CLASS CONFLICT AND COLOUR BARS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINING INDUSTRY, 1910-26

by

Frederick A. Johnstone

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Introduction

The class warfare which erupted in Johannesburg in 1922 was one of the most bitter episodes of class conflict in South African history. The basic facts of this conflict are fairly well known, and do not need to be recapitulated here. Our understanding of what the conflict was about, however, has been made somewhat difficult by the fact that class and race relations in the gold mining industry during this period - and the 1922 conflict in particular - have received relatively little systematic and scholarly study, and that the bulk of writing on those questions has tended to adhere to a general interpretation which has distorted as much as it has clarified them.

This interpretation may be summarized very briefly as the view that the conflict was essentially about the job colour bar (known as "the colour bar" in this view), which was attacked by the mine owners in the interests of rational economic development, but defended by the white workers in the interests of racial domination. This thesis is the subject of a brief critique in the second part of the paper.

It is not the intention of this paper, in the short space available, to make a detailed study of any particular aspect of the subject. Moreover, in order properly to answer such a question as "What was 1922 all about?" it is necessary to examine the general dimensions of the conflict situation. The purpose of the paper, therefore, is to attempt to lay the groundwork for an answer to this question, through a general analysis of class and race relations in the gold mining industry in these early years of Union. (1)

I. Class Structure and Class Colour Bars

1) The Class Structure of the Gold Mining Industry

In order to understand the nature of the conflict which developed among the whites in the gold mining industry, it is necessary to look at the industry's class structure. For this clarifies the nature of the interests of the groups in conflict, which in turn renders the nature of the conflict intelligible.

The ownership and control of the Witwatersrand gold fields was concentrated in the hands of a few groups of capitalist companies. This was a legacy of the early development of diamond and gold mining in South Africa. The Kimberley diamond mines, which at first consisted of numerous individual small holdings, were amalgamated into progressively fewer companies, until, by the end of the nineteenth century, De Beers Consolidated controlled all the diamond mines and 90 per cent of the world's diamond output. The development of monopoly capitalism on the Rand was greatly facilitated by the accumulation of capital and techniques in Kimberley. Moreover, the geological nature of the gold fields, with a low average grade of ore and with the vast bulk of the ore deep underground, necessitated large scale organization virtually from the start. By the early 1890s, the ownership of the gold mines had become concentrated in the hands of a few groups of capitalist entrepreneurs. This centralization of control was further consolidated by the formation of a Chamber of Mines (as early as 1887), which came to represent and co-ordinate the interests of the Groups, and of two African labour recruiting agencies - the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (1896, under another name) and the Native Recruiting Corporation (1912).

The purpose of these and other forms of centralization was to unify the groups behind their common interests in a monopolistic structure of control. Although there were several groups, they shared the same basic interests and tended to act together as a unified and non-competing body, constituting in effect a form of monopoly capitalism. As a South African economist commented:

> The Gold Mining Industry may claim to provide a working model of a 'rationalized' industry. Through the group system of control of the separate mining companies, and the close co-operation of the whole industry through the Chamber of Mines and its subsidiary services, it has substituted for the blind selection by competition of the fittest to survive, a conscious and deliberate choice of methods,

> equipment, areas and personnel on the basis of an extremely detailed comparative study of results. (2)

It was this centralized control which enabled the mine owners to determine conditions in the industry so extensively and so effectively.

This structure of ownership of the gold mining industry determined its class structure, which was divided between a class of capitalist owners and managers, and a class of wage earning workers. The working class was divided into a relatively small artisan and overseer "labour aristocracy" of white workers (about 20,000), and a large force of unskilled African labourers (nearly 200,000). This class structure was thus simultaneously a racial stratification, with two white groups on top of a stratum of Africans.

The class structure and the racial stratification were thus asymmetrically related. It was not the case simply of a white capitalist class and a non-white working class. The white workers were simultaneously members of a subordinate (working) class and a dominant (white) group.

The essential significance of this racial division lay in the critical importance of colour as a criterion of status and power differentiation in South African society. This colour-power correlation came to constitute a second important determinant of group interests (in addition to relationship to the means of production).

2) White Class Interests and Class Colour Bars

The main concern of this paper is with the relations between the two white classes - the mining capitalists and the white section of the working class - in relation to the colour differentiation of South African society. The position of these two classes in the structure of production gave them certain fundamental class interests, which expressed themselves, <u>inter alia</u>, in various forms of racial discrimination, or "colour bars", which served to secure these interests.

The basic class interests of the white workers were somewhat ambiguous, because of the asymmetrical relations between the class structure and the racial division, and because of the importance of colour in relation to power. Their position in the economic structure left them theoretically with two alternative possible class interests - the protection of their élite status, or class solidarity with their African fellow workers; they pursued the former.

The reasons for this cannot be gone into fully here. But the basic explanation is to be found precisely in the material conditions of this group and the dominant conditions of its environment. Not only were the material conditions of the white workers substantially differentiated from those of the African workers by the familiar artisan-labourer division of the working class (as in European countries at the time). (3) This material differentiation was significantly reinforced by the importance of colour in the South African environment as a criterion of access to rights, power and status. In terms of both of these differentiations, the white workers occupied a privileged élite status relative to the African workers; while, on the other hand, the African workers were at the opposite pole - a cheap and rightless labour force, which precisely because of its servile status constituted something of a threat to the white workers, since employers preferred the cheaper and more servile labour of non-whites.

Had the division between the material and cultural conditions of the two sections of the working class been less extensive, the white workers might well have been more favourably disposed towards a policy of class solidarity. But this differentiation was so great as to predispose the white workers towards the defence of their élite status. These objective conditions underlay, and expressed themselves in, the white workers' perception of themselves and their interests. The majority of these workers viewed themselves first and foremost as members of a ruling group and a labour élite. As Merriman observed to Smuts:

> the most violent illiberal native views are to be found in the large centres among the newcomers, especially among working men, who regard the natives not unjustly as their most dangerous rivals, and having been regarded however unjustly as 'the lower classes' in Europe, are delighted on arrival here to find themselves in a position of an aristocracy of colour. (4)

And in the case of the impoverished Afrikaners who at this time were being forced off the land into wage labour in the gold mining industry, it was not a case of coming to think this way but one of never having thought any other way. ?

The basic class interest pursued by the white workers in the gold mining industry during this period was thus the protection and consolidation of their privileged status as a labour élite and as members of a dominant racial group, using the advantages of the latter to secure the benefits of the former. They were concerned to maintain and increase their material security, especially job tenure and high wages, against the pressure of undercutting and displacement by much cheaper non-white labour. This expressed itself in the job colour bar - a system of racial discrimination reserving all skilled and responsible work to whites. Already well established in custom and law by the time of Union, the legal job colour bar was extended by the Regulations of the Mines and Works Act of 1911, and finally incorporated into the

Act itself by the Mines and Works Amendment Act of 1926. This job colour bar constituted what could be termed the "class colour bar" of the white workers - a discriminatory claim to certain class benefits on the basis of colour differentiation.

While some attention has been given in the past to this job colour bar of the white workers, little has been given to the class interests of the mining capitalists in the system of racial discrimination, and to the particular class colour bar which was developed to secure these interests.

To understand these interests, it is necessary to look a little more closely at the structure of production. The realization of profits through the mining of gold on the Rand was determined by a unique combination of circumstances. Profits were absolutely dependent on low production costs, because of the very low average grade of the ore, and because of the fixed price of gold. The average grade of ore mined on the Rand in the first decades of this century was about 6.5 pennyweights per ton, compared with about 10 dwts. in Canada's Hollinger Mine and about 13 dwts. in Western Australia. (5) The internationally fixed price of gold prevented the mining companies from transferring any increases in working costs to consumers. The realization of profits thus implied intensive cost minimization, and the industry was characterized by an extremely sensitive cost structure. The Chamber of Mines calculated that a difference in working costs of only one shilling per ton meant a difference in profits of about £1.5 million. (6)

But how could production costs be kept low enough to assure profits with the average grade of ore remaining so low (and actually diminishing), with the fixed price of the product, and with most of the costs of production increasing? The two main costs of production were those of stores and labour. The cost of stores rose with the cost of living, and the Chamber of Mines had little control over it. Therefore, the crucial area of cost minimization was that of wages.

White wages, however, were also rising, and it was difficult to prevent this, because of the power which the white workers had to raise their wages, and thus their cost. Therefore, the fundamental area of cost reduction had to be that of non-white wages, and the specific social conditions of South Africa provided the mining capitalists with the solution to their problem, through a vital equation: non-whiteness equalled rightlessness equalled powerlessness equalled cheapness. To the extent that wage rates were determined by the rights and opportunities of workers to increase their share of surplus wealth, and where such rights and opportunities were distributed on the basis of race and colour, the race and colour of the large unskilled labour force became of absolute importance to the mine owners. For as in this specific environment <u>non-white</u> meant <u>powerless</u>, so it also meant - and could be made to mean - <u>cheap</u>. In this critical equation of colour and cheapness, the mining capitalists found the answer to their profits realization problem. Their fundamental class interest was to secure the cheap, non-white labour on which their profits depended, and to maintain its cheapness.

This driving interest expressed itself in various racially discriminatory labour controls which operated to secure and perpetuate the cheapness of African labour. These colour bars of the mine owners were basically threefold: the maximum average system (a collective agreement of the mining companies not to permit the average wages of African workers to exceed a very low maximum rate); the recruiting monopsony (a buyer's monopoly over the recruitment of African labour, to prevent the competitive determination of African wage rates through a freer relationship between supply and demand); and servile labour measures (such as the closed compound system, breach of contract provisions, etc.). Since the essential aim of these discriminatory measures was to secure the cheapness of African labour, they can be referred to as the wage colour bar (as opposed to the job colour bar of the white workers), which constituted the class colour bar of the mining capitalists.

This wage colour bar was extremely effective. First of all, the recruiting monopsony operated through the W.N.L.A. (in Portuguese East Africa) and the N.R.C. (in British South Africa) eliminated the competitive determination of African wages in the sphere of supply and demand. The mining companies agreed not to compete with each other in the recruitment of African labour, and instead to receive evenly distributed quotas of such labour from a central committee of the Chamber and the recruiting agencies, which estimated the complement of labour required by each mine and sought to fill all complements equally. (7) In 1925, the Economic and Wage Commission found, with regard to the gold mining industry, that:

> Everywhere we were informed that there was a shortage of native labour, yet the ordinary result of such a shortage - a rise in wages sufficient to reduce the demand to equality with the supply - does not take place. (8)

Then the maximum average system reinforced this monopsonistic control over African wage rates by directly fixing a low maximum rate of African wages. This system was first introduced in 1912, in the schedule of wage rates of the N.R.C., restricting the maximum average wage payable to Africans on piece work to 2/3d. per shift, with the penalty of a fine for any company exceeding it. Slight alterations were made in later years to render the system more flexible, but the basic restriction of maximum average wages to well below 3/- per shift remained. (9)

Between 1912 and 1919, when the money wages of white mine workers rose by 40 per cent, the average wages of African mine workers rose by a mere seven-tenths of a penny, from 1/11.6d. per shift in

1912 to 2/0.3d. in 1919. (10) In view of the substantial increase in the cost of living during the War, the real value of African wages had declined considerably by the post-war years. (11)

The recruiting monopsony and the maximum average system were reinforced by measures which maintained the servile and powerless status of African workers. These cannot fully be described here, but included measures like the provisions of the Master and Servant Laws and the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911 which made breach of contract by Africans a criminal offence. The closed compound system fragmented and isolated the African labour force in barrack-like compounds, giving the mine owners extensive control over it. Measures like these helped to secure the cheapness of African labour by perpetuating its servile status. In the view of the Chamber of Mines:

> It would be impossible to control native labourers in the employ of European masters or to rely on them for a satisfactory fulfilment of labour contracts, but for the deterrent provisions included in the various laws with special application to natives. (12)

This wage colour bar of the mine owners was probably the most important feature of the gold mining industry, since it was the mechanism which made the industry possible. Only the availability of very cheap African labour, which this colour bar secured, made the mining of Rand gold profitable, as the Chamber was the first to acknowledge, declaring that "it was not so much the richness of these fields that attracted the necessary capital as it was their apparent continuity and the fact that they could be worked efficiently by cheap native labour". (13)

3) Class Colour Bars and Class Conflict

The driving interests of the two white classes thus expressed themselves in different class colour bars - the job colour bar and the wage colour bar - which served to secure these interests.

But while both classes benefited from the system of racial discrimination in this way, conflict developed between them over the specific form that it should take. For, over time, these class colour bars became increasingly incompatible at the margin, as each class attempted to maintain or increase the particular range of benefits secured by its colour bar. The pursuit of the cheap labour policy by the mine owners through the wage colour bar increased the threat of cheap labour competition to white workers, against which the job colour bar was erected. And the job colour bar, especially in the sphere of semi-skilled work, became an increasingly important obstacle to the profitable operation of the gold mines.

Historical developments during and after the First World War accentuated the marginal incompatibility of the class colour bars. The departure of many white workers to the War and their replacement by "poor white" Afrikaners, the increasing ratio of Africans to whites in the labour force, and the increasing employment of Africans in semi-skilled work, intensified the importance of the job colour bar to the white workers and led to the Status Quo Agreement of 1918. This agreement between the Chamber and the white workers declared that:

> ... the status quo as existing on each mine with regard to the relative scope of employment of European and coloured employees should be maintained, that is to say that no billets which are held by European workmen should be given to coloured workmen and vice versa. (14)

The job colour bar was thus further consolidated.

But the crucial development concerned the profits of the mine owners, who were faced with a desperate crisis in the form of growing production costs and diminishing profits. By the end of 1919, working costs had reached 23/9d. per ton, compared with 17/5d. per ton in 1915. (15) This was due essentially to increases in white labour costs (up by 2/- per ton between 1914 and 1919) and in the cost of stores (up by 2/5d. per ton in this period). (16) For a while, the companies found respite in the premium on the price of gold. But in 1920 the premium price began to fall, from 130/- per ounce in February 1920 to about 95/- in December 1921; working costs, on the other hand, continued to rise, reaching a record high of 25/8d. in 1921. (17) It was estimated that, with costs at this level, the return to the normal price of 85/- per ounce would put 28 mines out of business. (18)

The timing of the 1922 conflict was determined by this falling rate of profit of the mining companies, which led them to attack the degree of protection secured by white labour through the job colour bar. The mine owners sought to increase the ratio of Africans to whites and the employment of Africans in semi-skilled work, and to retrench some white workers and reduce white wages. At the end of 1921, the Chamber announced that it would no longer abide by the Status Quo Agreement. The white workers, however, refused to accept such reductions in security and status, and struck work in January 1922. White workers in related industries, whose labour conditions had also been threatened by employers, also came out on strike.

There followed the bitter and prolonged general strike on the Rand mines, which culminated in military warfare, and ended with 230 dead and twice as many injured. The army crushed the revolt of the white workers, and the Chamber of Mines secured all its goals - no fixed ratio, retrenchments, wage reductions, etc. By August 1922, there were 4,400 fewer whites employed in the gold mines than before the strike. (19) Some of these were re-employed in the next few years; but the government estimated that by 1924 the number of unemployed whites who had been employed in the gold mines in 1921 was between 1,000 and 1,500. (20) The relations of production were thus reorganized in the Chamber's interests, and working costs fell from 25/8d. per ton in 1921 to 20/- in 1923 and 19/7d. in 1924. (21)

But the mining capitalists and the Smuts government were to pay a price for this victory, in the ousting of the latter in the 1924 general election and the return of the Nationalist-Labour Pact to power. The Pact government proceeded to protect the white workers and consolidate the job colour bar through industrial legislation and the "civilized labour" policy. A racist welfare state thus emerged as the progeny of ultra-cheap-labour capitalism.

Thus was established a particular equilibrium between different white class interests and class colour bars which has persisted in many respects to this day. The capitalist operation of the gold mines would continue, but the mining capitalists would not be permitted to maximize their particular interests with impunity; other white interests were to be safeguarded and secured. In exchange for marginal constraints on their particular interests, the different white classes would continue to reap the benefits deriving to them from their collective colonial dominion over the non-white population. Violent and disruptive quarrelling over the distribution of these benefits was to be replaced by a more orderly and judicious division of the fruits of exploitation.

II. Critique of the Conventional Wisdom

As mentioned at the outset, much of the writing on class and race relations in the gold mining industry during this period has tended to adhere to a certain interpretation, the underlying tenets of which are that:

1) The conflict between the whites was essentially a conflict between the imperatives of rational economic development, represented by the mining companies in their attack against the job colour bar, and the imperatives of irrational colour prejudice and racial discrimination, represented by the white workers in their support for the job colour bar. The mining companies were thus something of a liberalizing force, in contrast to the reactionary posture of white labour.

2) The key problem underlying the conflict was the job colour bar (known as "the colour bar"), which was an obstacle to rational economic development. It was basically in relation to occupational mobility that racial divisions were significant.

The most extreme version of this thesis is to be found in Hutt's The Economics of the Colour Bar, which claims that the mining companies were liberalizing the system of racial discrimination until stopped by government interventionism and white labour policies.

> The inescapable conclusion ... is that private enterprise in mining and industry ... has tended to work wholly for the material advancement (and indirectly the social benefit) of the African people. The intervention of the centralized state, on the other hand, has worked almost entirely in the opposite direction ... It is difficult to imagine a better illustration than is provided by South Africa of the truth that the fight against colour injustice is actually against the consequences of planning on the collectivist model. (22)

While not going quite as far in this direction as Hutt, other writers have adhered - implicitly or explicitly - to the basic assumptions and problematic of this interpretation, with attention tending to focus on such questions as "rigidities in the labour market" caused by the job colour bar, the job colour bar as an obstacle to "economic progress", etc. (23)

It should be evident, however, in the light of the preceding analysis, that this common perspective has serious limitations. In general, it fails to focus attention on all of the colour bars in the gold mining industry, concentrating exclusively on the job colour bar; it fails to analyse these different colour bars in terms of the different class interests which determined them and which they functioned to secure; and it fails to see the genesis of this colour bar system in the mode of production and the class structure. More than anything else, it fails to elucidate the role of this capitalist structure, and of the mining capitalists, in developing and perpetuating this system of racial discrimination. The nature and significance of the wage colour bar have not been given adequate attention.

The mine owners are alleged to have been struggling for economic efficiency and free enterprise against "rigidities in the labour market" caused by labour prejudice and government policies. Yet the maximum average system deliberately restricted the efficiency of African workers, while the recruiting monopsony effectively eliminated the freer interaction of supply and demand. Both introduced "rigidities" into the "labour market". The Chamber was wont to praise the virtues of "healthy competition" when objecting to the responsibility of the job colour bar for high white labour costs. But the Chamber did not consider competition to be healthy in the determination of African labour conditions, and suppressed it. (24)

The mining companies are alleged to have been "on the side" of the African workers in their conflict against "the colour bar". But this ignores entirely the workings of the wage colour bar. Moreover, it is worth noting that the African mine workers considered their most serious grievance to be not the job colour bar but low wages, secured by the wage colour bar. This is clear in many sources, and is confirmed in various reports. (25) It is only because of the assumptions of the liberal-capitalist thesis that this rank of importance has been accorded to the job colour bar, and that the job colour bar has been known as the colour bar.

The actual role played by the mining capitalists in operating the system of racial discrimination, through the wage colour bar, in pursuit of their class interests, thus tends to be overlooked. This constitutes at the same time a misrepresentation of the nature of the conflict, which is seen to have been between the imperatives of "rational economic development" and "the colour bar". But, in fact, this was far from being a struggle between opponents and supporters of racial discrimination. It was a conflict over the form that racial discrimination should take, over the marginal distribution of the various costs and benefits accruing to the whites from their class colour bars and the colonial power structure.

The attack of the mining capitalists against the job colour bar, like the attack of the European bourgeoisie against feudalism and despotic monarchy, was essentially an attempt to reform the relations of production to suit their own class interests. Far from being opposed to the colour bar system, they depended on it, through the wage colour bar, and merely sought to rearrange it in certain respects to ensure continued profits.

This nature of the conflict is not only clear from the nature of the wage colour bar but is also evident in the actual policy of the Chamber towards the job colour bar. Contrary to some of the mythology which surrounds the events of 1922, the mine owners were not fundamentally or desperately opposed to the job colour bar as a whole - given the permanent presence and power of white labour - but merely to the degree of security which it came to secure for the white workers after the Status Quo Agreement and with the growing profits crisis. This is evident through these early decades - the initiative taken by the Chamber in securing the job colour bar provisions of the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance in 1904, negligible opposition by the Chamber to the introduction and extension of the job colour bar in the Union's Mining Regulations in 1911, the Status Quo Agreement itself, the relatively limited nature of its occupational demands in 1921-22, and its failure to take significant advantage of the Hildick-Smith case ruling of 1923 declaring the job colour bar in the Regulations to be illegal. (26)

In fact, the presence of a white labour "aristocracy" was not as alien to the Chamber's interests as has been supposed. White labour's claims to rights on grounds of colour legitimized the denial of rights to others on grounds of colour, which was part of the crucial equation underlying the Chamber's wage colour bar. Moreover, the reverse side of the job colour bar, which secured a monopoly of skilled work for whites, was the restriction of non-whites to unskilled work, and thus the restriction of unskilled work to non-whites, which was also a vital interest of the mine owners. The division of the working class, and the absence of working class solidarity, were also useful. Ideally, the Chamber would probably have preferred an all-African labour force; but the job colour bar and its various implications were not without their benefits for the mine owners.

Thus, not only were the mining capitalists not attacking the colour bar system per se, on which, on the contrary, they depended; they were not even attacking the job colour bar per se, but only the degree of protection which it came to claim for white labour in relation to the falling rate of profit. It was this profits realization problem that the conflict was essentially about. But the specific form which this conflict assumed (with the dominant importance of "the colour bar") was over-determined by the particular colonial structure and ethnocentric culture of South African society. (27)

The actual and vital relationship of the mining capitalists to the system of racial discrimination, and the actual nature of the conflict between the two white classes, have thus tended to be misrepresented. This reflects more general problems of analysis. The study of class and race relations in the gold mining industry (and in South Africa as a whole) has tended to be limited in perspective and analytically undynamic. Class relations are examined as if the capitalist class was in no important way the source of racial discrimination; race relations are examined in terms of this false assumption, and with the main concern usually being to describe the effects of the status quo on African labour conditions, rather than to analyse the structural determinants of these conditions and the status quo. (28)

In fact, the study of race relations in the gold mining industry is essentially a study of class relations; and the examination of these class relations must look very closely into their economic and social structure, into the specific interests determining and being determined by this structure, and into the class colour bars which emerged as the instruments of these interests.

It is only when these general and determining aspects of the conflict situation in the gold mining industry at this time have been analysed that such questions as "What was 1922 all about?" can really begin to be answered in a more specific manner.

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Notes

(1) For reasons of space and continuity, references have been kept to a minimum, and certain aspects of the subject which are relevant, but of secondary importance to the general thesis developed in this paper, have not been dealt with.

(2) Professor Henry Clay (one of the members of the Economic and Wage Commission, 1925), quoted in Frankel, S. H., Capital Investment in Africa (London, 1938), pp. 81-2.

(3) See, e.g., Hobsbawm, E. J., "The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain", in Labouring Man. Studies in the History of Labour (London, 1964).

(4) J. X. Merriman to J. C. Smuts, 16 July 1908, Merriman Papers, 1908, No. 86; South African Public Library, Cape Town.

(5) Statements of Evidence of the Gold Producers' Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines to the Mining Industry Arbitration Board, 1926-27 (Johannesburg, 1927), Statement No. 1, p. 52, para. 23; and Annual Reports of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines.

(6) Statements of Evidence of the Gold Producers' Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines to the Economic and Wage Commission (Johannesburg, 1925), Statement No. 5, p. 16.

(7) "Statement by the Complements Committee of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, the W.N.L.A. and the N.R.C., to the Low Grade Mines Commission", Evidence of the Low Grade Mines Commission, 1919, Miscellaneous Papers File, National Archives, Pretoria.

(8) Report of the Economic and Wage Commission, 1925, U.G. 14/26 (Cape Town, 1926), p. 38, para. 58.

(9) Report of the Low Grade Mines Commission, 1919-20, U.G. 24/20 (Cape Town, 1920), p. 32, para. 203; Van der Horst, S. T., Native Labour in South Africa (London, 1942), p. 193.

(10) Low Grade Mines Commission, op. cit., p. 31, paras. 193, 195.

(11) Some idea of the degree of this decline can be gained from the fact that even the 40 per cent increase in the money wages of the white workers did not constitute an increase in real wages. (Report of the Unemployment Commission, Minority Report, 1922, U.G. 17/22 (Cape Town, 1922), p. 28, para. 18.) The Economic and Wage Commission calculated that while the index of the nominal value of the white mine workers' wages rose from 1,000 in 1910 to 1,129 in 1919, the index of their real value fell from 1,000 in 1910 to an average of about 821 in 1919 (and about 926 in 1920, rising briefly to about 1,065 in 1921, and falling to about 845 in 1922). (Economic and Wage Commission, op. cit., p. 271, para. 27, Table H.) In fact, it has been estimated that the real wages of African gold mine workers were no higher and were possibly even lower in the mid-1960s than in

1911. (Wilson, D. G., "Gold Wage Inquiry a Must", based on Ph.D. research, Financial Mail, 10 May 1968.

(12) Statements of the Gold Producers' Committee ..., 1925, op. cit., Statement No. 3, p. 1.

(13) Ibid., Statement No. 5, p. 6, para. 12.

(14) Quoted in the Report of the Mining Industry Board, 1922, U.G. 39/22 (Cape Town, 1922), p. 5, para. 13.

(15) Low Grade Mines Commission, op. cit., p. 7, para. 16.

(16) Ibid., p. 7, para. 17.

(17) Mining Industry Board, op. cit., pp. 2-3, paras. 3-6.

(18) First Interim Report of the Unemployment Commission, March 1921, U.G. 16/21 (Cape Town, 1921), p. 3, paras. 10-11.

(19) Mining Industry Board, op. cit., p. 11, para. 46.

(20) "Memorandum of the Under Secretary of Mines and Industries to the Secretary of Mines and Industries", 13 August 1924, Archives of the Department of Mines and Industries, File MM 1699/24, National Archives, Pretoria.

(21) Statements of the Gold Producers' Committee ..., 1925, op. cit., Statement No. 5, p. 2.

(22) Hutt, W. H., The Economics of the Colour Bar. A Study of the Economic Origins of Racial Segregation in South Africa (London, 1964), pp. 99, 135.

(23) e.g. Doxey, G. V., The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa (London, 1961); Horwitz, R., The Political Economy of South Africa (London, 1967); Hessian, B., "An Investigation into the Causes of the Labour Agitation on the Witwatersrand, January to March 1922" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Witwatersrand University, 1957); various articles in the South African Journal of Economics; and most of the relevant government Commissions during this period.

(24) Hutt begins with a sound premise: "We do not ... find in colour prejudice as such the main origin ... of most economic colour bars. The chief source of colour discrimination is, I suggest, to be found in the natural determination to defend economic privilege (the preservation of 'customary economic relations between the races'), non-whites simply happening to be the essentially under-privileged groups in South Africa." But he proceeds to ignore the way in which the mining capitalists demonstrated its truth (Hutt, op. cit., p. 27).

(25) e.g. Report of the Native Grievances Inquiry, U.G. 37/14, (Cape Town, 1914), pp. 38-39, para. 280; Low Grade Mines Commission, op. cit., pp. 30-31, paras. 190, 196; and evidence of African mine workers and their representatives to various government commissions during this period.

(26) One of the clearest articulations of this accommodationist policy towards the job colour bar is a speech by Sir George Farrar, of the Chamber, to the white workers of Benoni in 1903. Farrar dwelt on the disadvantages to the white workers of having white workers doing unskilled work, and the advantages of having Chinese labourers instead, and promised that with the introduction of Chinese labour extensive job colour bar provisions would be introduced into the regulating legislation. This duly took place, and took the form of Schedule I of the Transvaal Labour Importation Ordinance, which served to restrict over fifty occupations to whites. (Parliamentary Papers, Further Correspondence relating to the Affairs of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, Cd. 1895 [London, 1904], p. 13.)

(27) For a discussion of the concept of over-determination, see Althusser, L., "Contradiction and Overdetermination", New Left Review, No. 41, Jan.-Feb. 1967, pp. 15-35.

(28) What Andre Gunder Frank says of the "Indian problem" in Latin America applies equally well to analysis of African labour conditions in South Africa:

> The 'Indian problem' in Latin America is in its essence a problem of the economic structure of the national and international capitalist system as a whole ... In its incorporation of the Indian ... the development of capitalism generated the institutional forms appropriate to its changing needs at different times and places ... The 'Indian problem' therefore does not lie in any lack of cultural or economic integration of the Indian into society. His problem ... lies rather in his very exploitative metropolis-satellite integration into the structure and development of the capitalist system ...

(Frank, A. G., "On the 'Indian Problem' in Latin America", Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (New York, 1969), pp. 123, 130, 142). For another illuminating work with important insights for the study of South African class and race relations, see Arrighi, G., The Political Economy of Rhodesia (The Hague, 1967).