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TITLE: FOREIGN LABOUR MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA AFTER APARTHEID: CONTINUITY OR CHANGE?

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Dedications:

This thesis is dedicated to aunt Amelia Noziphelo Sishuba, for her unfailing support has made this study a success.

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Introduction

Migrant labour constitutes one of the perennial problems of the political economy of the Southern African region. The movement of people between their home countries and the gold mines in South Africa is over a hundred years old. In this sense, labour migrancy predates apartheid, and is now threatening to outlive it. Migrants working in South Africa make up a sizable proportion of the total wage earning population of the neighbouring countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi). Their entrenched dependence on migrant-based revenue has made them vulnerable to fluctuations in labour flows to the gold mines (Davies, 1992).

The developments since the first quarter of 1988 have altered the terms of debate on migrant labour. With the independence of Namibia and the establishment of a new government in South Africa, to name but a few, the pattern of future regional cooperation has become a central issue. Likewise, the debate about labour migrancy has entered a new phase. Given the current political changes, and yet to take place, this study constitutes a modest attempt to contribute to the debate by examining the prospects of restructuring of labour migrancy to the gold mining industry. The central aim of this undertaking will be to establish what the future holds for the foreign component of the labour force.

The focus here will be on the emerging debates in this area, policy pronouncements by major stakeholders, the Chamber of Mines and the new Government of National Unity. However, an

informed forecast on the future of labour migrancy is possible only if we establish the conditions that created it in the first place; how it has been constructed overtime; and the

successive moments of transformation in the system. In this regard, this study will locate the origins and development of labour migration in its proper historical context before drawing conclusions about the future of the system.

In this scholarly pursuit one does not pretend to break a new ground but rather to re-interpret the current literature on migration and establish whether the current pattern of labour migration will change. The research will be based mainly on secondary materials, drawing extensively on published materials, journals and articles.

Chapter one.

Literature and Theoretical Review

1. Introduction.

The process of political change in South Africa which ushered in the Government of 'National Unity' has engendered developments of great potential significance for the Southern African region. The re-integration in April 1994 of Walvis Bay and its Off-Shore/Penguin Islands into Namibia and, more recently, cancellation of the R800 million debt, ceded to Namibia before independence, have marked the beginning of a new phase which has, probably, set the pattern of future regional relations.

Crucial in this context is the issue of migrant labour. Having been constructed over the previous seven decades, the migrant labour system predates apartheid and, is now threatening to outlive it. How the new government of national unity deals with this central tenet of the apartheid legacy will have far reaching consequences not only for the process of transformation in South Africa; it will also determine the fate of development and stability in the Southern African region as a whole (Levy, 1994).

These are some of the issues that present a real challenge in the post-apartheid era. Left unresolved, these issues will present a real threat to local and regional stability and change. Thus it has become imperative that a broader regional approach to migrant labour will have to

recognise that supplier states cannot, without considerable economic and social disruption, immediately withdraw from the system. At the same time the impact of labour recruitment in underdeveloped labour reserve areas will have to be recognised as placing an obligation on the mining industry to contribute to whatever efforts made in the direction of regenerating the productive capacity of those areas (Davies, 1992).

This chapter briefly looks at the salient aspects of the debate in the current literature on migration. The first section reviews the basic assumptions of the theoretical approaches employed in the study of migrant labour. The second section presents an overview of the current trends of labour migration to the South African mining industry with a view to establishing the current pattern of labour migration.

1.1. Theories of Labour Migration.

Theoretical approaches that have been employed in the analysis of labour migration range from the conventional or neo-classical approach at one extreme, to the political economy approach at the other and more recently, the rigorously formulated account - the theory of the articulation of modes of production.

In this section we explore the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the contrasting paradigms of socio-economic development in which each perspective is embedded.

1.1.1. The Conventional or Neoclassical Approach.

The basic assumption of this approach is that migration is a result of choice and that it takes place mainly for economic reasons, with individual migrants seeking those employment opportunities which offer the greatest net return or life-time income. In addition, the process of migration is viewed as an equilibrating mechanism in an economy characterised by uneven development. In this context it is seen as fostering economic development by shifting resources from low productivity areas to high productivity areas. Again, implicit in this argument is a strong assumption that the resulting process of development will necessarily see to migration being phased out. Against this background the neoclassical analysis sees migration as a transitional phenomenon.

However, this approach suffers from a number of weaknesses. First, while it provides a rich model of individual decision-making, by taking the maximisation behaviour of individual as a point of departure, "it overlooks the structures that render possible such forms of individual utility maximisation while reliance on formal rationality and individual behaviour leads to the neglect of the social nature of the criteria by which individuals maximise utility" (Ketso, 1991:54). The assumption that people behave rationally is not at issue, nor that the search for economic advantage may (in the absence of other constraints) motivate workers to move from poor to rich areas.

The problems with the neoclassical perspective, rather, relate to "the equilibrium that is presumed to follow from the geographic mobility of labour, to the ahistorical character of the

approach and to the reductionism that precludes attention to the underlying causes of the structural parameters within which individual decisions are made" (Woods, 1982:303). Indeed, Cohen (1987:35) argues that a freely-reached decision can only operate within the constraints of the opportunities on offer and, that this general proposition applies with particular force to the decision to migrate. To this extent, neo-classical analysis neglects the structural parameters which are most relevant to the study both of the causes and consequences of labour migration.

The second weakness pertains to the ahistorical nature of the approach in that it hardly offers any analysis of the conditions which determine the process of migration. In this regard, Murray points out that migration is the study of 'structural transformation' which can only be understood through an analysis of a particular historical process of differentiation and integration (cit. Marks and Richardson, 1984:6). This contention is amplified by Amin's (1972:88) view of the problem of the migration of labour as an element in the redistribution of the 'factors' of production. The decision to migrate is then completely predetermined by the overall strategy determining the allocation of factors.

Amin further points out that the neoclassical approach is guilty of eliminating the discussion of the modes of production and the organisation of society. From the beginning it is prevented from seeing the essential facts, which lie behind the individual motivations, by taking its point of departure in the observation of motivations. In this sense it obliges one to stay within the framework of the system, because people base their decisions, in this case the advantages and costs of the decision to migrate, on the reality of the limited alternatives that the system offers them.

In the light of the above there is little doubt that the micro-economic model captures the individual rational calculus, but the result of such an analysis is necessarily limited. In actual fact the microeconomic framework offers little insight into the macro conditions that compel the decision to move in the first place, thus the conclusions derived are invariably restricted to the realm of secondary causes, or in Mitchell's terms "...the incidence of migration (the set of unique circumstances which induces a particular migrant to leave) rather than the rate of migration (the underlying factors which determine the volume, trends and patterns)" (cit. Cohen, 1987:36).

1.1.2. The Historical-Structural School.

In contrast to the neoclassical approach to migration, the historical-structural perspective locates population movement in the broader structural transformations underway in a particular social formation. The emphasis is on the influence of structural factors on labour mobility through their impact on the degree and spatial distribution of the demand for labour and on the associated forms of recruitment and remuneration (Ketso, 1991:54 and Woods, 1982:302).

By the same token, migrant labour is no longer regarded as an incidental phenomenon whose effects can be analyzed with respect of integrity or otherwise of a traditional social system (Murray, 1981:173). Murray regards it rather as a:

> *"particular manifestation of a process of fundamental transformation that has been taking place, in Southern Africa, for more than a hundred years, as a result of the penetration of*

the capitalist relations of production under specific historical conditions".

Migration is thus considered primarily as a macrosocial rather than an individual process. Accordingly, migration is conceptualised as a class phenomenon, where the unit of analysis is the stream, as opposed to the atomistic approach that treat migration as the sum of individual choices.

While the historical-structural perspective provides a rich model of migration, it also is flawed in that once the macrostructural forces that determine spatial imbalances in wages, employment and amenities are specified, the approach pays scant attention to the factors that motivate individual actors. Dinerman and Portes, comparing the structural framework to the microeconomic model, argue that the former is "less effective in identifying the specific costs and benefits that affect the decision to move and in terms of specifying other variables, such as social networks, that may affect both the propensity to migrate and the direction of the migratory stream" (cit. Woods, 1982:307).

Again, the weak conceptualisation of the decision process at the individual level is seen as one aspect of the larger problem of identifying the mechanisms that link macrostructural change to population movement. This is so because with the class conceptualisation of migration, this approach explains the patterns of migration in terms of changes in the organisation of production that unequally affect the fortune of different social classes. Due to the fact that the factors that lead to transformation in the structure of production operate at many different levels of the social system, the historical-structural perspective is said to face the formidable task of

tracing the impact on migration of forces and counterforces whose origins lie at the international, national, regional and local levels.

In this chain of explanations the last link is perceived the most problematic. Woods, for example, does argue that there is conceptual discontinuity between the units (systems of production and the associated classes) and that which is being explained (the movement of people). This is illustrated by considering the participation of household members in the various forms of production in a rural area (Woods, 1982:307).

Woods points out that in this way individuals may occupy multiple positions within the structure of production, adjusting the allocation of labour power to the emergence and to the decline of employment options. The movement across class boundaries, and the resilience of the household to which the individual belongs, imply that changes in the regional economy cannot be assumed to have direct or immediate effect on population movement.

The above discussion has brought forth the dysfunctional gulf in analytical tendency between the two schools. Realising that it would be problematic to support this gulf, Paton (1990:4) acknowledges the higher order of explanatory value of structures than individuals' decisions in understanding migration patterns, but adds that "at a given time the sum of migrants' decisions in response to the opportunities they perceive, is the highly accurate description of the tendency to migrate". He sees the separation of structure and individual failing to facilitate our understanding as intended. Hence the need for a period of in-filling which explores in detail the processes by which imperfect structures shape and are shaped by the propensity for movement of imperfect decision-makers.

A conceptual framework that attempts to integrate individual and structural approaches to the study of migration shifts the unit of analysis to the household (see Martin, 1983; Cohen, 1987 and Woods, 1982). The introduction of the concept of the household to the study of the development of South Africa's labour force and migration is particularly illuminating. Martin (1983:172) points out that a particular household structure underpins the history of migration from rural areas to the mines:

> *"one set apart from those supplying and reproducing labour to other peripheral production processes in the region (such as commercial white agriculture or independent black cash-crop reproduction)".*

Each of these household types emerged, in his view, with South Africa's incorporation into the world economy and the destruction of pre-capitalist modes of production. Most significant is the direct connection drawn between the development of the migrant labour force and the emergence of a particular household structure in the countryside. He conceives of a mutual relationship between mining and this household structure in that he maintains mining was as dependant on its links to this household as members of the household were dependent upon income from mining.

Woods (1982:314), however, submits that this framework underscores the idea that migration is an activity "firmly embedded in, and conditional upon the success or failure of the initiatives undertaken by the household as it interacts with the social, economic and political environment". Compared to the equilibrium and the historical-structural perspectives, the argument goes, the study of "household sustenance strategies, interpreted within the political economy of which the household is a part", provides a more holistic approach that potentially

identifies the complex interactions between the structural and the behavioural factors that determine patterns of population movement.

Be that as it may, the current frameworks for analysing the link between households and migration do not necessarily accomplish an integration of the historical-structural and equilibrium approaches. Rather, as Bach and Schraml (1982:334) have pointed out, even at the household level of analysis, the vast differences between structure and individual remain and neo-classical theory is adopted as the source of the behavioural rule behind migration.
In the light of the above, and granted the higher order of explanatory value of structures, when employing these schools care must be taken not to overemphasise the structures at the expense of the sum of the individuals decision to migrate.

1.1.3. The Theory of the Articulation of Modes of Production.

This conceptualisation of labour migrancy established its dominance within the Marxist tradition of scholarship in the 1970s. The leading scholars in the debate in this period include: Bettelheim, 1972; Althusser, 1971; Banaji, 1977; Meillassoux, 1972; Laclau, 1970; Wolpe, 1972 (a), 1980 (b), *etc.*. In this section we do not intend to unravel the intricacies of the debate but rather to make a brief exposition of the basic assumptions of the theory of the articulation of modes of production.

Accordingly, this theory assumes the co-existence of more than one mode of production in a social formation, structured by the dominance of the capitalist mode of production. It is

postulated that this domination, which allows the capitalist mode to enter, feed off, and restructure non-capitalist modes of production, has two tendencies: a predominant and a secondary tendency. The former leads to complete dissolution of other modes, while the latter leaves the non-capitalist modes structured and partly dissolved and thus subordinated to the predominant capitalist relations (Bettelheim, 1972).

Wolpe (1972) employed this theory to explain the basis of cheap labour procured because capital did not have to pay the full costs of production and reproduction of the direct producer. This introduced the theory to the analysis of labour migration in South Africa. In his seminal essay on cheap labour power and the origins of the migrant labour system in South Africa, Wolpe pointed out that the migrant labour-force was mobile because it had a particular economic base in the pre-capitalist reserve economy.

The cheapness of the labour-power, it is argued, is secured because capital appropriates labour-power below the cost of its reproduction. This is possible because the means of subsistence must be produced by the non-capitalist mode of production and must be accessible to the migrant worker. Wolpe posits that this was possible because the pre-capitalist economies were conserved in a structured form to subsidise the cost of capital accumulation. Thus his conclusion that:

> *"If the network of reciprocal obligation were broken, neither the agricultural product nor the 'social services'... would be available to the worker (migrant)" (Wolpe, 1972:299).*

So far we have argued that the capitalist mode of production enters, lives off, and restructures the pre-capitalist modes of production. However, this is by no means a smooth running process as Rey points out that the tenacity of the pre-capitalist modes of production necessitates the use of violence before any successful penetration can take place. This also explains why the direct producer is not completely divorced from the means of production. Rey periodises the stages of capitalist penetration of the pre-capitalist modes of production thus:

- *First, an initial link is established in the sphere of exchange, where interaction with capitalism reinforces the pre-capitalist modes of production.*

- *Second, capitalism takes root, subordinating the pre-capitalist modes but as yet is unable to destroy them.*

- *And finally, (a stage he contends has not as yet been reached in the Third World) the total disappearance of pre-capitalist modes of production, even in agriculture (cit. Bradby, 1980).*

The application of Marx's concept of the reserve army of labour and surplus population in the debate is particularly illuminating (see Wolpe, 1980; Wolpe and Legassick, 1976; Taylor, 1977; Kimble, 1980). Wolpe and Legassick (1976:96) distinguish between primitive accumulation and its self-expansion. They argue that primitive accumulation has the tendency of total expropriation of the direct producer, but this might take two forms. On the one hand, it might take the form of direct expropriation and immediate establishment of capitalist relations of production leading to the dissolution of pre-capitalist modes. On the other, the impact of the

capitalist mode of production on continuing forms of non-capitalist modes of production might merely lead to the introduction of commodity production within these economies (Wolpe and Legassick, 1976:96).

Of importance is that both forms of primitive accumulation result in the creation of a surplus population. The first form leads to the flow of the surplus population into the towns, while the second is more likely to lead to the retention of this surplus population in a latent form in the countryside. Thus, on the basis of the above deliberations, the 'restructured economic base' becomes the basis of cheap labour procured in this manner of articulation. However, Kimble locates the basis of cheap labour not in the 'restructured economic base' but "on the balance of class forces which enable capital to increase the rate of exploitation through the depression of the value of labour power" (Kimble, 1980:23).

While acknowledging the valuable theoretical insights provided by this theoretical formulation one must also be careful of its short-comings. Two areas of concern include, first, a failure to identify a mode of production and, second, the limitations of theoretical extraction. To amplify this view, Taylor (1979) provides a definition of a mode of production, thus, "a mode of production exists as a double combination of invariant elements" and that "this combination determines which of the practices will be determinant in the last instance in the social formation" in which this mode is articulated. He then points out the necessity to specify the forms in which these elements combine and the nature of their double combination in any attempt to examine the economic systems of pre-capitalist societies.

We can draw useful insights from Taylor's critique of Terray's analysis of the lineage mode of production; Meillassoux's analysis of modes of production and, the analysis of the Asiatic modes of production carried out by the authors of the C.E.R.M Group in which he argues: "they apply 'fully-formed' concepts of modes of production from Marx's discourse". He points to the common procedure in each of the cases, that is, identifying the combination of elements that appear to exist in the process of production, and the use of this as the basis for their arguments of the modes of production. For him, the analysis of any mode of production cannot simply be approached by identifying elements and their combination in the process of production, the division of labour. This is so because the process of extraction of labour can never be derived from the process of production, precisely because the latter depends on, is structured by, the former. Taylor regards such an approach to contain a number of errors which, because of their pervasiveness in the analysis of non-capitalist societies, represent a barrier to be overcome, "if the concept of mode of production is to be used in the theorisation of Third World formations".

With regard to the limitations of theoretical extractions Taylor argues a case against extracting different concepts that Marx used in analysing non-capitalist formations at different periods of his work without adequately situating them in his discourse. The problem with this approach is the tendency to avoid the crucial problem of the theoretical adequacy of these concepts in analysing particular non-capitalist formations. He goes at length showing how particular texts in the work of Marx do not establish adequate basis on which can be analysed non-capitalist modes. For example, he maintains that Marx deals specifically with the non-capitalist formations in the 'German Ideology' and the 'Manifesto'. In themselves these texts, in his view,

announce the project to be pursued in the 'Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy' and, for this reason, establish no adequate basis for an analysis of non-capitalist formations. In conclusion, although the theory of the articulation of modes of production does not possess a monopoly of explaining the migration phenomenon, its emphasis on the imperatives of capitalist penetration and accumulation in the periphery provides useful insights in understanding labour migrancy.

1.2. Migrant Labour in the Future Economy.

Since 1978, mechanisation and the insertion of technology in the production process has engendered significant developments in the mines' intake of novices from supplier states. A survey conducted by Chamber Of Mines in 1988 concluded that the mine's expectations through mechanisation is to reduce labour-associated risks in production. It also identified a highly skilled work force and a permanent labour force as the prerequisites for this process to succeed (cit. Matlosa, 1991:75). It is these developments which have increasingly led towards internalisation of labour supply to the mining industry as a policy.

Currently, available indicators seem to suggest the eventual phasing out of the migrant labour system, but accept as a reality that it will continue in its present form in the short term. This view is echoed in the works of Ketso (1991); De Vletter (1991); Phillip (1991) and Matlosa (1991). These scholars also foresee a gradual marginalisation of foreign mineworkers due to reduced restrictions on movement, residence and job opportunities.

While this may be the case, there is a strong feeling that prevailing regional as well as internal unemployment will ensure a continuous supply of labour for unskilled positions from both sources. This is important in the light of the sentiments echoed at the beginning of this chapter, that a sensitive approach to regional unemployment is central to long term regional political stability. Again, even though there may be a declared policy to reduce migration, other factors are at work to counter the effects of that policy. These include the general demand factors and the specific economic factors which explain the foreign component of the mining industry's labour force.

At another level, the emergence of a democratic government is likely to provide migrant supplying states the opportunity to negotiate issues of migrant labour on more sympathetic and conciliatory terms than in the past. Events such as the re-integration of Walvis Bay into Namibia; the more recent cancellation of the dept of R800 million, ceded to Namibia before independence; and the pro-active role by the new government in the Mozambique elections, to name but a few, testify to this argument.

1.3. Conclusion.

In the preceding sections of this chapter I have examined a number of influential theoretical texts which are representative of different theoretical approaches to the study of labour migration. An examination of the basic assumptions of the neo-classical and historical-structural perspectives, respectively, have exposed their limitations which fail to facilitate our understanding of the problem of migration as intended. As an attempt to close the analytical gap

between the two schools, an alternative approach that shifts the unit of analysis to the household, was brought in. This approach also has a number of weaknesses, apart from a failure to integrate the two schools, it maintains the vast differences between structure and individual and adopts neo-classical theory as the source of the behavioural rule behind migration. This was followed by a brief analysis of the theory of the articulation of modes of production.

The implications of the above analysis for this study can be summed up as follows: while acknowledging the higher order of explanatory value of structures, care must be taken not to overemphasise this perspective at the expense of the sum of individual's decisions to migrate. In a similar vein, the reflection on the basic assumptions of the theory of the articulation of modes of production has indicated that, although it does not possess a monopoly of explaining labour migrancy, its emphasis on the imperatives of capitalist penetration and accumulation in the periphery provides a useful analytical tool.

The last section reviewed the current trends of migration in Southern Africa. This revealed the fluctuations in labour supplies which were a consequence of both economic factors and political manipulation. It is noted also that the factors that led to the reduction of foreign African labour seem to underlie the renewed threat of reduction.

However, the establishment of the new government has created an atmosphere for negotiations. An attempt was made to show why the issue of labour migration has come to occupy a centre stage in regional relations today. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, recent events in

Namibia, Walvis Bay, *etc.,* might well be a new pattern of regional dispensation and, therefore, the extent to which labour migration will benefit from this, even though subject to debates and specific conjunctures, is likely to be influenced by a new and favourable political dispensation in the region.

Chapter Two.

Origins and Development of Labour Migrancy

2. Introduction.

> *From a comparatively free husbandman the Native has been converted into a modern wage-slave, with only his labour power to sell.... This is the change in South Africa, the transformation of the Native farmer into a landless proletarian* (Bundy, 1979:1).

The collapse of an autonomous African economy in South Africa is located between the years 1870 and 1913. The year 1870 marks the beginnings of the mineral revolution (the discovery of diamonds and gold), while 1913 saw the passing of the Native Lands Act, when the African 'reserves' were established. In this period the bulk of the rural African population was transformed from their "pre-colonial existence as pastoralist-cultivators to their present existence as sub-subsistence inhabitants on eroded and overcrowded lands, dependent for survival upon wages earned in 'white' industrial areas and on 'white' farms" (Bundy, 1979:xiv).

This chapter traces the pattern of labour migration from its establishment to the 1970s. It will reflect on the supplying areas and institutional frameworks established to facilitate inflow of sufficient cheap labour to the mining enclaves. The aim is to locate the origins and development of the migrant labour system within the preceding theoretical debate.

2.1. Economic Dependence of the African Population: Roots of Labour Migrancy?

Two conditions are necessary for the capitalist mode of production to be dominant in any social formation. The first of these is the presence of a class freed from the means of production and, as such, dependent on wages for survival. Secondly, the wage received for the sale of labour-power must only be a portion of the value created by the worker. This situation leaves the capitalist faced with the problem of how to create a class that does not own the means of production. In Webster's (1978:7) view, Marx calls the process of creating a labour supply, increasingly divorced from access to or ownership of the means of production, proletarianisation: "the historic process of divorcing the producer from the means of production, the transformation of peasant to worker".

Accordingly, the history of labour migration in this region can best be located in the ninenteenth century discovery of the vast mineral wealth in South Africa (see Stahl, 1981). Particularly illuminating in this regard is the work of Legassick and De Clercq (1984). Reflecting on the effects of capital accumulation on the lives of the people in the region both scholars maintain that "it created a rural proletariat formed predominantly from the indigenous (black) people, although supplemented by indentured labour from India". In their view, much of this proletariat existed, whether as wage-labourers or labour tenants, immobilised on the farms where it worked, although it was supplemented seasonally by labour migrating from areas still in the communal possession of African communities, coming to earn money to buy guns, pay taxes, etc.

A subordinate tendency, both in areas of communal possession and in areas under rentier landlords, was the emergence of a peasantry. The significance of this process lies in how it provided the basis for the migrant labour system today. It is pointed out, for example, that:

> "the rural proletariat as a whole was subjected to a penal contract-system, enforced either by the direct force of the commando or by the legal system of the state. It was in this period, moreover, that various forms of state intervention in the attraction-redistribution-repulsion of labour emerged (pass laws, the Durban togt labour system, etc.)" (Legassick and De Clercq, 1984: 145).

However, it is the discovery, in the Rand, of gold towards the end of the century that quickened the pace of accumulation. To explain the quickened pace of accumulation we can consider Johnstone's argument (1976:13) about the capitalists who were enriched by the diamond industry. He maintains that they were "quick to buy up and amalgamate claims, to float companies, and to invest capital in gold mining out of which arose what was to be South Africa's key industry". A factor which resulted in the rapid expansion of mining production and along with it agriculture, transport, commerce, services etc.

The expanded opportunities for accumulation meant a dramatic increase in the demand for labour. It must be emphasised that production was, from the beginning, based on a relatively small number of skilled workers, in combination with a large number of unskilled Africans recruited from all over Southern Africa, both inside and outside South Africa, at considerable

expense to the mines. For example, in 1889 only about 6,000 Africans were employed in the Witwatersrand mines; a decade later they numbered approximately 97,000 (Stahl, 1981:10).

From the above discussion it is clear that, whatever the variations in timing, the demand for labour, first on the diamond mines of Kimberly, then on the gold mines in the Witwatersrand reef, impelled massive changes in the rural hinterlands. The scale of the changes wrought by the minerals revolution is reflected in the works of Van der Horst (1942); Bardill *et al.* (1977:9-10) and Wilson (1972). Van der Horst (1942:66,85) points out that the annual export value of diamonds exceeded the value of all other exports passed through the Natal and Cape ports by 1881, while some 17,000 Africans were employed as diggers. In a similar vein Bardill *et al.* (1977:9-10) argue that "... production relations within the reserves (excluding peasant relations) were already breaking down by the 1860s when the Kimberly diamond mines went into production". Wilson (1972:3), arguing that the discovery of gold (1886) was to have an even more disruptive effect on the pastoral economies of the region, maintains that by 1899, a mere thirteen years later, the gold mines employed some 100,000 Africans.

We now turn to the large-scale recruitment efforts by the mining industry to both secure African labour and eliminate competition for that labour among the mining companies.

2.2. Institutional Framework and Structural Imperatives.

To understand more clearly how the mining companies came around the problem of labour shortages, a cursory examination of the structure of ownership and the sensitive cost structure of gold mining is necessary.

The formation of a central recruiting institution must be seen in the context not only of the mine-owners' general strategy for monopsony of the labour market but also as a means towards a systemic reduction of wages from their 1896 levels. The Chamber became the central organisation of the gold mining industry, which served to represent and secure the common interests and policies of the Groups and companies in all areas, and to provide the companies with a wide range of services (Jeeves, 1985 and Johnstone, 1976).

Outlining the problems faced by gold mining industry in this period Levy (1982:81), shows how labour shortages had presented an "an urgent threat to the uninterrupted growth of the industry". As a consequence, there was a resurgence of inter-company competition (especially evident in 1890, and again in 1895), and an escalation in the wage rate which caused the Chamber of Mines to consider its entire wage and work structure in danger of erosion.

The subsequent recruiting combination is seen as especially significant for its impact on wages and the labour flows to the mines. It also marked a new stage in the unity of the employers, demonstrating the collective strength of the Chamber, the Association of Mines (a smaller group opposed to the Chamber), and the Association of Mine Managers. Hence the establishment of

other central organisations of a more specific purpose, the most important of which being the two labour recruiting agencies. One of these was for African labour from outside British South Africa (the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association - WNLA, founded in 1896), the other, for African labour within British South Africa, the Native Recruiting Corporation - NRC, set up in 1912 (Johnstone, 1976 and Levy, 1982).

The collective strength of the Rand mining employers combined in the Chamber with its vast recruiting mechanism, itself a product of employer unity, to make the system of migrant labour feasible over the long term and to extend the system from the Transvaal and other colonies in South Africa to East and Central Africa and to mainland China as well. Colonial governments throughout Southern Africa came to the support of the industry, hoping, according to Jeeves (1985:4), "to secure for their territories a share of the gold bonanza by delivering contract labour to the mines".

The purpose of these forms of centralisation can be seen in the unity of the mine-owners through a monopolistic structure of control enabling them to pursue best their aim of minimising labour costs. The period between 1913 and 1924 stands as a measure of the cost-effectiveness of the Chamber's strategies. In this period, the total black work force on the mines increased from 155,000 to 199,000 while recruiting costs actually declined by around 20% (Bardill *et al.*, 1977:8).

In addition, the internationally fixed gold price regime, increased the need to remove competition for labour within the industry and establish control over labour supplies. The effect

of the internationally controlled price of gold was to prevent the mining companies from transferring any increase in working costs to the consumers. Consequently within this narrowly circumscribed cost structure, the usual area of cost minimisation has been wages. The task then for the mine-owners has been to create and contain a vast supply of cheap African labour (Webster, 1978:9).

In summation, the cost structure of South African gold mining combined with competition between individual mines led to high labour costs. The pressing need to minimise competition and control labour supply led to the formation of the WNLA and the NRC.

2.3. The State and Gold Mining Industry.

The developments discussed above must be viewed in the light of the significant role the mining industry had come to play both in the world economy and the South African economy overall, a factor which, in the view of Legassick and De Clercq (1984:146), "compelled both British imperialism and the dominant local political forces to look to the interests of the gold-mining industry". To amplify this argument a comparison of mining's contribution with the other economic sectors illustrates its dominant position in the economy. Bardill *et. al.* (1977:4) contend that in 1911 mining's contribution was some 28% of the GDP in South Africa. Agriculture contributed a further 21%, whilst the contributions of manufacturing and construction combined amounted to less than 5%.

Against this background, as the migrant labour system underwent transformations, in the process of capital accumulation, the role of the state in its relation to it was also changing. Moreover, as highlighted earlier, a feature of the migrant system is that:

> "Historically the state has intervened by legal and administrative means to assist the mine-owners to acquire labour and to perpetuate the partial separation of the 'maintenance' of the labour force (by their employers on the gold mines) from the 'renewal' of the labour force (by the migrants' kin in the rural areas" (Levy, 1982:23).

Jeeves (1985:10) concurs:

> "the industry simply could not have established it[s] migrant labour (my emphasis) system, which took forty years to perfect, without the massive and persistent intervention of governments".

Thus the system was in the first case economically attractive to employers because the costs of reproducing the work force was largely externalised to the rural areas. The migrant system, in the South African context, may be defined to some extent by this partial separation of the two processes of renewal and maintenance (Bardill *et al.,* 1977; Wolpe, 1980; Legassick and De Clercq, 1984).

Crucial in this context are the market structures, characteristic of the period, that have come to be designated by the ideological term 'segregation'. Bardill *et. al.* (1977:4-9) elaborate two

main and interrelated elements of segregation: a) the territorial separation of land ownership between black and white designed to induce a flow of labour; and b) the regulation of that flow. The former found initial legal expression in the 1913 Natives Lands Act which "froze African land ownership to a mere 13% of the total land area and so forced Africans into the overcrowded reserves" (Webster, 1978:10). There is shared consensus among scholars about the twin effect of this Act - that of suppressing the emerging African peasantry, which was proving an effective counter-class to the White farmer, and creating a pool of cheap labour in the reserves.

Second, as a necessary complement to the Natives Land Act of 1913 measures regulating the mobility of black labour were introduced. These were modelled on Masters and Servants Laws enacted in the Cape in 1841 and 1856, which restricted the rights of non-white workers and regulated the formation, duration and termination of their contracts. Any breach of these contracts constituted a criminal offence, making the offender liable for imprisonment. The year 1911, then, saw the extension, under the Native Labour Regulation Act of the same year, of these criminal sanctions to workers in the mines, who were also denied the right to strike (Bardill *et al.,* 1977 also Johnstone, 1976; Jeeves, 1984; and Levy, 1982, *etc.*).

These authors also point out two facets to the structures erected in support of the unskilled labour-intensive production techniques of the gold (maize) industry. In their view, both revolved around the manipulation of markets - since it is in the arena of commodity exchange that capital must secure its own reproduction - and both were designed to institute a form of structural migration, that is to say:

> "the oscillation of direct producers between production modes according to the dictates of the agricultural cycle and the (wage) labour time investment required for the satisfaction of their necessary (cash) wants" (Bardill et al., 1977:8).

On the one hand, a system of land allocation that combined the simple expropriation of, and the prohibition of new land acquisition by direct producers ensured that Africans were by and large unable to satisfy their cash needs through peasant production, and were accordingly compelled to sell their labour power to survive. On the other, the terms on which they disposed of their labour were rigidly controlled in the interests of capital through constraints on their mobility and restriction on competitive buying on the part of the employers (*ibid.*).

In addition, the industry was operating under a set of physical conditions that militated against the mechanisation of the production process. This meant that raising the social productivity of labour was a less attractive or immediate possibility than the recruitment of a work force from new geographical areas or, in other words, the artificial creation of an industrial reserve army (Bardill *et. al.*, 1977; Levy, 1982; Johnstone, 1976; Legassick and De Clercq, 1984, *etc.*). Hence the state's intervention in the form of pass laws and other coercive statutes to regulate the movement of Africans and bring them under a harsh industrial discipline, though avoiding complete identification with the mining industry. Thus, though the mining industry did not require cash subsidies until the 1960s (when certain low grade mines were subsidised), it did require throughout its history an enormous legislative and administrative effort to organise the black labour supply - a crucial element in mining costs.

2.4. The Foreign Component of the African Labour Force.

The monopsonisation of labour recruiting discussed above dealt only with competition for African labour within the gold mining industry. This is important because competition for this labour between different groups of employers remained, and intensified as time went on. Moreover, the position of the gold mining companies in this competition was weakened for two reasons. First, because mine work was the least popular form of work among South Africans. Second, as indicated above, the industry's sensitive cost structure made, in Johnstone's (1976:32) terms, an "inelastically ultra-low non-white wage" more imperative than for other enterprises.

Under the circumstances the mining companies had to find ways to secure and maintain the large supply of African labour which they required, despite the finiteness of the South African supply, the increasing demand for it, and the preference of South Africans for other work. Accordingly, the importation of African labour from outside South Africa presented, perhaps the only, but surely the most viable option as the following speech by the NRC Chairman in 1904 confirmed:

> With reference to the competition for labour from industries other than the mining industry, there is no doubt that many Natives who would otherwise come to the mines of the Transvaal are being attracted to more congenial work on the surface.... As other industries spring up and become developed, this competition

> will no doubt increase, and... other sources of Native labour must be tapped as British South Africa cannot provide a sufficient supply of Native labour for mining, farming and other industries (Johnstone, 1976:32)

To explain the industry's importation of foreign African labour, one must also cover the factors of expediency. The reason being that the mining companies secured economic and political benefits from employment of foreign labour. At the economic level the advantages of labour importation can be summed up as follows:

- it was to exert a downward pressure on African wage rates in South Africa.

- in the case of Mozambican work force the longer minimum period of their contracts was an economic advantage. Johnstone (1976:33) maintains that the minimum period for Union Africans was six months (until 1924, when it was raised to nine), with an average stay of eight months, compared to a twelve-months minimum contract for the work force from Mozambique and an average stay of eighteen months.

- the work force from Mozambique could also be used to even out quotas of African labour distributed to the mines by the recruiting agencies. This resulted from the tendency among Union Africans to chose the mines they wanted to work on, or avoid unpopular mines.

Politically, foreign migrant labour served the function of "de-nationalisation of decisive sectors of the working class, by replacing the indigenous proletariat with an imported proletariat, which leads a marginal... existence deprived of political, trade union and civil rights" (Johnstone, 1976:32). Further, it is noted that this applied with particular force to South Africa, especially the gold mines, where the working class was already extremely fragmented economically, politically and culturally, a condition exacerbated by the large-scale employment of foreign workers.

However, despite the advantages mentioned above it is clear that the Chamber had not given up the prospect of improving (and cheapening) the internal labour supply. This is attributable to difficulties of importing labour over long distances which actually forced the Chamber to make a final attempt to improve the supply from within the Republic. This fact is testified to by the Native Labour Commissioner's report of 1894 in which he expressed that:

> All that was required to maintain an ample supply (was) ... the honest aid of the government" (cit. Levy, 1982:68)

We now turn to the sources of African labour outside of the Union which, apart from the High Commission Territories - Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, were, to use the current names of the countries, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Namibia, and parts of tropical Africa (north of latitude 22 degrees south) as well as China. The importation of Chinese indentured labour between 1903 and 1908 stands as the most notorious episode in the procurement of non-white labour, though the source was later abandoned due to widespread protest.

Mozambique was the most important foreign source of African labour for the gold mines, referred to, by the President of the Chamber of Mines, as "the mainstay of the industry" (Johnstone, 1976:33). Just before the Anglo-Boer War, over 70% of the work force of 97,000 was from Mozambique. After the war, with the importation of Chinese indentured labour, this level remained around 50% or more until the onset of the depression in 1929 (Legassick and De Clercq, 1984:147).

Thus far, we have established that the large-scale recruitment efforts organised by private capital formed the major means of attracting labour to the mines. In addition, the state played a critical role in reinforcing and regulating this system of private recruitment. For example, all black mine labour was subject to criminal liability for breach of contract. Again, the status of 'foreignness' was initially established because recruiting in Mozambique became the subject of inter-state agreements. The *modus vivendi* of 1901 (culminating in the Mozambique Convention of 1909, and its later amendments) provided a precedent over which the South African state and WNLA established later agreements with the colonial governments of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Botswana, *etc.* (Cohen, 1987 and Legassick and De Clercq, 1984).

Cohen (1987:88) also points out that the WNLA established recruiting stations in these countries, "built 1500-mile road linking its stations in Namibia and Botswana, established motor barge transport on the Zambesi river and laid on train and air services to Malawi and Botswana". However, while WNLA set up stations in Botswana after 1937, recruiting by the Chamber of Mines' other labour organisation, the NRC, had been going on much longer in

Southern Botswana. Wilson (1972:115) points out that Botswana supplied 2,000 of the 54,000 blacks at work on the mines in 1896-1898. Using statistical data from Smit, he puts the numbers of Botswana migrants at work in South Africa approximately at 10,000 by 1935. By 1940 it had risen to 18,000 and by 1970 at least 55,000 migrants were employed on the mines and in other sectors of the economy.

'Tropical' labour from all these areas was deemed foreign and 'prohibited immigrants'. Mining employers, according to Van der Horst (1942:222), had agitated continuously for a relaxation of this restriction on recruiting north of latitude 22 degrees south, and in 1933 permission was granted for the introduction of an experimental batch of 2,000 'Tropical' Natives (at a time when recruiting in Mozambique was being restricted at a request of the Union Government). The recruitment of further experimental batches was permitted, and in 1937 the Immigration Act of 1913 was amended to permit Natives from north of latitude 22 degrees south to enter the Union for employment on the mines, subject to the terms of engagement and repatriation being approved by the Union Government. This increased the number of 'Tropical' Natives employed by the gold mines to nearly 11,000 at 31 December 1937 (*ibid.*).

According to Wilson (1972) it is not clear as to which 'Tropical' countries, apart from Malawi, were supplying labour to South Africa as no official breakdown of the number of 'Tropicals' has been provided. However, there have been notable changes over the past few decades. Among them can be counted the external pressures to South Africa at the time of Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, leading the Tanzanian Government to cancel its agreement whereby WNLA

was allowed to recruit 10,000 men a year. A similar incident took place when, in the mid-1960s, President Kaunda of Zambia also withdrew permission from WNLA to recruit there.

In the case of Angola, Wilson argues that no recruiting stations were allowed, but adds that the stations in the Caprivi Strip drew not only on men from Zambia but also, although unofficially, from Angola. The large numbers of men crossing the border to join up for work down south can be taken to reflect the authorities acquiescence to this movement. Wilson's estimates of men involved in this cross-border movement attest to this, as he points out that the numbers vary between 5,000 and 20,000 Angolans a year (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, workers from the High Commission Territories were deemed to be part of 'British South Africa'. In this respect, like any other area of black occupation in the Union, these were regarded as 'native reserves' until the 1950s and when the process of decolonisation raised the prospect of these territories becoming independent states, that (in 1963) their labourers were also reduced to the status of 'foreign' (Legassick and De Clercq:1984).

The above is a clear indication that conscious large-scale recruitment efforts organised by private capital formed the major means of attracting labour to the mines. In spite of the deficiencies of the system and the inadequacy of the supply, the migrant pattern was thus retained as the alternative that was considered economically most viable. The Chamber's response was therefore not to replace but to deal with the disadvantages of the system.

2.5. Patterns of Labour Supplies.

The theoretical debate in chapter one makes reference to the analytical framework that shifts the unit of analysis to the household. According to this framework the study of household sustenance strategies, interpreted within the political economy of which the household is a part, provides a more holistic approach that potentially identifies the complex interactions between the structural and the behavioural factors that determine patterns of population movement (Woods, 1982 and Cohen, 1987). Similarly, Martin (1983) situates the development of the migrant labour force within the emergence of a particular kind of household structure in the countryside. He conceives a mutual relationship between mining and this household in that, "mining was as dependent on its links to this household as members of the household were dependant upon income from mining".

Accordingly the mining labour force predominantly came, until the mid-1970s, from areas where the conditions supporting such labour-exporting household existed, however tenuously. For instance, the interwar and post-World War 2 periods were characterised by the decline of the 'reserves' as labour reproducing areas, a factor which led to intensified proletarianisation (Bardill *et. al.,* 1977; Legassick and De Clercq, 1984; Wolpe, 1980). The development of a wage labour force for core industrial production process in South Africa led to wide wage disparities between the mining sector and the manufacturing sector. Martin (1983) indicates that in 1936 black mining wage rates were 85% of manufacturing wage rates, by 1971 black miners received only 33% of black wage rates in manufacturing.

Martin further draws a direct connection between mining's increased recruitment efforts outside South Africa after World War 2 and the above developments. He explains the geographical shift in labour recruitment in terms of the type of household structures that existed in these areas. He points out that:

> "Household structures in these areas were still able to combine resources from agricultural production with their remittances. Thus although the geographical sources of labour shifted over the whole time period under examination here, the type of household structure that supplied 'cheap labour' remained quite similar" (Martin, 1983).

Much of this changed in the mid-1970s, as the return to a high proportion of South African miners is seen to represent a qualitative transformation in the social basis of the labour force. Crucial to the mines' efforts to move in this direction was an explicit recognition that higher wages were necessary to attract South African labour, explaining the historic rise in wage rates during the 1970s with black mining wages reaching 70% of manufacturing wages in 1978. Thus Martin's concludes that:

> "The more recent expansion of the South African proportion of the labour force rests upon wage structures necessary to provide a substantial proportion of the expenditures of a black household that lacks any significant input from agricultural production even when resident in rural areas" (ibid.).

In summation, Stahl (1981:24) presents two distinct phases in gold mining labour supply. He points out that the first phase, from the turn of the century to around 1940, was marked by a highly increased number of South African Blacks seeking employment in gold-mining, despite stagnant money wages and declining real earnings. The second phase, located between 1940 and 1973, has two factors. The first of these, according to Stahl, was a large decrease in the number of South African Blacks willing to work in the mines, despite a growth in money wages which prevented real earnings from declining. Second, there was a substantial increases in the number of Africans from abroad employed in the gold-mining.

There are explanations given for both phases. The first phase is explained in terms of:

- collusion in the African labour market by affiliates of the Chamber of Mines.
- changes in the African subsistence sector which led to increasing cash requirements of the African population while there was a parallel decline in the ability of African peasantry to secure that cash through the production of agricultural surpluses.

The second phase, characterised by increased reliance on African labour from abroad, is ascribed to the ability of the Chamber of Mines to extend its labour recruitment area, thus avoiding wage competition with other sectors of the rapidly expanding South African economy (Stahl, 1981).

2.6. Conclusion.

This chapter attempted to locate the origins of the migrant labour system in its proper historical context. It has argued that the migrant labour system in its various forms must be understood in the context of capital accumulation in the region. This accumulation has been characterised by the generation of a surplus population which has continually been relatively large. Even in periods of most rapid accumulation it has not been totally absorbed or reabsorbed into production. On the other hand, in the periods of recession, South African capitalism has continued to call on internal and foreign migrant labour.

It was noted also that conscious large-scale recruitment efforts organised by private capital formed the major means of attracting labour to the mines. The Mozambique agreements are an especially stark illustration of some of the arguments advanced in the previous chapter. Any notion of freely-impelled, individually-motivated migration has to be set aside in the light of the juggernauts that organised this trade in labour. At the same time the state played a critical role through legislative and administrative measures to reinforce and regulate this system of private recruitment. The last section discerned four distinct phases in the fluctuations of foreign migrant supplies: high levels in the early twentieth century; lower levels in the late interwar period; high levels after World War 2; and finally much lower levels after the early 1970s.

This was, in very broad terms, the mine labour framework which was constructed over the previous seven decades and which has survived into the modern period. It was a coercive and repressive labour system in that the rights of African workers regarding conditions of

employment, housing, accommodation, collective organisation and trade unionism were circumscribed, even suppressed, by corporate management or the state and frequently by both. The overall effect of this labour-repressive framework was a militaristic and authoritarian industrial culture. Up until the 1970s, this was the world African miners encountered and came to know intimately.

Chapter Three.

Changing Pattern of Labour Migration

3. Introduction.

It is the object of this chapter to explore the changing pattern of migrant labour supplies from the 1970s to the 1980s. The focus will be on the inward-looking recruiting strategy of the Chamber of Mines. It will cover developments at regional as well as domestic levels. At a regional level, concern will be the impact of both political independence of the labour supply areas and destabilisation policy on the flows of migrant labour. At the domestic level, the following areas will be explored: the development of a strong mining trade union; the internalisation of labour supply policy; stabilisation of labour force and mechanisation of production policy. The ultimate objective will be to expose the impact of these developments on the demand for labour and the effects of this on the supplier states.

3.1. The Context of the 1970s and 1980s.

The 1970s marked the beginning of a new phase as mine labour migrancy, South Africa itself, its neighbours, and the world gold market began to move into a new era. This section merely outlines *some* of the major developments in this period and the context essential to understanding their significance.

Although the migrant labour system remains largely intact, albeit with some changes in form but not in content, Crush *et. al.* (1991) maintain that recruitment and use of mine labour is not as certain as it once seemed. Although these developments are still largely unfolding, these scholars argue that external factors will *influence* the form they eventually take, but more importantly they stress the intense struggle for control between workers and management in the mines themselves.

There is a general agreement on the historical significance of the world-wide economic downturn at the beginning of the 1970s. These years were marked by the complete abandonment of the system by which the international price of gold had remained fixed at US$36 an ounce since 1936. Steep price increases followed but in turbulent, unstable gold markets. Internally, labour relations in the mines had entered a period of unprecedented turbulence and violent conflict that caused major damage and production disruptions. Large labour shortages began to appear, resulting from political developments in neighbouring countries. Thus, there were dramatic increases in the real wages of Black miners from the very low base of the 1960s (Bardill *et. al.*, 1977; Crush *et. al.*, 1991 and James,1992).

As a result of these uncertainties in the migrant labour system the Chamber of Mines had to review its labour supply strategy. In consequence, within the mining groups, new industrial relations divisions began to formulate and determine labour policy. While change came slowly at the inner circles of management, militant black workers in the compounds and mineshafts organised and pressed for improvements. These changes should be seen in the light of more fundamental forces affecting both South Africa and the entire region. Among them can be

counted the fall of the *raison d'etre* when the British and the Portuguese abandoned some of their South African dependencies, which included some of the important suppliers of mine labour. Of importance is the ambivalence shown by the following regimes on their dependence on mine labour, even though in practice the contrary was true.

Again, the increasing hostility by the South African government to foreign labour is another important factor here. Even more important, is the noted ambivalence about long distance labour migrancy within the country. For instance, Crush *et. al.* (1991) point out that the last two decades were marked by a preference for a type of "commuter migrancy" which allows daily or weekly return to a home base within travelling distance of the place of employment. They also argue that in 1986 the government formally acknowledged the futility of its existing controls over Black urbanisation and abolished influx controls and the pass laws, intending to replace them with a new system geared to the availability of housing and employment in the urban areas.

Such policy shifts, in these authors' view, indicate fundamental change because long-distance, contractual migrancy has been at the core of government policy since 1948. So that any move away from it can be understood to imply potentially profound changes to the migrant labour system. While it is agreed that mine migrancy will not disappear over night, these developments are seen as the beginning of a pivotal process of transformation. Thus the conclusion that:

> "Just as the development of modern South Africa in the first decades of the twentieth century was inextricably tied to the entrenchment of migratory labour, this new phase of

migrancy is bound up with structural change in South Africa as a whole" (Crush et. al., 1991:15).

These statements are clearly generalisations. The rest of this chapter examines more concretely the successive moments of transformation in order to refine and qualify these generalisations. By the end, it is hoped, will have succeeded to show that the conditions that have entrenched and sustained traditional migratory to the gold mines have now begun to erode.

3.2. The Chamber's Inward-looking Recruiting Strategy.

The strategic shifts in the Chamber's recruiting strategy can be located way back in the 1960s debate between the South African state and the mining employers on the issue of dependence on foreign migrants. In this period the boom of the manufacturing industries ran parallel to a decade-long stagnation in the mining industry. In the context of the historic constraints imposed on gold mining by the fixed price regime, the mining industry was faced with inflation and rising competition for Black labour from secondary industries. To alleviate this problem the mining industry opted for labour supplies from outside South Africa (see Table 1). This Table shows the up-trend of foreign migrants from 1966 to 1973. The logic of this option was on the dual virtue of this source of labour. It was relatively freely available and less expensive, a factor which resulted in the industry's growing dependence on it until, in 1973, foreign migrants comprised about 78% of Black mineworkers [Blacks accounted for about 90% of the total workforce on the gold mines] (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986:112-113).

When the state expressed its concerns on the use of foreign workers, the standard industry response was to show its willingness to recruit South African blacks but that they would not work for the price the industry could afford to pay. It is argued that a lack of data on the part of the state to support counter arguments combined with other powerful interests in favour of foreign recruitment to make the state vulnerable to this argument. It has also been pointed out that white farmers were not in favour of more competition from mining companies at home (Crush *et. al.,* 1991:110).

Finally, the state was internally divided on the issue. On the one hand, the bureaucrats dealing with South African blacks expressed, from the 1920s to the 1960s, the need to find jobs for unemployed blacks within South Africa and tended to oppose foreign labour. On the other, the foreign-affairs functionaries wanted the leverage and diplomatic advantage gained from employing foreigners. However, it is pointed out that these differences are important but not fundamental. The reason being that both groups, like the employers, understood the need always to strike a balance between domestic security and foreign influence (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986 and Crush *et. al.,* 1991).

Table 1: Sources of African labour, by country of origin, employed at the end of each year by affiliates of the Chamber of Mines, 1966-79 (in thousands)

Country	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	[1]1977	1978	1979
Botswana	19.0	16.0	15.5	14.8	16.3	16.0	17.5	16.8	14.7	16.6	15.5	19.7	18.1	18.7
Lesotho	64.3	59.7	65.1	65.0	71.1	68.7	78.5	87.2	78.3	85.5	96.4	103.2	104.1	109.2
Swaziland	4.3	3.8	4.5	5.0	5.4	4.8	4.3	4.5	5.5	7.2	8.6	8.1	8.4	10.0
[2]Malawi	56.3	56.9	61.7	69.9	98.2	107.8	129.2	128.0	73.1	8.5	6.9	14.2	18.0	19.2
Mozambique	109.0	105.7	105.8	99.8	113.3	102.4	97.7	99.4	101.8	118.0	48.6	41.4	45.2	37.7
Zimbabwe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.0	26.9	21.4	9.7	8.0
Total Foreign migrants	252.8	242.2	252.7	254.6	304.2	299.7	327.2	335.9	273.4	242.9	202.8	208.0	205.4	204.3
S Africa	130.5	126.2	129.9	116.5	96.9	86.5	87.2	86.2	90.0	121.8	158.6	214.2	250.3	274.2
Over-all total	383.3	368.4	382.6	371.1	401.1	386.2	414.3	422.2	363.5	364.7	361.3	422.2	455.7	478.6

1. Separate figures for Malawi and Zimbabwe not available for 1977. The figures are estimates.
2. Malawian figures include a relatively small number of people recruited north of 22° S from countries other than Malawi - perheps 10 per cent on average.

Sources: Mine Labour Organisation (WNLA): Annual reports, various issues; TEBA, Annual reports, various issues.

This form of state intervention was to remain a salient feature of the industry-state relationship, balanced from time to time against the White farmers' fear of competition for labour from the mining companies. For instance, in 1975 the South African Agricultural Union, increasingly fearful of competition, repeated the call for state control over mine recruiting. In response, the Chamber reiterated its case, based on the observation of its recruiters, against state intervention. Its argument was based on the fact that the labour bureaus had forwarded negligible numbers of workers to the mines, that the bureaus would be unable to provide the multitude of services

performed by NRC offices, and that in many Bantustan areas, tribal labour bureaus were either non-existent or in disarray (Crush *et. al.,* 1991:111).

In addition, these authors make an important observation with regard to the logic of the symbiosis defining the relations between state and capital. They observe that when the mining industry is in crisis the divisions within the state disappear, and both departments render their unqualified support to ensure the industry's survival. In their view this became more clearer than ever before in the crisis of the mid-1970s. In this period, both state groups backed the industry's recruiting efforts. The Department of Bantu Administration did all it could to promote the employment of more South Africans in the mines; the Department of Foreign Affairs met with the Chamber's representatives to see how they could help to increase labour flows from foreign sources, including the then Rhodesia, Mozambique, and Angola. Once it became apparent that the mining companies had restored stability in the late 1970s, and that they intended to continue employing foreign labour, the Department of Co-operation and Development (the former Bantu Affairs) renewed its calls for expulsion of foreign workers (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986).

These periodic demands to phase out foreign labour continued right into the 1980s. The first round of state intervention came from the Department of Co-operation and Development in mid-1983 and is attributed to official concern about mounting black unemployment, necessitating pressures on the industry to review its established sourcing policy. The Chamber was accused of still employing more foreign than local labour, but then it repeatedly deflected such criticism on the grounds that individual mines were responsible for their own sourcing

decisions and that the industry's policies have cabinet approval. Although this did not constitute a call for a total disengagement from the use of foreign workers it is important insofar as it pressed for, among other things, the adoption of a 'South African first' principle and a reduction of the foreign labour component to 20% (Crush *et. al.,* 1991).

The second attempt in mid-1984 should be seen in the context of the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique. It had as its primary objective the consolidation of the Accord, and the pressure came from Department of Foreign Affairs so that the industry could accommodate more Mozambican labour. This was to be done without increasing the total number of foreign workers in the mine work force, by reducing somewhere. Though initially the industry resisted on the grounds that it had the right to pursue its own foreign policy, it later bowed to the pressure until 1985 when the Accord fell apart.

In summation, therefore, these periodic pressures, which came from inside and outside South Africa, helped reshape the system in significant ways. The attitude of both state and capital to more local sourcing in the 1970s was that, though it was desirable in some ways, the industry and the economy as a whole could not afford it. A number of scholars agree (Crush *et. al.,* 1991; James, 1992 and Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986) on the combination of forces that helped change this attitude. These include the gold price increases of 1971 and 1972, combined with the appearance and dissemination of Francis Wilson's book on the conditions of Black labour in the gold mining industry, and the Durban strikes of December 1972 and January 1973 which, while not affecting the mines, also provided an impetus for higher wages and better working conditions.

In as much as these factors did not lead to any review of sourcing policies, they laid the basis for change and, hence the move towards local soureing, a better paid and a trained labour force. The industry was in a better position to afford such a change, but resisted it until the events of April 1974. In this period it became convinced that it could not afford not to change, particularly its sourcing policies. It is to these developments that we now turn.

3.2.1. The Regional Political Context.

Most scholars agree that April 1974 was the most traumatic in the history of South African gold mining industry (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986; James, 1992 and Crush *et. al.,* 1991). However, similar events did occur in the 1960s, when Tanzania and Zambia disengaged from the mining industry's migrant labour system, but did not have any serious impact on the Chamber's recruiting strategy. Hence, the significance of the 1974 events lies in the manner by which they focused the debate about foreign versus local recruitment, and high versus low wages, thus prompting a course that in many respects became irreversible (Crush *et. al.,* 1991).

First came the withdrawals of 130,000 Malawian workers from the South African gold mines as result of an air crash in Francistown, Botswana, which killed seventy-four Malawian miners *en route* home on a WNLA-chartered flight (James, 1992). That the Chamber and the South African government were shocked by the sudden decision, there were abortive attempts to urge the Malawian president, Banda, to reconsider. As a result thereof, the incident occasioned a decline of the Malawi contingent at the mines from 120,000 to virtually nothing by the end of

1975 (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986). These authors estimate the cost to the mining industry at R7 million in air fares alone, but consider this less significant than the general impact of the withdrawals on other workers, the massive increases in labour turnover, the decreases in productivity and the general impetus towards expensive local sourcing.

Following the Malawian withdrawals, the Spinola coup in Portugal occasioned the handing over of Mozambique to Frelimo. It is a shared view among scholars that should a Malawi-type withdrawal have taken place the mining industry would have been completely crippled, and that for a few months there was a widespread belief in the industry that such a withdrawal was imminent. On the contrary, these scholars point out that the Frelimo government actually sent a record number, 115,309, to the mines in 1975. They argue it was only in 1976, that newly introduced administrative procedures inadvertently but drastically cut the outflow of migrants: from the high of 114,385 Mozambicans on the mines in January 1976, this number was reduced to a low of 48,565 by the end of December of the same year (Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986 and Crush *et. al.,* 1991).

For the Chamber, the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Southern Africa registered the political uncertainty of future labour supply from Mozambique. As a consequence thereof, the Mozambique Convention was phased out unilaterally. From the high of 118,000 in 1975 the number of Mozambican recruits was reduced to a low of 42,000 in 1978 and, by 1992 Mozambique supplied about 50,000 miners to South Africa (cit., Matlosa, 1992). At the same time, the gap created by the Malawi withdrawals was closed by an agreement with the then Rhodesian government to employ up to 20,000 jobless urban Africans annually. Although the

arrangement itself was short-lived, the Chamber gained an upper hand with regard to regulating the flow of workers from foreign sources as a result of the expanding domestic labour market in the Bantustans (James, 1992:6 and Crush *et. al.,* 1991).

In the aftermath of these debacles the Chamber was impelled to revisit its sourcing strategy. Consequently, the mines were committed to a steady and firm reduction of their foreign workers. The new policy was informed by the realisation that it was dangerous to rely on any single source, thus advocating the principle of spreading their labour pools as widely as possible. In this regard, they adopted a strategy that "combined crisis management with longer-term contingency planning" with primacy given to foreign sources closer home (Crush *et. al.,* 1991: 109). According to these authors there is no evidence that points to the mining officials' intention to displace all foreign labour or mount a systematic policy of withdrawal from the supplier states. Instead, their initial move was for an equal split, but later settled for a 60:40 ratio of domestic to foreign labour (see Table 2). Within this context, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland were considered low-risk areas due to a combination of two factors: their proximity and good relations with Pretoria. Their migrant labour quotas stabilized, and in some cases increased during this period (James, 1992:35).

Table 2: Sources of African Labour, by Country of Origin, Employed at the End of Year by Affiliates of the Chamber of Mines, 1970-1983

Country	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	%
Botswana	16.3	16.0	17.5	16.8	14.7	16.0	15.5	19.7	18.1	18.7	19.3	16.8	18.3	17.6	3.6
Lesotho	71.1	68.7	78.5	87.2	78.3	85.5	96.4	103.2	104.1	109.2	109.0	109.2	104.0	102.8	21.3
Malawi	98.2	107.8	129.2	128.0	73.1	8.5	6.9	14.2	18.0	19.2	14.3	15.3	16.1	15.9	3.3
Mozambique	113.3	102.4	97.7	99.4	101.8	118.0	48.6	41.4	45.2	37.7	45.8	41.3	45.5	44.8	9.3
Swaziland	5.4	4.8	4.3	4.5	5.5	7.2	8.6	8.1	8.4	10.0	9.4	9.6	11.5	11.8	2.4
Zimbabwe	-	-	-	-	-	7.0	26.9	21.4	9.7	8.0	5.0	1.4	-	-	-
Total (incl. Namibia)	304.2	299.7	327.2	335.9	273.4	242.9	202.8	208.0	205.4	204.3	204.3	195.0	196.8	193.8	39.9
S. Africa	96.9	86.5	87.2	86.2	90.0	121.8	158.6	214.2	250.3	274.2	279.1	285.2	276.7	289.5	60.0
Over-all Total	401.0	386.2	414.4	422.1	363.4	364.7	361.4	422.2	455.7	478.5	483.4	480.2	473.5	483.3	100.0

Sources: Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), *Annual Report* (Johannesburg), and the Employment Bureau of Africa Limited (TEBA), *Annual Report* (Johannesburg), both 1970-1983, passim.

The impact of these policy adjustments on the supplier states cannot be underestimated. On the one hand, Malawi could not absorb all of its withdrawn workers in local employment, and by 1978 was pressing the mines to resume hiring about 20,000 workers annually. As indicated, by this time the mines were in a much stronger position and took back a fewer number of workers, though some concessions were made to Banda (James, 1992 and Crush *et. al.,* 1991). On the other, Mozambique, confronted with a growing civil war and a faltering socialist economy, wanted to return to earlier colonial patterns of migrancy, in terms of which close to 100,000 Mozambican workers were employed by the mines. It is pointed out that the country's Labour Ministry unfailingly presented a request, on an annual basis, to the Chamber committees so that it could send more labour to the mines in the early 1980s.

At another level, the Chamber's policy shifts had important repercussions even on the economies of those countries more secure in the migrant labour market, such as Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana. They became concerned about the trend towards internalising the source of labour within South Africa, and closely monitored recruitment levels in their own countries. All these developments need to be seen in the context of these countries' entrenched dependence on the migrant labour system. All the foreign states have for decades sent labour to the mines of South Africa, they had become dependent on the migrant based-revenues, and had cause to resist the trend towards internalisation.

3.2.2. The Domestic Context.

This section provides a cursory examination of some of the factors in South Africa which precipitated a decline in foreign labour intake on the mines after 1975. To begin with, organised African labour emerged and managed to assert its interests in the mining industry's labour framework. Some scholars, like James (1992), consider this development a hallmark of the modern period. James locates this in the withdrawal in the late 1970s, of the South African state from regulating labour relations in the mining industry. Although the industrial relations framework remained state-sanctioned, he posits that the significance of this development lies in the fact that African workers were allowed to establish independent trade unions thereby reversing a policy that had been intact for a century.

This assertion should not be misconstrued to imply that Africans were simply passive participants in the economy. For, in the view of Freund (1991) the permission of trade unions represented an attempt to contain a crisis of control which resulted from the geographical composition of the labour force as it shifted in the 1970s towards domestic labour (see also Crush *et. al.,* 1991). Their proactive role is given its proper historical context in the works of Webster (1978); Warwick (1978); Moroney (1978) and Phimister (1978). These authors present a view of industrial conflict as "a continuum of resistance to exploitation, with organised strikes and trade unions at one end and 'desertion' and resistance to recruitment at the other" (Webster, 1978:7). However, no justice can be done to the history and development of these unions in the space available.

More important is that the struggles of the workers combined with the rise of the gold price, which reached $200 by 1975 and $800 by 1978 on the international market (Lipton, 1985, to effect increase in miner's wages. Stahl (1981) contends that the 1972-1974 wage increases could not increase the number of South African blacks taking up the least desired occupation in the gold mines. For him it was the continuing recession in the country which, accompanied by growing black unemployment, attracted more domestic African labour which hitherto despised mine jobs. The pressing need for the state and capital to address the chronic structural unemployment crisis helped reinforce the Chamber's new strategy to reassert itself in the domestic labour market (Matlosa, 1992).

This period also saw the Chamber embarking on three main strategies aimed at reducing foreign African labour on the mines. The expansion of mines, itself a function of the rise in the price of

gold, increased the need for scarce skilled labour. By the same token, rising labour costs intensified the incentives to mechanize the production process, which would further increase the demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour and move the industry from a labour-intensive to a capital-intensive enterprise. Lipton (1985) points out that in 1974, the Chamber launched a R150 million crash programme of research into mechanisation. He reflects that at that time pressures to raise the job colour bar and expand the supply of skilled labour had become more urgent. In addition, such a step would also serve to reduce the dependence of the mining industry on increasingly precarious sources of labour supply. Mechanisation can thus viewed as, to use De Vletter's (1991) term, a double-edged sword: on the one hand it will be labour saving, on the other, the mines will be dependent on a highly skilled black labour force.

Alongside the mechanisation of production was the internalisation of labour supply policy. This entailed replacement of foreign migrants with domestic workers, thereby reducing the industry's dependence on external and precarious sources of labour supply. Particularly illuminating in this regard is Stahl's (1991) analysis of its impact on the number and origin of foreign migrants employed by the Chamber's affiliated mines. His statistics reveal a sharp decline in the number of foreign migrants employed in the above mentioned mines, from a high of 335,900 the numbers dropped to a low of 203,500 over the years 1973-1977. For him, this is a reflection of the forced character of the process, and that the countries which have borne the brunt are Malawi and Mozambique. Finally, stabilisation policy, aimed at creating a professional and disciplined mine labour force, led directly to the substantial increase of the contract period for migrants. As a result of this policy, valid re-engagement guarantee of bonus certificate were

introduced, and tough measures taken against migrants contravening this contract obligations (Matlosa, 1992).

It must be pointed out that this three-pronged strategy of reducing foreign labour has, in the 1980s, been tied to South Africa's regional strategy of exerting pressure against neighbours who have been sympathetic to the liberation struggle in South Africa while rewarding those supportive of the apartheid regime. This must be seen in the light of the mounting international pressure on the South African economy through disinvestment and the threat of sanctions, which provoked a retaliation on the part of the South African government. In this regard, foreign workers in the gold mines were held to ransom in order to extract political gains from the Frontline states and to repel the United Nations' threat of sanctions.

The combined effects of these processes have been retrenchment of foreign labour and a substantial reduction of novice intake. The repercussions on the economies of the supplier states cannot be underestimated. Given the postulate that mining capital, and not the interests of the supplier states, determined the overall reduction on recruitment, it is reasonable to posit that it has proceeded more rapidly than the capacity of these states to productively absorb returning migrants. With regard to the mechanisation, internalisation and stabilisation policies, Ketso's (1991) view is that the factors underlying their implementation seem to underpin the renewed threat of reduction. Moreover, the return of many South Africans who, in addition to seeking employment, will also pose a greater strain on available welfare programs, may be a greater imperative to implement these policies.

In response to the changing pattern of labour demand and supply, the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC) was formed in 1981. Since inception its primary mandate has been to coordinate and stabilise migrant labour supply to South Africa through collective bargaining with the South African state and mining capital on labour agreements, in order to establish mutually acceptable quotas of mine labour from member states. In addition, the SALC was also charged with the responsibility of striving towards gradual withdrawal of member states from the migrant labour system. This is combined with a mandate to facilitate members' contingency plans for absorbing returning migrants in case of either gradual or sudden repatriation of foreign migrants by South Africa (Matlosa, 1992).

However, these strategic objectives were never realised because the SALC failed to take any effective action or present a united front. Paton (1990), like other scholars, attributes the failure to act as a cartel on two factors: first, he identifies a lack of commitment on the part of the member countries. From his explanation it emerges that negotiations with the South African government and the Chamber were conducted independently of what was going on at the annual SALC meetings. Second, despite the considerable prospects for united action, the potential impact of disruptions in the migrant flows was too varied for these governments to agree on a course of action. This applies with particular force if disengagement is considered as a desirable political goal within a framework of constraints generated by deeply entrenched dependency of the supplier states. In other words, these countries find themselves in a catch-22 situation in that, much as they seek to secure the conditions for continued accumulation they simultaneously have to pursue their own internal strategies of legitimation (Crush *et. al.,* 1991; James, 1992;

De Vletter 1991, *etc.*). Thus, members continue negotiating bilaterally with South Africa, in the hope of increasing recruitment, national income and/or foreign exchange.

3.3. Conclusion.

This chapter constituted a brief exposition of the partial transformation of the labour-repressive framework that had been constructed over the previous seven decades. A great deal of attention was given to the train of events which, though apparently unconnected, had signalled the advent of structural changes in the political economy of gold mining, in the socio-political conditions of Southern Africa, and the shifting character of the South African state. The importance of these events, which came both from inside and outside South Africa, lie in the way they helped reshape the migrant labour system.

However, the repercussions of these changes on the economies of the supplier states are well known. Far from being favourable, they have reinforced the view of the regional economy as a labour reservoir. They have not only exposed the magnitude of these countries' dependence on the migrant labour system, but also the limited capacity of their economies to productively absorb returning migrants. To make things even more difficult for these countries, the regional strategy of destabilisation perpetuated by the Botha regime further exacerbated their unfortunate condition. In response to these developments the supplier states came together in a form of a labour cartel. However, the contradictory situation in which they find themselves have combined with the hostile regional political context to make their strategic goals even more unattainable. This makes the benefits associated with the birth of a 'New South Africa' even

more enticing. But then, domestic economic problems and the high rate of unemployment combine to undermine any hope of a meaningful change in the migrant labour system *vis-a-vis* the supplier states. An exploration of what the future holds for the migrant labour system and the supplying areas is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Four.

Mine Migrancy in the 1990s: New Directions?

4. Introduction.

The migrant labour system has undergone fundamental transformations. As we have shown, in the previous chapter, it took the events of the mid-1970s to partially transform the labour-repressive framework that was constructed over the previous seven decades. Overall, this has meant that the supplier areas outside South Africa are relegated to supplying unskilled make-up labour. Now, the migrant labour system which predates apartheid is threatening to outlive it.

This chapter sets out to explore what the future holds for the migrant labour system and the supplying areas. In doing so one takes into cognisance the well known caveat about forecasting that suggests it is like driving along the road while watching the rear view mirror. This works only if the road is straight. In the same vein, the history of labour migrancy to the South African mines reveal a road far from straight. For this reason, it seems somewhat hazardous to be categorical about the future. Nonetheless, here we consider the shape of the forces at play in the process of labour migration so that we can be in a better position to make informed projections.

4.1. The Winds of Change: A Quest for an Alternative.

The quest for an alternative to migrant labour in the mining industry cannot be regarded as a novel phenomenon at all. Already in the 1970s, the winds of change blew within the industry when the industrial relations departments began to question the wisdom of exclusive reliance on migrant labour. At that time their point of contention concerned the inadequacy of the system with regard to the mines' growing need for stable, skilled black workers. They conceptualised the mine workforce as a pyramid and argued that the top 10-15% should be stabilised workers living on or near the mines in family houses. The remainder would continue to be migrant workers drawn from the rural areas of the subcontinent (Crush and James, 1991).

It can be argued that in the 1980s, this pressure gained momentum and, more important, this time the conduits of change in the industry, albeit with different positions on the issue, were the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Goldfields, and other mining houses. The NUM, on the one extreme, espoused on behalf of its members the termination of the migrant labour system. On the other, Goldfields was happy with the *status quo* and so any search for alternatives to the migrant labour system was seen as a unnecessary. Other mining companies can be said to have been on the middle ground as they were pleased with migrant labour but searching for alternatives at the same time (James, 1989 and Phillip, 1991). The merits of these scenarios will be investigated later in the discussion, for now it is worthwhile to consider the 1990s.

In an article entitled "Migrant Labour: Considering the Options" Levy (1994) appositely captures the mood of the 1990s and the real challenge facing the new Government of National Unity. Her paper is based on a conference held in Cape Town in June which brought together South African and international economists and labour experts to examine the prospects of transforming mine migrancy in the 1990s. She identifies the dilemma facing the new government as the daunting task of transforming:

> "a system that is inherently unjust and exploitative into one that combines the industry's development capacity and potential for jobs and wealth creation with a real commitment to workers' rights, dignity and humanity".

Her argument about the compelling need to resolve this issue carries weight in the light of the real threat it will present to local and regional stability and change, if left unresolved.

It need hardly be said that these developments are a true reflection of the pressure that has been building up over the years for a development of an alternative to migrant labour. In the 1990s it has reached a head, something that is accurately conveyed in Wilmot James' view of the present era as the opportune moment to confront the complex legacy of the migrant labour system and his argument that the political environment had never before been so conducive to raising policy issues aimed at constructing an alternative *(ibid.)*. The upsurge for an alternative notwithstanding, different policy decisions regarding migrant labour and its alternatives will have different economic and political consequences and ought to be considered in those terms.

Surely, an investigation into the implications, strengths, and weaknesses of the scenarios raised above must of necessity be informed by an understanding of the political economy of gold, as the framework within which any fundamental change will have to take place.

4.2. The Political Economy of Gold in the 1980s and 1990s.

The previous chapters, especially chapter two, have gone at length uncovering the central role gold mining had come to play in the development of South Africa's political economy (see also Legassick and De Clercq, 1984; Bardill *et. al.,* 1977). It was argued that this dominance compelled not only British imperialism but also the dominant political forces in the country to look after the interests of the mining industry. Consequently, as Yudelman has correctly pointed out:

> "a mutually dependent 'symbiosis' developed between the gold mines and the state, and much of South Africa's economic history - including aspects of apartheid - has concerned the unfolding aspects of this relationship" (cit. James, 1992:16).

Despite the changed character of the South African economy over the years, the dependency of economy and the state on the gold mines has remained a persistent feature right into the 1990s. This dependency is spelt out in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) adopted by the Government of National Unity, thus:

"mining and mineral products contributes three-quarters of our exports and the industry employs three-quarters of a million workers.... Our RDP must attempt to increase the level of mineral beneficiation through appropriate incentives and disincentives in order to increase employment and add more value to our natural resources before export" (RDP, 1994:99).

James provides data of this dependency in the 1980s. His statistical projections approximate 10% of the nation's gross domestic product and 25% of direct state revenues as having been gold-based. He argues that gold-mining has been the single most important source of jobs in the economy, next to agriculture. And that over 700,000 individuals, mostly black, were employed by the gold-mines, and over one million are in the mining industry as whole.

However, as in the past, the 1980s have seen the steady increase in the overall working costs of the gold mining industry. James (1989) has listed at least two essential items constituting working costs. One is machine technology, which is for the most part imported, and thus subject to upward inflationary pressures and a deteriorating rate of dollar-rand foreign exchange. The other is labour costs. Together, increases in the price of machine technology and labour have doubled the working costs of the industry about every four years. This needs to be seen in the light of the overwhelming desire in the industry to keep working and labour costs as low as possible. Given the political economy of gold in the 1980s, it is of particular importance to maintain profit levels by keeping labour costs, including the costs of developing alternatives to migrant labour, as low as possible.

In this context, Levy (1994) argues that speaker after speaker in the conference painted a gloomy picture of massive and escalating retrenchments, faltering mines, an overall decline in the gold price and the quality of ore mined, and totally depleted sender communities throughout the region whose thorough dependence on the South African mining industry raises a dreadful spectre of intra-regional economic collapse. Since the mid-1970s, the mining industry is said to have been shedding labour, a process which gained momentum after the August 1987 miners' strike. Revealing the statistics of the last six years, Levy shows that the gold mining industry has lost nearly 180,000 jobs due to retrenchments and down scaling. And it is anticipated that a further 150,000 jobs could go by the mid-1990s.

According to James' (1992) statistical projections, between 1987 and 1990, the industry hired 60,000 fewer workers in its mining operations. And that after the strike hiring practices highlighted two structural tendencies in the labour system that had become apparent in the recent past. One was the shift towards more labour-efficient and productivity-centred mining operations. The other was the persistent trend towards labour substitution through technological innovation, especially after African labour became organised. The overall impact of these processes has been reduction in the number of jobs available to workers in the gold industry.

4.3. Considering the Options.

Going back to the different scenarios advanced by Goldfields, the NUM and other mining houses we can discern essentially three possibilities. These will have to take place within the limits of the possible and, therefore, are not without shortcomings as will be shown later:

(a) The first scenario envisages continuation with migrant labour as the major means of labour supply. This would not only mean ignoring the objections of the NUM and its industrial relations experts who tend to advise otherwise, but also keeping the African labour force relatively unskilled, and maintaining the historically created racial division of labour.

(b) The second, creation of a mixed labour system, relates to keeping a large part of the African labour force migrant, while a significant part is settled permanently on or near mine property. This involves the costs of creating an alternative to migrant labour which are justified on the grounds that the settled workers are more skilled and upwardly mobile, and in conjunction with a number of other factors, can be expected to give much higher levels of productivity. The accompanying prospect would be a diminished labour force.

(c) The termination of migrant labour presupposes a permanently settled workforce which is paid much higher wages. This radical shift pushes up working costs to the extent that the less unprofitable marginal mines have to shut down, and that employment levels in the industry are radically diminished.

4.3.1. The Continuity Option.

For reasons outlined below it can safely be argued that the simple continuation of migrant labour is no longer an option for the mining industry. As the developments delineated in the previous chapter testify, a number of structural problems with this labour force have emerged over time and came to a head in the 1980s. To resolve these requires the development of more stable labour systems. Other factors that make continuation with migrant labour even more unattainable include:

- The changing skill profile of African workforce which, for Crush and James (1991), is a reflection of more fundamental changes in the political economy of gold mining. This is attributable to cumulative work experience, and practical adjustments in the application, leading finally to the abolition in 1987, of the colour bar. For instance, James (1989) provides data from the Chamber of Mines indicating that over three decades, taking data points at 1960, 1970 and 1980, the percentage of Africans who were semi-skilled increased respectively from 22%, to 27%, to 32%. As a result, the percentage of Africans in unskilled positions declined from 68%, to 60%, to 53%. On the basis of these figures, the projected proportions in skilled, semi-skilled positions for 1990 are 9,36 and 45% respectively.

- Increasing skill levels and the upward mobility of African miners combined with, among other things, the introduction of more modern mine technologies

do militate against the migrant labour system. A clear illustration of this view comes from the Chamber of Mines Research Organisation as it pointed out that: "The need for highly skilled workers can be met only by a change from a migratory to a permanent work force (James, 1989:18).

- In the past, and before the advent of Black trade unionism, hostels or compounds were the uncontested instruments of managerial authority. As they later became a useful political instrument for trade unions and, more recently strongholds for party-political violence, they began to be seen by management as undesirable institutions. For instance, an Anglo American sourced document is cited as saying: "Hostels have therefore become targets of trade unions and other forces and, as such, vulnerable elements in our mines' operations systems". On a more general note, "... migrancy in general..." has "... led to a situation which is increasingly becoming less acceptable as the labour force becomes more socially sophisticated, unionised and politically conscious" (cit., James, 1989:19)

- NUM's condemnation of the migrant labour and its associated institutions, especially the hostel system, as exploitative and oppressive presents a real problem to the management of the industry as a whole because it is morally indefensible. In spite of the fact that NUM has also used the hostel system to construct a power base during strikes, this puts enormous pressure on the Chamber of Mines and the mine houses to development alternatives to migrant labour. This indefensiveness is transparent in a report in which TEBA notes that

"... the NUM has publicly declared its abhorrence of the migrant labour system and is vociferous in its criticism of the single sex hostel accommodation" (James, 1989:20).

4.3.2. The Mixed Labour Option.

The mixed labour option must be seen against the background of the problems experienced in the migrant labour system which prompted the development in the 1980s of a number of alternative labour forms, albeit limited in scope. Attempts to problematise such developments elsewhere have ended with two contrasting interpretations of the relationship between class consciousness and urban social structure. The space available precludes an examination of this theorisation, suffice to say on the one hand, there is incorporationist theory which draws a causal relationship between spatial separation, residential segregation and home ownership as independent variables, and the weakened working class solidarity and organisation as dependent variables. While on the other, it is believed that home ownership has no political effect that is constant upon time and space (Crush and James, 1991).

The relevance of these theories for this discussion lies in the application of the incorporationist theory in the analysis of the recent changes in housing philosophy and practice in the South African gold mining industry. For instance, Crush and James perceive the changes in housing policy in the 1970s and 1980s as:

"a logical outgrowth of shifts in the political economy of gold mining and the failure of traditional methods of spatial organisation to contain the growing militancy of the Black mine workforce".

This makes housing delivery and home ownership, in these authors' view, an important part of a new industrial relations strategy to promote social differentiation, dampen worker militancy, and depoliticise the workforce. It also explains why the most powerful arguments for a new approach to housing come from within the industrial relations divisions of the major mining houses.

This analysis carries more weight in the light of the observation, by one Anglo spokesperson, that "the continued concentration of workers in the hostels and compounds now made it impossible to establish a sound basis for the conduct of 'orderly' industrial bargaining and negotiating" (ibid). Again, management speaks quite openly of the broader political agenda which underlies the need to "depopulate" the hostels and provide owner-occupied housing for married workers. In negotiations with the state, Anglo-American argued that hostels were becoming unmanageable, that they were exploited by the NUM to "ferment unrest" and that a policy of home ownership would "have the greatest impact on worker and social stability" (*ibid.*).

The problems that relate to economics and politics of delivery notwithstanding, available indicators reveal that over the next few years the mining industry will begin to move away from its long standing and almost exclusive dependence on the migrant labour system. However,

continued employment of foreign workers raises the prospect of migrancy outliving apartheid and continuing even in the post apartheid South Africa. In addition, the mines will continue to rely on the migrant labour system for the bulk of their sizable unskilled and semi-skilled labour needs (Martin, 1983; Stahl, 1981 and Yudelman and Jeeves, 1986).

As already indicated, Goldfields and other mining houses declared their intention to continue with using migrancy and to contest any move to the contrary. It is argued that these lines of division pervade the industry as a whole, with Anglo American, followed by Gencor, being the one which has gone much the furthest in planning to move away from migrancy. Others are, according Crush and James (1991), more or less committed to the idea of providing additional family housing, but Goldfields has so far expressed little interest in stabilising labour.

The implementation of mine housing policy is also hindered because it affects only a tiny proportion of the mine labour force. The estimates are in the region of 3-4% and, though caution is emphasised in dealing with the industry's estimates in this regard, it is expected that by "the year 2000 about 10% of the African labour force will no longer be migrant, and will be housed in one or another form of family or owner-occupied accommodation" (James, 1989:22).

In addition, the lack of consultation with the major Black unions on the mines has proven to be a hindering factor. However, it is argued that this problem is unlikely to continue. It must be recalled that as early as 1987, NUM declared war against migrancy. Though this stance may appear contradictory in the face of NUM's membership from outside South Africa which is ineligible for participation in home ownership schemes, after much research the union

demanded a broad range of flexible housing options which offer all workers the possibility of opting out of the migrant labour system rather than a select few (Crush and James, 1991).

Moreover, the NUM will also continue to push for vastly improved conditions for workers who cannot or choose not to take this route. As it were, home ownership has become a central component of managements' housing strategy for both ideological and fiscal reasons. The union is responsive to a varied constituency, only some of whom are interested in owning their own homes. Thus home ownership can only be one of a number of options which must be made available to miners. A precedent having been set when the mines provided heavily subsidised rental housing for many white workers, the union demands no less for its own membership. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how far mining capital will go to accommodate the real and diverse needs of the mine workforce. The initial indicators are that the gap is a wide one.

Finally, it has been noted that many workers from outside South Africa occupy better paid, upper job categories. These are ineligible for participation in the mines' housing policy. The previous government (SA) required them to remain migrants. Their home governments, heavily reliant on remittances acquiesced. However, it emerged from the conference in Cape Town that the formulation of flexible policy measures to accommodate migrants' accommodation preferences is one of the basic policy challenges to the new government. Moreover, the plight of migrants have also attracted the attention of the Government of National Unity as the RDP document testifies. Noting the state of their accommodation it is spelt out that:

"In future, all workers must have the right to live at or near their place of work in decent accommodation... the mining companies must take some responsibility for the education, training and social needs of miners and their families as an integral part of labour policy on the mines" (RDP, 1994:101).

Whether this will impact positively on the rights of migrants to make their individual choices regarding their status remains to be seen.

4.3.3. The Termination Option.

Termination of migrant labour, associated with the NUM, becomes highly problematic as an option, if it is considered as an immediate or short term rather than a long term goal. As James (1989:25) points out, "the costs involved would be so high as to shut down a significant section of the industry with related losses in production and employment". He estimates the cost of settling the South African component of mine labour force on or near the mines at R13 017 million. The state would lose in foreign exchange capacity and tax revenue on a large scale.

In addition, the mining houses would have to restructure their operations, and only some of them might have the capacity to survive such a major transformation. Such shifts would not be welcomed by the new Government of National Unity as the RDP has categorically indicated that:

"Minerals and mineral products are our most important source of foreign exchange and the success of our RDP will in part dependent on the ability of this sector to expand exports to avoid balance of payments constraints in the short to medium term" (RDP, 1994:99).

Some scholars, such as James (1989), have associated the NUM with this problematic option. On the contrary, Phillip (1991) presents a more comprehensive approach by the union to ending the system of migrant labour. She argues that the NUM understands the migrant labour system in its historical context, as part of a historical package. In this view primacy is given to changing the conditions that created it. Thus, its process of development is given its politically and historically specific content, and its abolition as part of a package of political and economic liberation. Phillip argues that this package include the following:

- The redistribution of land;
- Rural and urban development in the areas that apartheid has marginalised and bled dry;
- An economic policy of growth through redistribution, creating jobs and spreading wealth;
- A resolution to the housing crisis in urban South Africa;
- Policies of peoples education, serving the need of human development as well as resource development for a growing economy.

As it is discernible from the above, changing the conditions that created migrancy implies that it is a reality that will continue in the short term while efforts are made to change the specifically oppressive aspects of the system as it exists today. This is perfectly in line with the general principles underlying the need to push for a new post-apartheid policy on migrant labour as listed by James and Crush in the conference on Transforming Mine Migrancy in the 1990s. First, these authors see the formulation of flexible policy measures to accommodate the range of migrants' accommodation preferences as the basic policy challenge. They believe that migrancy and hostel residence should not be forced upon workers as a precondition of employment, as in the past. They also point out that a worker's desire to remain migrant should not be grounds for exclusion from the mine employment .

Second, it is noted that mine management had rarely been held accountable for its decisions around the employment of migrant labour, something that warrants mechanisms of accountability and the fostering of a free flow of information as issues that need to be encouraged. Third, they reject urban-based policy in favour of a holistic policy which links improvements in the working and living environment of miners to the lives of their dependants. Fourth, they put forward that the new policies have to recognise the long-standing historical association and major contribution to the wealth generating capacities of the South African mines, of Black miners from the neighbouring states, and the disruptive individual, economic and political consequences any radical change in the present national profile of the mines' labour force would have in the areas affected (Levy, 1994).

In summation, regarding the option of continuing with the migrant labour system, it is clear that any such hopes will have to be resigned in the face of the bleak prospects accompanying this option. Alternative accommodation practices seem to be gaining momentum both inside and outside the industry, a factor which justifies any perception of the migrant labour system as a dying institution. Although most mining houses indicated their preference for a settled workforce on or near the mines, they also bank on the time frame this will take before it is in place.

The second option, creation of a mixed labour system consisting of both migrant and non-migrant forms, seems most compatible with the political economy of gold mining today. It is a realistic approach that accommodates widely held concerns about the economic and political consequences of any radical change to the migrant labour system. The concerns of the labour supplying states will find a place in this approach as it allows for the continuation of migrant labour alongside permanently settled workforce.

As it is now clear, foreign migrants are by definition excluded from the alternatives to migrant labour. Their home governments have worked with the previous government to ensure they remain migrants. This means that occupants of the new housing schemes would be South African workers. This process, considered together with other privileges, would reinforce the emergent tendency to push South Africans up the occupational structure and foreign workers down. Eventually, foreign workers would become the unskilled, migrant workers of the industry. Unskilled workers, originating mostly from neighbouring countries, will remain migrant for the foreseeable future.

Finally, although NUM's position regarding the end to migrant labour may seem problematic, Phillip's account has shown that it is quite in line with the thinking of many South African and international economists and labour experts in the 1990s.

4.4. - Conclusion.

This chapter was a modest attempt to explore the prospects of restructuring of labour migrancy in the 1990s. It was argued that the quest for an alternative to the migrant labour system is not a new phenomenon. It has developed from the 1970s through the 1980s and came to a head in the 1990s. The 1990s saw new actors drawn in from outside the mining industry to put pressure and give content to the direction of change. Unlike its predecessor which acquiesced the labour-repressive policies of the mines, the new Government of National Unity joined hands with other progressive forces to abhor exploitation and oppression on the mines.

However, the central role of gold to the economy and the state will ensure that any fundamental change in the present structure of the industry takes place within the constraints imposed by the political economy of gold mining. In this regard, analysts of the South African gold mining industry have tended to draw a direct connection between worker consciousness and the organisation of work and living space. In response to growing industrial conflict and union power, housing delivery is becoming an important industrial relations issue.

Of the three possible alternatives to migrancy explored in this chapter, the mixed labour option, consisting of both migrant and non-migrant forms, seems most likely to replace traditional migrancy. It seems likely to accommodate commonly shared economic and political concerns. The recent conference on Transforming Migrancy in the 1990s held in Cape Town and pronouncements in the RDP document adopted by the Government of National Unity bears testimony to this. In terms of this line of change unskilled workers, originating mostly from foreign countries, will remain migrant workers for the foreseeable future.

The most discomforting element with the new era is that all realistic projections indicate that foreign workers would be relegated to the background in the labour market and, therefore, would be the least likely to benefit from promotions. Those likely to benefit - skilled workers, African supervisors, depending on the political feasibility, perhaps semi-skilled workers as well - will progressively become settled with their families on or near mine property. They would be South African and upwardly mobile.

These changes will be accompanied by the trimming of the labour force. In terms of this analysis South Africa will have to live with migrancy well into the 1990s, although alternative labour forms will slowly but surely come to replace it.

Chapter Five.

Conclusion

This study set out to locate the origins and development of labour migrancy in its proper historical context. This undertaking was meant to provide the framework for an examination of the prospects of restructuring of labour migrancy to the gold mining industry with a view to establish what the future holds for the foreign component of the industry's labour force.

Chapter one has examined a number of influential theoretical texts that are representative of different theoretical approaches to the study of labour migration. The objective of this exercise was to set the stage for an analysis of the historical development of labour migrancy in chapter two.

In chapter two we looked at the origins and development of the migrant labour system from its establishment to the 1970s. It was argued that the migrant labour system in its various forms must be understood in the context of capital accumulation in the region. This accumulation had been characterised by the generation of a surplus population which has continually been relatively large. Even in periods of most rapid accumulation it has not been totally absorbed or re-absorbed into production. On the other hand, in periods of recession South African capitalism has continued to call on internal and foreign migrant labour.

It was also noted that conscious large-scale recruitment efforts organised by private capital combined with the critical role of the state in reinforcing and regulating this system of private recruitment to attract labour to the mining enclaves. The Mozambique agreements, similar versions of which were followed by other colonial governments, are an especially stark illustration of some of the arguments advanced in chapter one. Any notion of freely-impelled, individually-motivated migration has to be set aside in the light of the well orchestrated trade in labour.

This is, in very broad terms, the mine labour framework which was constructed over seven decades and which has survived into the modern period. The coercive and repressive character of this labour system is portrayed by a conspicuous disregard for the rights of African workers regarding conditions of employment, housing, accommodation, collective organisation and trade unionism. The overall effect of this labour-repressive framework was a militaristic and authoritarian industrial culture. Up until the 1970s, this was the world African miners encountered and came to know intimately.

The decade of the 1960s now represents the end of an historic era. Chapter three begins with the partial transformation of the labour framework that had been constructed over the previous seven decades. A great deal of attention was given to the train of events which, though apparently unconnected, had signalled the advent of structural changes in the political economy of gold mining, in the socio-political conditions of Southern Africa, and the shifting character of the South African state. The importance of these events, which came both from inside and outside South Africa, lies in the way in which they helped reshape the migrant labour system.

However, the repercussions of these changes on the economies of the supplier states are well known. Far from being favourable, they have reinforced the view of the regional economy as a labour reservoir. They have not only exposed the magnitude of these countries' dependence on the migrant labour system, but also the limited capacity of their economies to productively absorb returning migrants. To make things even more difficult for these countries, the regional strategy of destabilisation perpetuated by the Botha regime further exacerbated their unfortunate condition.

In response to these developments the supplier states came together in a labour cartel. However, the contradictory situation in which they find themselves have combined with the hostile regional political context to make their strategic goals even more unattainable. This makes the benefits associated with the birth of a 'New South Africa' even more enticing. But then, domestic economic problems and the high rate of unemployment combine to undermine any hope of a meaningful change in the migrant labour system *vis-a-vis* the supplier states.

An attempt to explore the prospects of restructuring of labour migrancy in the 1990s, has been a subject of the fourth chapter. It was argued that the quest for an alternative to the migrant labour system is not a new phenomenon. It has developed from the 1970s through the 1980s and came to a head in the 1990s. Although the pressures came from different directions they were, according to Jeeves and Crush (1995), never serious enough to compromise the system as whole. The 1990s saw new actors drawn in from outside the mining industry to put pressure and give content to the direction of change. Unlike its predecessor which acquiesced the labour-

repressive policies of the mines, the new Government of National Unity joined hands with other progressive forces to abhor exploitation and oppression on the mines.

As Crush and James (1995:xi) have correctly pointed out, "mine migrancy and all the problems associated with it - such as hostels, the separation of families and rural poverty - are a legacy of segregation and apartheid, and have an uncomfortable place in a democratic society". For these scholars any continuation of regional migrancy in its present form would represent an endorsement by the new government of "one of the most inequitable labour systems yet seen in the industrial world". While, on the other hand, termination brings with it the prospect of "fuelling such regional hardship that South Africa's borders will be flattened in the rush of impoverished ex-miners and their families". Thus, the biggest challenge to the new Government of National Unity and all the major actors in the new dispensation becomes that of fostering change without destroying the wealth and employment-creating capacity of the mining sector (Crush, 1995 and Levy, 1994). In this respect, any genuine transformation will have a widespread impact upon miners, their families, their home communities and the economies of the neighbouring states.

In this context, it is worthwhile to note that various actors have different interests regarding the future of mine migrancy in the post-apartheid era. For instance, Crush and James (1995) anticipate a situation where the mines will present the same arguments for foreign workers in the late 1990s as they did in the 1980s. Further, they observe a common element between the interest of the mining industry and that of the supplier states insofar as both are comfortable, though for different reasons, with the maintenance of the status quo after apartheid. This must

be understood in the context of the continuing high level of dependence of many households on miners' remittances and, for this reason, the supplier states will "want to see their citizens continuing to migrate to the mines....".

With regard to foreign miners, it is argued that they also have interest in continued access to mine jobs in South Africa though they also have strong views about how the migrant labour system might be reformed and humanised. In this regard, they may want to actually settle in South Africa and there is, according to these authors, evidence that some, anticipating that they may be excluded from the mines by the African National Congress, are already moving clandestinely into South Africa. Given the option, however, the majority would prefer to retain their home base in their country of origin. In line with this position, McNamara (1995) points out that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has, in its recent demands, attempted to reconcile different needs by simultaneously demanding advances in housing and the upgrading of hostels. He goes on to assert that the NUM has also recognised, much as the management does, the importance of giving workers a range of choices between hostel accommodation, rented or purchased homes.

Of the three possible alternatives to migrancy explored in the previous chapter, the mixed labour option, consisting of both migrant and non-migrant forms, seems most likely to replace traditional migrancy. It seems likely to accommodate commonly shared economic and political concerns. The recent conference on Transforming Migrancy in the 1990s held in Cape Town and pronouncements in the RDP adopted by the Government of National Unity bear testimony to this. The findings of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Migrant Labour

Project conducted on the future of cross-border labour migration in Southern Africa are particularly illuminating in this regard. In March 1994, the project advised the ANC's Department of Economic Planning on the alternatives to the migrant labour system and the place of foreign miners in particular.

The study explored a range of policy options available to the Government of National Unity. Of the five scenarios alluded to in this study, it is worth mentioning only those that are not reflected upon in the previous chapter. The first of these is 'the South Africanisation option' formulated along the lines of the strategy mistakenly attributed by the International Labour organisation (ILO) to the South African Government and the mining industry in the 1980s. The linchpin of this strategy is the gradual (partial or complete) withdrawal of foreign miners in South Africa. This could be achieved by:

- A calculated process over a period of years with a final target date and a series of mini-target dates set by the state, or
- Might occur by a process of attrition where foreign miners were simply replaced by South Africans as they retire from mine employment with supplier states treated individually or as a group according to their capacity to reabsorb repatriated workers into the economy.

The entrenched nature of dependence of the supplier states on migrancy combine, among other things, with the limited capacity of their economies to reabsorb repatriated migrants and the role foreign miners have played in the development of the mining industry to question the wisdom of this as an option. Thus, it is argued that this option would produce massive rural hardships with

resultant mass clandestine in-migration to South Africa exacerbating rather than stemming cross-border movement (Crush and James, 1995).

Second, is the 'economic community option'. This gives primacy to South Africa's historical and future relations with its neighbours by "situating the foreign labour question within broader considerations of post-apartheid regional and economic integration and the fostering of positive relations with other states in the region" (Crush and James, 1995). There are two postulated ways by which this option could be operationalised, thus:

- As a continuation of the status quo but governed by inter-governmental agreements which guaranteed certain rights, freedoms and conditions of employment to foreign miners in South Africa in order to ensure a break with the past;
- Alternatively, through the unshackling of all constraints on freedom of movement in the region comparable to the changes introduced in South Africa with the abolition of influx controls and internationally with European Community model (cit., Crush and James, 1995).

This approach may be attractive to foreign miners but the prevailing rates of unemployment in the region combine with the likelihood of a regional rush to South Africa to make it very unlikely as an option.

Last, the 'normalisation option' which may be linked to the 'mixed labour option' above forms the basis of policy advice recently given to the ANC by the project. Crush and James (1995)

maintain that this option combines what the project regards as the best features of some of the other scenarios into one fundamental principle:

> "it is no longer acceptable to treat migrant mineworkers as a category apart, subject to 'special status' which, in practice, restricts basic rights and freedoms and facilitate victimisation by an exploitative, state endorsed system".

The fundamental policy goal of this option is to normalise the status of workers who have "always been regarded as exceptional by the mines and the state" (ibid). In this respect, important areas of concern include:

- Entitling South African miners to the same rights and freedoms as all workers in the country and, foreign miners to the same rights, freedoms and guarantees as all other immigrants to the country. In terms of this view, the mining houses are given a leeway to continue to hire workers from wherever they chose, including all the countries of the region. The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) could continue to act as an employment agency in the surrounding states, though its existing monopoly over hiring procedures and practices would need close scrutiny to ensure these are consistent with the principle of normalisation.

- These authors argue that all the other institutional props of the migrant labour system would disappear (as they already have within South Africa). This could include compulsory deferred pay which constitutes a fundamental violation of employee's rights to receive and spend their earnings where they choose. Arrangement for voluntary deferment through the

commercial or mining industry banks could continue. Laws governing the taxation of temporary residents of South Africa would also apply to miners.

- The conditions of entry and residence in South Africa by foreign miners from the region constitute another area. The view presented here is that miners should receive exactly the same treatment as all other potential immigrants or temporary residents of the country. The mining companies would have to be accountable to government for their hiring decisions and observe the protocols of immigration law. Employment of any worker from a neighbouring state would have to be justified in the normal way, for example assuring the immigration authorities that no South African can do the job and explain why it is necessary to hire a foreigner.

Once hired, foreign miners would be entitled to the rights and benefits that pertain to the particular category under which they are hired. In the case of temporary residents, for example, they would have the right to bring accompanying dependants. In the case of permanent residents, they would also have access to all the rights, privileges and protections of all other immigrants. Foreign miners who have already worked and lived in South Africa for an extended period (and who were eligible to vote in the April election) could apply for permanent residence status.

In summation, these are some of the policy options confronting the Government of National Unity on the question of foreign labour migration to the South African mines in the post-apartheid era. The case for a mixed labour option in the context of a normalised labour industry

promises to unshackle and destabilise entrenched interests and mechanisms of exploitation. More important is the high level of caution with regard to the implementation procedures to ensure minimum disruption during the changeover.

In this context, the recent move by the Government of National Unity and labour unions to grant citizenship to miners who have spent more than five years working in South Africa derseves applause. Though it is too early to associate this with the latter option, it can be seen to represent a progressive step towards normalising the status of foreign workers. Accordingly, this development can be expected to unfold the dynamics and type of problems associated with the 'normalisation option' and therefore prepare the governments of South and Southern Africa, including major stakeholders, for the challenges ahead.

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