

# THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISCOVERY OF MINERALS FOR LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1867-1926

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The discovery of diamonds at Hopetown, in 1867, and of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, changed irrevocably the manner in which the South African economy was conducted. It made of South Africa a country in which minerals and mining played an important part. Mining encouraged and facilitated the development of industries, trade and finance. Thus began a process leading to the economic transformation of South Africa.

Before the discovery of gold and diamonds the South African economy was a simple one. Agriculture and limited trade were the only industries. In the Western Cape wheat and wine farming and in the Eastern Cape wool farming were settling in. The country's economy was not significantly based on production and overseas trade. In large areas of the country stock farmers practised a subsistence economy. Except for the Western Cape, the trading products of the country were skins, hides, horns and elephant tusks.

The discovery of diamonds and gold led to the development of large mining companies, with large capital investment and profit as its main aim. Companies like De Beers Consolidated Goldfields, founded by Cecil John Rhodes in 1886, united all diamond interests. Thus powerful and capital intensive private enterprises were established. At and near the mines several other industries established themselves, attracting more commercial activities. Cities like Kimberley and Johannesburg arose on what was once open veld.

## 2. LABOUR

The mines and other industries needed machinery and merchandise, which had to be acquired from abroad or from elsewhere in the country. The people needed food and clothing, which also had to be transported. Therefore most parts of the country felt the effect of the mines. The harbour cities of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban were probably affected most by these changes. Rail links and wagon transport became important.

Capital, equipment and skills were the three most important needs in running the new capitalistic economy with its drive for efficiency, success and profit. Skills required trained people with knowledge. But manual labour was also important to cater for the hard physical work. This theme deals with the role of labour in the political, economic and social spheres. The political role refers to the influence that labour had on the development and implementation of policy. The economic role refers to the place of labour in the general economic development and policy. The social role has to do with the lifestyle and living conditions of the labourers at and around the mines.

The consequences of the discovery of gold and diamonds for labour in each of these spheres cannot be divided into water-tight compartments labelled political, economic and social. What happened in one sphere influenced each of the other two in many ways. That is why the consequences should rather be categorised in the following manner:

- For the first time in South African history a clearly-defined urban labour class develops.
- A unique system of migratory labour develops.
- A pattern for the housing of mining workers, called the compound system, is established.

- A special racial pattern of labour division is generated that would become known as the industrial colour-bar.
- Labour unions and political parties are established.
- Strikes as an instrument for demonstrating the power of organised labour takes root.
- The regulating of labour through extensive labour legislation becomes a necessity.

## 3. THE RISE OF AN URBAN LABOUR CLASS

### 3.1 Skilled workers

The mining of minerals, especially gold of low quality ore-content, demanded a highly mechanised technology. Engineers, technicians, scientists, etc., were therefore essential for the South African mining industry. Initially South Africa was not able to supply its own skilled operators and technical experts for the diamond and gold mines. Consequently thousands of technicians and skilled artisans were imported, so that it was immigrants from overseas who started the South African industries. The first generation of gold mine workers came mainly from Cornwall in England, and to a lesser degree from Europe, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The Witwatersrand was therefore a cosmopolitan mining community, of which the British workers made up the largest number.

### 3.2 Unskilled workers

The Afrikaners, who made a living mainly from farming and transport, had no knowledge of mining. They also felt a good deal of resentment towards the mines. But many of them could not make a living on the farms any longer, because of i.a. the severe droughts and the sub-dividing of land. They had to find refuge on the mines, on the railways and in the factories. The Anglo-Boer War left a great many without a livelihood, so that even more of them moved to the mines after 1902. They knew no skills and had to perform unskilled or half-skilled tasks. Most of them were regarded as poor-whites.

Initially Blacks showed little interest in the mines. As the need of the mines for strong and healthier men to do the exhaustive physical work increased, Blacks were more and more considered as a labour market. As totally unskilled workers, they would in due course, make up a third of the working class. They

were, however, initially not accepted as part of one single working class by either the English or the Afrikaans white mine workers. From the beginning therefore the working class on the mines consisted of three distinctive components.

#### 4. LABOUR PRACTICES ON THE MINES

##### 4.1 Black labourers, migratory labour and the compound system

The largest part of the mine work, the manual or unskilled labour, was done by black workers. It mainly comprised hard, physical labour, such as the loading or pushing of heavy objects, like rock drills. Because the South African gold mines were of low ore-carrying quality the exploitation costs were exceptionally high. For that reason cheap black, unskilled labour was seen as the solution for reducing labour costs and preventing low profit margins. Wages had contributed approximately 50% of the production costs. In order to meet this tremendous demand for black labour the Chamber of Mines (representing mine owners and management) began to establish recruiting agencies in black areas. In 1896 the Chamber established the *Native Labour Supply Association* to recruit workers for the gold and coal mines. By 1899 there were already approximately 107 000 black workers employed by the mines.

During the Anglo-Boer War the Chamber of Mines re-established its recruiting agencies in 1900 and the *Witwatersrand Native Labour Association* (also known as *Wenela*) was founded. That led to the establishment of an organised contract or *migratory labour system*, which was to become the characteristic pattern for the South African labour dispensation of the 20th century. By means of this system black workers were recruited in their tribal areas, with the permission of their tribal chiefs, to accept contract work on the mines for periods of three to six months' duration. Blacks were recruited among the Pedi, Ndebele and Tswana tribes in the Transvaal and in Mozambique, but later also in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Nyassaland (Malawi), Bechuanaland (Botswana), South West Africa (Namibia), Basutoland (Lesotho), Swaziland, the Eastern Cape and Natal. The migratory labour system also gave rise to new social settlement patterns. Because the system was based on a short-term contractual basis, only black men were recruited for the mines. During their period of service they stayed in single quarters or **compounds** at the mines. Their families remained behind in the reserves.

This migratory labour system engendered great social consequences. White authorities feared that housing for married black workers at the mines would result in

the permanent settling of Blacks in white areas. It was also feared that Whites would thus be swamped by the large number of Blacks. The result was that the black labourer was viewed as merely a temporary employee of white firms in white areas, and without any property rights. The Chamber of Mines was also of the opinion that contractual labour and the compound system were cheaper to run.

##### 4.2 The importation of Chinese labourers

The Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) seriously disrupted production and the supply of labour, especially black labour, on the gold mines. The destruction caused by the war, the disruption of black recruiting programmes, the lowering of post-war minimum wages for Blacks, and the disillusionment of Blacks with the post-war British authorities, initially led to a withdrawing of black labour and a drastic reduction in the number of black workers on the mines. As a result the Transvaal Legislative Council, under pressure from the President of the Chamber of Mines, George Farrar, in 1904 agreed to the importation of Chinese labourers. In the mines the Chinese, of whom approximately 64 000 were imported, performed the same manual labour — which often included dangerous tasks in the shafts — as the Blacks. Resistance against their poor work and living conditions on the mine compounds led, amongst other things, to desertion and crime. This again led to such strong protest by the white section of the public and political parties that the last of the Chinese were repatriated to China in 1910.

##### 4.3 The industrial colour-bar

Another characteristic of the South African labour dispensation that began to evolve was the so-called *colour-bar* in industry. It was a situation in which skilled labour was legally reserved for Whites in mines and factories, and the lower paid or unskilled labour was left for Blacks. Mining regulations, such as the mining code of 1896, according to which only white miners could qualify for handling explosives, and the mining regulation of 1906, helped establish the colour bar in the mining industry. According to the 1906 regulation jobs such as that of machinist, shaft-digger, shaft guard, manager, boiler assistant, lift operator, shift-boss, surface foreman, mine overseer and mechanical engineer were reserved for Whites. That implied, for instance, that a white miner, as a skilled worker, would supervise one or two pressure drills operated by unskilled black "assistants". The legislative restrictions circumscribing the extent of the work that Chinese labourers had been allowed to do, was subsequently also applied to Blacks. Job reservation, as applied

through the colour bar, became a form of protection of white labour.

#### 4.4 White unions and political labour organisations

Some of the most serious consequences of the discovery of minerals were in labour politics. Amongst the white workers, the dominant British character of the mines established British labour and trade union traditions on the Witwatersrand. A **trade union** is an organisation established by the workers to defend their rights against exploitation by employers. Unions therefore organise workers to secure a stronger negotiating position on economic matters. Unions served as institutions through which workers could agitate for their rights against management. Skilled white workers poured into the Witwatersrand and brought with them a variety of socialist and labourite ideas. The rise of trade unionism and labourite political consciousness among the workers was further aided by the local distribution of British labour and socialist literature, and by visits to South Africa of prominent British, Australian and New Zealand labour leaders. Almost all the early union leaders in South Africa were of British or Australian descent. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in the Transvaal made trade unionism possible, and even unavoidable, in South Africa.

Trade unions and political labour organisations first appeared in South Africa **before** the Anglo-Boer War. The first unions and political wings of the labour movement were modelled on similar movements in Britain. Some of these first unions were branches of overseas mother organisations. One of the oldest unions in South Africa was one for workers in the printing industry, and operated in Cape Town as early as 1881-82. The first labour union in the Transvaal was the *Labour Union*, established in 1892.

With few exceptions, most unions and political organisations were supporters of a colour-bar in the field of labour. The exclusivity of the unions, to which only skilled white workers belonged, therefore contributed to the protection of a privileged working class, often referred to as "the aristocracy of labour". The skilled immigrant labourers from abroad also immediately identified themselves with this practice of the South African labour dispensation.

The trade unions and the labour organisations were not represented at the National Convention. This served as an encouragement for them to become politically more conscious and active.

At an international labour conference in Johannesburg from 9 to 11 October, 1909, at which most of the

unions and political labour organisations in the country were present, the South African Labour Party (SALP) was formally founded — the first pan-South African political party to be officially organised. H.W. Sampson was the first President of the SALP, while F.H.P. Cresswell, a mining engineer, was the party's parliamentary leader. The SALP was supported mainly by workers of British descent, and the party was moulded in the British tradition. Most of the leaders of the party too were of British descent.

The SALP, and its trade union supporters especially, propagated a pro-white labour policy and the protection of skilled white labour against cheaper, unskilled non-white labour. This, together with stumbling-blocks like the migratory labour system, job reservation by means of the colour-bar, and white workers' preference for segregation, all contributed to the fact that the first attempts at the establishing of black trade unions openly only came at the end of the first decade after Union was achieved.

## 5. INDUSTRIAL STRIKES

White workers did not have the power to exert meaningful political power. They could not improve their circumstances through legislation. In the general elections of 1910 and 1915 the SALP could secure four seats only. The labour movement utilised industrial strikes as a method to demonstrate their power. The first two and a half decades of the 20th century were thus characterised by continuing industrial unrest, which resulted in many strikes. If workers could unite in withholding their labour, they could force employers to grant concessions. Without labour the employer could not produce anything. He could not make any profits — but he could also not pay any wages. A trade union therefore has to weigh the pros and cons of a strike well before it takes such a drastic step.

Because no effective legal protection existed, white workers agitated especially about matters such as minimum wages, a minimum working day and working week, insufficient safety measures at the working-place, silicosis, the protection of white labour against cheaper non-white labour, and the retaining of the colour-bar.

### 5.1 The 1907 mine strike

The first general strike erupted in 1907. A general strike occurs when workers other than those who initiated the strike join in disrupting work over a wide field. An entire city or area is normally affected by such a strike.

The immediate cause of the strike was an order from the manager of the Knights Deep gold mine at the Witwatersrand that white miners should henceforth supervise three instead of two manned rock drills. That implied that white mineworkers would be gradually phased out as supervisors and that Chinese and black workers would be elevated to semi-skilled or skilled drill operators, at a wage lower than those of the skilled white workers. The white miners also feared more exposure to silicosis, dismissals and wage reductions. When the workers of the New Kleinfontein gold mine at Benoni adopted strike action in May 1907 the strike, under the leadership of the mine workers' union, accelerated into a general strike involving more than 4 000 mine workers. The Minister of Mines, General Smuts, called in a military force to break the strike and to protect strike breakers and scab labourers. These are persons who are brought in as substitutes for the labourers on strike. The Chamber of Mines locked out the strikers and dismissed them. By July 1907 the strike was over.

### 5.2 The mine strike of 1913

The next big strike of May 1913 again originated at the New Kleinfontein gold mine, when the mine manager tried to force five underground mechanics to work longer hours on Saturdays. When they refused they were dismissed. Negotiations to re-employ them failed; other miners began to strike out of sympathy. The strike began to spread to other Rand mines and industries, and a strikers' committee, representing members of the various unions, co-ordinated the action. Eventually approximately 18 000 miners from 63 mines went on strike. Plundering, assault on scabs, violence and arson gradually spread and increased. General Smuts was again forced to call in the British Imperial Armed Force in an attempt to bring the situation under control. At that time the Union's police force and armed forces were not yet strong and efficiently organised. During the night of 4 July 1913, also known as "Black Friday", activists burnt down Park Station (Johannesburg's station), as well as the offices of *The Star*, which the strikers regarded as the mouthpiece of the hated Chamber of Mines. Twenty one citizens died in the riots on 4 and 5 July as a result of armed action by police and soldiers. Following consultation with mining magnates, Generals Botha and Smuts were forced to negotiate with a strikers' deputation under the leadership of J.T. Bain. An armistice agreement was eventually reached. It was agreed that the strike would be ended and all riots would cease, that the strikers of the New Kleinfontein mine would be re-appointed, and that no victimisation would be practised against returning miners and other labourers. The workers won this round.

### 5.3 The general strike of 1914

The next big general strike would erupt as an aftermath of the 1913 strike. The strike of 1914 was a continuation and an extension of the strike of 1913 and an attempt to protect the interests of white labour. Towards the end of December 1913 railway workers in Pretoria, Durban, Uitenhage and Salt River in Cape Town were dismissed. When negotiations between the railway union and the Minister of Railways about their re-employment failed, the union called out a country-wide strike as from 8 January 1914. In Natal, at the same time, coal miners were dismissed, and workers there also went on strike, as from 2 January 1914. On 13 January 1914 the *Transvaal Federation of Trades*, an umbrella organisation for unions, called out a general strike, and miners also joined the strike. This time, however, the government was prepared to deal with a strike of great dimensions, and on 14 January 1914 Martial Law was decreed in the districts where rioting took place. Eventually soldiers forced the surrender of the leaders of the strike committee in their headquarters in Johannesburg, and on 22 January 1914 the strike was called off. General Smuts ordered nine strike leaders to be deported to Britain. Because Smuts's action was against parliamentary law he afterwards had to justify this with piloting an Indemnity Bill through Parliament in March 1914.

### 5.4 The 1920 strike by black miners

The social and economic conditions in South Africa after the First World War were poor. This also led, towards the end of the first decade after Union, to big strikes by black workers and the establishment of the first black unions. In the years immediately following the First World War the cost of living and prices of consumer articles were exorbitant, while essential articles were scarce and wages remained low. The social and political expectations of Blacks remained unfulfilled, their position in society unimproved.

In reaction to these conditions Blacks engaged in a number of strikes, of which the biggest occurred in February 1920, at the Rand gold mines. The strike erupted because of an unsatisfactory wage increase of 3 pennies per working day, and quickly spread to 21 of the 35 gold mines. It also included a demand for the relaxation of the colour-bar. Eventually 71 000 black workers were involved in the strike.

It proceeded peacefully and in a well disciplined manner, while modern strike methods, like pickets, were also utilised. Pickets prevent scab labourers and strike-breakers from taking over the jobs of the strikers. Eventually the police broke the strike by surrounding and isolating the compounds, thus creating the impression among the strikers that other

strikers had returned to work. The strikers were forced back to the mines and in clashes with the police suffered some casualties, while white strike-breakers also assisted in ending the strike.

### 5.5 The miners' strike of 1922

The biggest strike in the history of white labour, also called the "Red Revolt", occurred on the Witwatersrand in January 1922. Once again the colour-bar was at the core of the unrest. As a result of the post-war economic depression mine owners could not control the prices of mining materials. Production costs kept rising, but the gold price did not rise proportionately with the result that some of the low-grade gold mines were forced to close down. According to the so-called *status quo* agreement between the white mine workers' union and the Chamber of Mines of 1 September 1918, all posts at the gold mines that were at that point in time occupied by Whites would in future also be reserved for Whites, and the same conditions would hold good for Blacks. Because of the economic crisis the only option open to the Chamber of Mines was to save on wages and increase productivity. That would mean the substitution of more expensive skilled white labour by cheaper unskilled or half-skilled black labour. Furthermore it would mean longer working hours at lower wages for the miners.

The idea that mineworkers could be dismissed, wages reduced or white workers replaced by black labour was totally unacceptable to white mines. On 28 December 1921 the Chamber of Mines announced the lifting of the *status quo* agreement and the reducing of salaries for highly paid Whites. This implied the partial lifting of the colour bar. Black miners would from now on be allowed to do half-skilled work, previously reserved for Whites only. These announcements coincided with wage reductions for coal miners and power station engineers in January 1922. A strike erupted among these workers, and on 10 January 1922 the *South African Industrial Federation* also called for a strike by the gold miners. Eventually about 22 000 white workers were involved in the strike on the Witwatersrand.

Meanwhile a radical militant group, the so-called Council for Action, effectively took charge of the strike. This Council, which also had the support of the South African Communist Party, counted a number of communists in its membership. Although the Council supported the abolishment of the colour-bar, the strikers, ironically enough, marched with banners displaying slogans like: "*Workers of the world fight and unite for a white South Africa*". Strikers' commandos and pickets acted with increasing violence against scabs, and armed

skirmishes with the police erupted. The Council of Action called out a general strike on 7 March 1922, and on 10 March genl. Smuts declared Martial Law. Amongst other counter measures, aeroplanes and armed forces artillery were utilised to attack strikers' lines in Benoni, Boksburg, Langlaagte and Fordsburg, and on 16 March 1922 the strikers' revolt was squashed. Of the security forces 72 had fallen, while 89 civilians had been killed and several wounded. Hundreds of strikers were accused of violence, and eventually four, C.C. Stassen, S.A. Long, H.K. Hull and D. Lewis, were hanged for murder. After this strike the wages of half-skilled white workers were reduced and the numbers of the black-white proportion in the mines changed from 8 to 1 to 10 to 1.

## 6. THE RISE OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS

The discovery in South Africa of minerals would eventually also lead to the establishment of black trade unions.

### 6.1 The IWA

The establishment of one of the first trade unions was, amongst other things, the result of events in white politics. The white labour ranks split in 1915 over the matter of participation in the First World War. The right wing of the SALP, the bigger group, supported the British war effort. The smaller socialist left wing of the party opposed the war, since, in their opinion, it was merely an internationalist capitalist conspiracy against the labourers of the world and therefore broke away from the SALP to found first the *War on War League* and eventually the *International Socialist League*. The latter organisation would be the first actual attempt from the white side to organise black labour formally and to regard the black workers as the real working class or proletariat of South Africa. In 1917, with the help of the *International Socialist League*, two of its members, S.P. Bunting and D. Ivon Jones, founded a general trade union for unskilled black workers, the *Industrial Workers of Africa* (IWA). Amongst other things the union distributed a socialist pamphlet translated into i-Zulu and i-Sotho — the first socialist publication in an African language. In 1919 the IWA was eventually absorbed by the ICU (see following sub-section). Even so, the *International Socialist League*, through the initiatives of Jones and Bunting, and later also through the Communist Party of SA (SALP), founded in 1921, would continue to recruit blacks especially as members. It was the communists who would eventually shape the Blacks as a working class and assist in organising them in trade unions.

## 6.2 The ICU

In the 1920s the *South African Native National Congress* (which would be re-baptised in 1923 as the ANC) could not really succeed in improving the political, social and economic life of Blacks. In those years the organisation was obscured by a more dynamic black union, the *Industrial and Commercial Union* (ICU). The founding of the ICU coincided with the industrial unrest that followed the economic decline after the First World War. The fact that workers became more radical because they were not allowed to belong to white unions or to join Indian and Coloured unions, also contributed to the unrest.

The ICU was founded on 17 January 1917 by Clements Kadalie and A.F. Batty. It was originally intended as a union for black dockers in Cape Town. Kadalie, the leading figure, was born in Nyassaland (Malawi) and because he could not speak any of the South African black languages he addressed his audiences in English. He was an exceptional orator, with a flamboyant, charismatic personality.

Through the initiative of Clements Kadalie a conference was arranged in Bloemfontein in July 1920 in an attempt to unite all the black labour organisations. Thus the *Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa* (ICWU), with H. Selby Msimang as president, was founded. As a result, however, of personality clashes among the leaders the ICWU disintegrated within a year. The original ICU was then re-established, with Samuel Masabalala as its chief organiser and Kadalie as general secretary. As a result of the post-war depression the ICU soon developed into a mighty and militant organisation. It addressed matters such as demands for the political and economic freedom of Blacks. From its original Cape Town base the influence and branches of the organisation expanded to the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Transvaal, Natal and the rural districts of the Eastern Transvaal. Even its own newspaper, *The Workers' Herald*, was established. In the 1920s the CPSA also exerted its influence upon the ICU, especially in 1925 and 1926. When the assistant general secretary of the union, James la Guma, also joined the Communist Party, many ICU members followed suit. This co-operation, however, did not last long. As a result of, amongst other things, policy differences, the remaining communists were kicked out of the union towards the end of 1926.

An interesting and strange rapprochement initially existed between Kadalie and genl. Hertzog. It was strange, seeing that Hertzog and the Pact government (see later) was concerned with the protection of white

labour. Hertzog contributed to a fund established for the victims of the Bulhoek incident, when the Smuts government wounded and killed a number of Blacks in an attack at Queenstown. There were also unfounded rumours that the Pact would support *The Workers' Herald* financially, but it was never proved. Because the Pact, like the ICU, was opposed to British Imperialism, the ICU requested its enfranchised members to vote against the Smuts government in the 1924 general election. When, however, the new Hertzog government piloted discriminatory measures, like pass laws and its "civilised labour policy", through parliament, it estranged the ICU. Kadalie condemned racism and capitalism and proposed the re-distribution of land. By 1926 the government was trying in vain to check Kadalie and the ICU by means of legislation.

When the ICU established its head office in Johannesburg, the hub of the organisation's activities moved north. Since 1925, a larger number of middle-class Blacks also joined the union. In Natal, especially, promising growth ensued thanks to the effective recruiting by the local organiser, A.W.G. Champion. By the end of 1927 the ICU became a mass movement with as many as 100 000 members. At that time it was the largest union organisation founded in Africa.

## 7. LABOUR LEGISLATION TILL 1926

The political, economic and social consequences of the discovery of minerals would also reflect in the labour legislation. This legislation gave expression to the policy of segregation. The *Mining Act of 1893* of the old South African Republic was the first real application of the industrial colour-bar in South Africa. The act decreed that no Blacks, Asians or Coloureds were allowed to use explosives in the mines. After Chinese miners were imported to the Witwatersrand gold mines in 1904 restrictions were laid on the work they were allowed to do. This was the first legal system of job reservation in South Africa, and it would subsequently be applicable to Blacks.

The first labour act of the Union of South Africa was the *Mines and Trades Works Act, No. 12 of 1911*. It became the cornerstone of job reservation, discriminating against Blacks in the allocation of work. Skilled labour, especially in the mines, the engineering industry and on the railways, was reserved for Whites only. By regulating the issuing of dynamite certificates in the mines, the proportion of white and black workers were, in effect, also regulated. Indians and Coloureds were similarly affected by this legislation. According to it no "coloured" persons could acquire certificates for skilled labour in the Transvaal or the Free State, and

skilled labour certificates of "coloured" persons from Natal and the Cape Province were not acknowledged in the two first-mentioned provinces. In 1911 the *Native Labour Act* was also approved by parliament. According to this act black workers who broke a labour contract and went on strike, would be guilty of committing a crime.

Through the *Apprenticeship Act of 1922* white youths benefited at the cost of other races as regards skilled workmanship. The minimum requirement at that time to train as an artisan was a std 6 certificate. This was a requirement few non-whites could meet, for proper scholastic training and amenities for them were few. Very few Coloureds and no Blacks trained as artisans or were accepted into technical colleges. Through the *Industrial Reconciliation Act of 1924*, accepted as a result of the 1922 strike, labour was further regulated. The law specified that only white and coloured unions were legally allowed to negotiate with employers on behalf of employees in industrial disputes. Black workers were not legally allowed to negotiate and were only allowed to strike if intricate conditions were met.

The 1922 strike was one of the factors that brought down the Smuts government in 1924. In 1923 Hertzog's NP and Creswell's SALP entered into an agreement or Pact to co-operate in the general election in 1924, with the aim of defeating Smuts. This paved the way for the Pact government to come into power. A new labour dispensation for white workers began. The Pact government established South Africa's first Department of Labour, with F.H.P. Creswell as the first Minister of Labour. Thomas Boydell took over from him in 1925. The *Wage Act*

of 1925 supplemented the existing Industrial Reconciliation Act of 1924, which had regulated the wages of skilled workers. Although the act functioned on the principle of racial impartiality, it still remained the aim of the government to protect white labour against competition from non-white labour. In this way it was made difficult for Blacks to advance to careers which Whites regarded as their preserve.

In 1923 the legal application of the colour-bar, by virtue of the *Mines and Works Act of 1911*, was declared invalid through a court action brought by the Reef gold mines. The result was that the government substituted this act with the *Mines and Works Act Amendment, No. 25 of 1926*, also known as the *Colour-bar Act*. The colour-bar on the mines was once again regulated and legalised. Skilled white labourers in the cities were protected against competition from Blacks and Indians who were not allowed to become dynamiters, surveyors or machinists. The act specified that competency certificates for skilled work could only be issued to Whites or Coloureds.

Thanks to the Pact government, large numbers of poor-whites secured jobs in urban industries. Unskilled white labourers for instance, were employed on the railways. With a government sympathetic towards white labour, protecting it and actively addressing the grievances of white workers by means of legislation, militant industrial action by Whites came to an end. The white working class would gradually move into the background and Blacks, as the representative working class of South Africa, would become more and more prominent.

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### ENKELE TIPIESE VRAE

1. Verduidelik wat die volgende is: lae ertsdraende gehalte; kampongs; trekarbeidstelsel; geskoolde werk; 'n vakbond; 'n staking; roofarbeiders; staakwagte; die Paktregering.  $10 \times 2 = 20$
2. Probeer vasstel watter soort werk die volgende beroepe op die goudmyne verrig het: masjinis; skaggrawer; skagwagter; skofbaas; hysbakoperateur; mynopsiener; stoomketel-assistent; myningenieur; plofstofoperateur; plofstofassistent.  $10 \times 2 = 20$
3. Skryf 'n kort opstel waarin die rol van stakings op die myne voor 1924 bespreek word. 50
4. Bespreek die uitwerking wat die ontdekking van goud en diamante voor 1910 op die arbeidsituasie in Suid-Afrika gehad het. 50

### SOME TYPICAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain what the following is: low quality ore; kampongs; migratory labour system; skilled work; a mine shaft; a trade union; a strike; scab labourers; pickets; the Pact government.
2. Try to determine what work each of the following careers on the gold mines entailed: machinist; shaft digger; shaft guard; shift boss; lift operator; mine overseer; boiler assistant; mining engineer; explosive operator; explosive assistant.  $10 \times 2 = 20$
3. Write a short essay discussing the role of strikes on the mines before 1924. 50
4. Discuss the consequence the discovery of gold and diamonds had for labour in South Africa until 1910. 50

- Lykskouings baat nie dié op wie dit uitgevoer word nie. (Maar dit het nut; dit hou minstens die lewendes langer aan die lewe).
- Maak jouself onmisbaar, en jy sal bevordering ontvang. Tree op asof jy onvervangbaar is, en jy loop die gevaar om die trekpas te kry. (In hierdie ou wêreld is dit naamlik noodsaaklik om ambisieus te wees, maar dit is fataal om dit te duidelik te laat blyk).
- Dit is slegs mense sonder geld wat sê dat geld nie geluk kan koop nie. (Maar as 'n mens wel geld het, dan hoef mens darem nie geluk te loóop en soek nie).
- As ek met jou 'n grap maak, moenie kwaad word nie; weet dat jy my vriend is. (Met my vyande maak ek geen grappe nie).

(Uit Johan Combrink: *Spreuke, wysede en woordspelings*)