa, Johannesburg, 1957.

Moodie, D.M., Mine Culture and Miners' Identity on the South African Gold Mines, Johannesburg, 1983.

Muller, A.L., Die Ekonomiese Ontwikkeling van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria, 1979.

Natrass, J., The South African Economy: Its Growth and Change, Cape Town, 1981.

Ncube, D., Black Trade Unions in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1985.

Nesbitt, L.M., Gold Fever, London, 1936.

Oberholster, A.G., Die Mynwerkerstaking 1922, Pretoria, 1982.

Odendaal, A., Feinberg, B., Apartheid: The facts, London, 1991.

Omer-Cooper, J.D., History of Southern Africa, London, 1987.

Omer-Cooper, J.D., Colonial South Africa and Its Frontiers, London, 1966.

Oliver, S.H.O., White Capital and Coloured Labour, London, 1929.

Orpen, C., Productivity of Black Workers in South Africa, Cape Town, 1976.

Our First Half Century, 1910-1960. Golden Jubilee of the Union of South Africa. Johannesburg, 1960.

Pallister, D., Stewart, S., Lepper, I., South Africa Inc. The Oppenheimer Empire, Braamfontein, 1987.

- Pampallis, J., Foundations of the New South Africa, London, 1991.
- Posel, D., The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise, Oxford, 1991.
- Rädel, F.E., Reynders, H.J.J., Inleiding tot die Bedryfseksonomie, Pretoria, 1967.
- Rafel, R., Job Reservation on the Mines, Johannesburg, 1987.
- Reese, K., Industrial Relations in Southern African Perspective, Johannesburg, 1983.
- Reinhalt Jones, R.D., Industrial Relations in South Africa, London, 1953.
- Reunert, T., Diamonds and Gold in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1983.
- Richardson, H.W., Regional and Urban Economics, Johannesburg, 1986.
- Roberts, G., The Story of the Discovery of the OFS Goldfields, New York, 1984.
- Robertson, I.(ed), Whitten, P., Race and Politics in South Africa, New Jersey, 1978.
- Scholtz, G.D., Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner, Deel IV, 1881-1899, Johannesburg, 1977.
- Shillington, K., History of Southern Africa, Essex, 1987.
- Silberbauer, E.R., Understanding and Motivating the African Worker, Johannesburg, 1975.
- Simons, H.J., Simons, R.E., Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950, Penguin Books, 1969.
- Smit, P.(ed), Up Against Fences: Poverty, Passes and Privilege in South Africa, Pretoria, 1970.
- Smit, P., Botswana and Development, Pretoria, 1970.
- Smollan, R., Black Advancement in the South African Economy, Johannesburg, 1986.
- Southall, A.(ed), Social Change in Modern Africa, London, 1961.
- Stein, M., Max Gordon and African Trade Unionism on the Witwatersrand, 1935-1940, Johannesburg, 1978.
- Stultz, N.M., Transkei's Half Loaf: Race Separatism in South Africa, Cape Town, 1979

- Taylor, J., The Pattern and Consequences of Declining Mine Labour Recruitment in Botswana, Geneva, 1986.
- Tiley, A.S., Bridging the Communication Gap Between Black and White, Cape Town, 1974.
- Van den Heever, J.P., 'n Korttermyn Ekonomiese Model van die Suid-Afrikaanse Goudmynektor, Pretoria, 1982.
- Van der Horst, S.T., Native Labour in South Africa, London, 1942.
- Van der Merwe, P.J., Bantoe-Mannekragpotensiaal van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria, 1970.
- Van Jaarsveld, F.A., Stedelike Geskiedenis as Navorsingsveld vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Historikus, Johannesburg, 1973.
- Van Rooyen, P.H., Swart Mannekragbenutting in Suid-Afrika, Stellenbosch, 1985.
- Van Onselen, C., Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914, Johannesburg, 1982.
- Van Schoor, A.M.(red), Die Nasionale Boek. Gewy aan 25 Jaar van Nasionale Bewind, 1948-1973, Durban, 1983.
- Van Vuuren, D.J., Wiehahn, N.E., Rhodie, N.J., Wiechers, M., (ed), South Africa in the Nineties, Pretoria, 1991.
- Van Zyl, D., The Discovery of Wealth: The Advent of the Industrial Revolution in Southern Africa, 1870-1899, Cape Town, 1986.
- Walker, E.A., A History of South Africa, London, 1928.
- Walshe, A.P., The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912-1952, Cape Town, 1971.
- Webster, E., (ed), Southern African Labour History, Johannesburg, 1978.
- Weston, R., Gold: A World Survey, New York, 1983.
- Wiehahn, N., The Complete Wiehahn Report: With notes by Prof. N. Wiehahn, Cape Town, 1982.
- Wilson, F., Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911-1969, London, 1972.

Wheatcroft, G., The Randlords. The Men Who Made South Africa, London, 1985.

Wilson, F., Migrant Labour in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1972.

Worden, N., The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid, Oxford, 1994.

Yudelman, D., The Emergence of Modern South Africa: State, Capital and the Incorporation of Organized Labour on the South African Gold Fields, 1902 - 1939, Westport, 1983.

6. UNPUBLISHED SECONDARY SOURCES

6.1 Papers

Minutes of a Meeting, Virginia Municipality, 1958.02.19.

Minutes of a Meeting, Virginia Municipality, 1958.12.12.

6.2 Dissertations, Theses and Papers.

Davies, K.R., Towns in the Orange Free State Goldfields: A Study of Past Development and Future Growth Potential, Unpublished MA, UOVS, 1996.

Farrell, J.D., Die Sakesektor se Bydrae tot die Verligting van die Probleem van die Stedelike Swartman, Ongepubliseerde M.BA, Universiteit van Kaapstad, 1974.

Farrell, J.D., Swart Arbeid: Knelpunte in Arbeidsbetrekkings, Instituut vir Arbeidsbetrekkings, UNISA, Pretoria, 1978.

Jochelson, K., Mothibeli, M., Leger, J., HIV and Migrant Labour in South Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988.

Kemp, S.W., 'n Beplanningstudie van die Verstedeliking van die Oranje-Vrystaat, Ongepubliseerde D.Sc proefskrif, Universiteit van Pretoria, 1968.

Mc Namara, K., Black Worker Conflicts on South African Gold Mines: 1973-1982, Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1985.

APPENDIX 1**ADVERTISEMENT OF THE NUM, 1998:****NUM OFFERS:**

- Legal Services
- Collective Bargaining
- Health and Safety
- Education and Training
- Bursaries for Members and Their Families
- In case of Death, NUM contributes R2 500 to the dependents
- Through the Mine Workers Development Agency, NUM provides training and business advice to ex-mine workers and their Communities

OUR TRACK RECORD AS A UNION IS A SUCCESS STORY:

- Mine Health and Safety Act - the Act entrenches four basic rights which are:
 - the right to refuse to do dangerous work
 - the right to education and training
 - the right to information
 - the right to representation and participation
- Wages - NUM negotiated and achieved minimum wage of R1 000 in the mining industry
- Provident Fund - NUM was instrumental in establishing and improving retirement funds for black mineworkers.

A SOTHO SONG

In the midst of trouble and
sorrow
We left our children at home
Children full of tears,
Crying tears: "Father is gone, is
gone.
God help fathers to return."
Happiness is returning with
spears.

(From "Another Blanket")

Quoted by Luli Callinicos, A People's History of South Africa: Volume 1, Johannesburg, 1981.

APPENDIX 3

SAFETY POLICY OF HARMONY GOLD MINE - 1995

The management of this mine is committed to ensure that the right of the individual employee to work in physically and mentally safe conditions is upheld.

We will comply with all the laid down safety standards, health rules and regulations of the company. The safety and health of it's employees will always take precedence over expediency and short cuts.

The programme of preventing, detecting and controlling of fires will be strictly adhered to.

The safety and proper maintenance of its property and environment are of paramount importance.

Every attempt will be made to reduce and/or eliminate the possibility of an injury.

The Mine property will be safe guarded against damage, theft, sabotage and explosions.

Management will:

1. Provide a climate and environment in which the interests of safety and health are paramount.
2. Provide the correct equipment and material for doing the work.
3. Train it's employees in safe, practical, healthy and efficient work methods.

The Supervisor is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that the healthy, safe climate and environment provided by management is maintained.
2. Ensuring that employees work in the manner in which they have been trained.
3. Ensuring that equipment and material provided are used correctly and that the best work methods are applied.

The Employee is responsible to:

1. Work in the manner in which he is trained.
2. Work in such a way as not to endanger the safety of health of himself or his colleagues.
3. Use the equipment and material in the designed manner.
4. Working in such a way to prevent wastage of material, equipment and energy resources

It is expected that all employees will endorse this policy through active participation contribute to the attainment of it's aims and objectives.

In Summary:

We are interested in your safety - health - and security and at the same time wish to prevent damage - waste - loss - fire and any type of explosion.

APPENDIX 4

List of Tables and Maps

1. South Africa's increased proportions of the World's total gold output, 1888-1928.	p. 10
2. The composition of the black work force, 1896-1936.	p. 15
3. The composition of the black and white labour force, 1910-1922.	p. 26
4. The black work force of the mines and other industries, 1935-1955.	p. 50
5. Percentage of white labourers on the mines, 1940-1952.	p. 54
6. The number of South African black workers on the mines in comparison with foreign labour, 1940-1960.	p. 99
7. The number of South African black workers on the mines in comparison with foreign labour, 1960-1985.	p. 104
8. The amounts paid by TEBA to the various regions in South Africa.	p. 105.
9. The average number of employees from Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana and Mozambique.	p. 114, 115
10. The work force at Harmony Gold Mine from 1988-1995.	p. 115
11. Black employment from neighbouring countries, 1981-1991.	
12. Map of the mines in the Free State Goldfields.	p. 140
13. Percentage of gold produced by the Free State Mines, 1958 and 1966.	p. 156
14. Map of the different reefs being developed by Harmony.	p. 170
15. The number of strikes and losses in 1982.	p. 184
16. Ethnic groups involved in strikes, 1982-1990.	p. 185
17. Increase in the number of South African black workers on the gold mines.	p. 202
18. NUM membership per mining house in August 1985 and July 1988.	p. 204, 205
19. NUM membership at Harmony Gold Mine, 1995.	p. 228
20. Expenditure of a mine in 1974.	p. 233
21. Labour costs of a mine in 1974.	p. 234
22. Wages of black and white workers, 1946-1960.	p. 237
23. Wages of black workers in rands, 1970-1987.	p. 242
24. Wages of the black workers, 1970-1985.	p. 243
25. Number of recruits, 1910-1990.	p. 244
26. Wages of black and white workers at Harmony, 1960-1990.	p. 248
27. Increase in the wages of black workers, 1960-1990.	p. 249, 250
28. Wages in kind, 1911-1969.	p. 254
29. Fatalities on the mines, 1950-1984.	p. 273
30. Fatalities on the mines decreased, 1910 to 1947.	p. 278
31. Fatalities on the mines, 1990.	p. 284, 285

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 31. Fatalities on the mines, 1990. | p. 284, 285 |
| 32. The increase in Sexually Transmitted Diseases among black mine-workers, 1978-1985. | p. 287. |
| 33. The Prevalence of HIV among migrant workers. | p. 288. |
| 34. Sexually Transmitted Diseases at Harmony. | p. 294. |
| 35. Decrease in Sexually Transmitted Diseases at Harmony. | p. 300. |
| 36. Sexually Transmitted Disease in Sex workers. | p. 301. |
| 37. Acclimatisation Periods. | p. 314. |
| 38. Training of black workers in shifts. | p. 315. |
| 39. Percentage of the work force undergoing training. | p. 316. |
| 40. Improved skill levels of black workers, 1960-1990. | p. 328. |
| 41. Bridging school at Harmony. | p. 338. |

SUMMARY

There are many roleplayers in the transformation process of the black gold mine-worker in the South African mining industry. These include the South African government, the mining companies, the Chamber of Mines, white mine-workers and finally the black workers themselves. The black labourers were first subsistence farmers, who came to the gold mines on an involuntary and temporary basis. When they could no longer survive on their subsistence economy, they looked to the mines for a steady income.

Meanwhile, their lives were transformed as they came into contact with Western civilization. The migrant labour pattern has had tremendous effects on the general way of life of the black man in South Africa. He was not only transformed as a labourer, but as a person as well.

For many decades the black labourer was not allowed to become involved in trade union activity. NUM was only granted access to Harmony Gold Mine in 1988 and then the workers united and demanded better wages, as well as improved living and working conditions. The important role NUM played in the transformation process of the black workers should not be overlooked. For the black workers there was strength in numbers.

The Free State Goldfields came into production in the 1950s and the mining industry arrived at a crossroad. It could maintain the unskilled status quo of the black labour force or transform the industry and grant black labourers the same rights as whites. Political barriers and economic necessity prevented the industry from taking a new course and established labour structures were implemented on the Free State mines. The colour-bar was only removed in the mining industry in 1988 and black miners could only then obtain a blasting certificate and advance in their workplace.

Working in a gold mine, was and still is dangerous. However, the mines have an enviable record of maintaining high safety standards and providing excellent medical facilities for their workers. At Harmony Gold Mine, pioneering work is done in the field of AIDS and the Harmony Hospital is quite modern and well-equipped.

Training facilities and career opportunities for the black workers have improved tremendously over the last few years. The black gold mine-worker of the nineties is better-trained, more productive and more informed than many years ago. They are still migrant workers, but their contracts have been extended to a period of 12 months. Conditions in the hostels improved likewise and facilities like M-Net and quarters for married workers are provided. The black workers' diets are scientifically determined and many sports facilities are readily available.

The black labourers have not reached a utopia. Migrancy has its negative effects on family life, alcohol abuse is a problem and the HIV virus poses a severe threat. Improved productivity has led to down-scaling of the work force and unemployment is rampant. Black gold mine-workers in the nineties have become integrated in the industry and in the economy of South Africa. A phenomenon which was postponed for many years and which leaves behind a history of hardship and struggle.

