

CHAPTER 3

Kathleen Edge, *Through the cloudy porch* (1912)

F Mills Young, *The great unrest* (1915)

Francis B Young, *Pilgrims Rest* (1922)

Frances Bancroft, *Money's worth* (1915)

William Westrup, *The toll* (1914)

F Mills Young, *Valley of a Thousand Hills* (1915)

Sarah G Millin, *The Jordans* (1923)

LABOUR PROBLEMS, PROTESTS AND STRIKES: 1913–1914 AND 1922

This chapter focuses on seven novels.¹ The first, Kathleen Edge's *Through the cloudy porch*, deals with the South African mine labour situation shortly before union. The following four deal with one or both of the 1913 and 1914 strikes: F Mills Young's *The great unrest*, Francis Brett Young's *Pilgrim's Rest*, Frances Bancroft's *Money's worth*, and William Westrup's *The toll*. Next I have placed Mills Young's *Valley of a Thousand Hills* since it relates to the general Indian strike which occurred late in 1913, in other words between the two Reef mine strikes. This slight dislocation of chronology is unavoidable because *The great unrest* deals with both strikes. As Millin's novel *The Jordans* is the only one I found which gives sustained attention to the 1922 miners' strike, it is considered last of all in this chapter.

Contextualisation – general

The contextualising material for this chapter is divided into six sections: (1) 1904 to 1911, the earlier prelude to the 1913–1914 strikes; (2) 1912–1913, the prelude itself; (3) the 1913 strike; (4) the 1914 strike; (5) the Indian strike from mid-October to early December 1913; (6) the 1922 strike. Relevant novels are accordingly interspersed between these sections. In order to build up a reasonably comprehensive and unbiased account of these two periods of intensely troubled labour relations, I have consulted as wide a variety of sources as possible.² In the alphabetical list that follows, an abbreviation in square brackets is given for each text. These abbreviations will be used in references throughout the chapter. As there is only one text cited for each non-fictional writer, or group of writers, the date of the text will not be repeated in the references.

H C Armstrong (1938) *Grey steel* [J C Smuts: *A study in arrogance*]. – [Arm]

Luli Callinicos (1981) *Gold and workers: 1886–1924* (A People's History of South Africa, Vol 1). – [Cl]

R K Cope (n.d.) *Comrade Bill: the life and times of W H Andrews, workers' leader*. – [Cp]

M A Du Toit (1976) *South African trade unions*. – [DT]

Wilfrid H Harrison (1947) *Memoirs of a Socialist in South Africa 1903–1947*. – [Hr]

Norman Herd (1966) *1922: The revolt on the Rand*. – [Hd]

Sheridan Johns (1995) *Raising the red flag: The International Socialist League and the Communist Party of South Africa 1914–1932*. – [Js]

Peter Joyce (ed) (1981) *South Africa's yesterdays*. – [SAY]

Labour History Group (University of the Western Cape) (nd) *The 1922 White Mineworkers' Strike*. – [LH]

J D Omer-Cooper (1987) *History of Southern Africa*. – [OC]

Edward Roux (1964 [1948]) *Time longer than rope: the black man's struggle for freedom in South Africa*. – [Rx]

Christopher Saunders (ed) (1994) *The Reader's Digest illustrated history of South Africa* (3rd expanded edition). – [RD]

Jack and Ray Simons (1983) *Class and colour in South Africa, 1850–1950*. – [Sn]

William Urquhart (Captain) (1922) *The outbreak on the Witwatersrand (March 1922)*. – [Ut]

Ivan L Walker and Ben Weinbren (1961) *2000 casualties: a history of the trade unions and the Labour Movement in the Union of South Africa*. – [WW]

Contextualisation 1904–1911

Through the cloudy porch

Between 1904 and 1907 the Chamber of Mines imported 63 695 Chinese workers (RD:264). There was opposition from white miners, traders, whites in general (fear of the 'yellow peril'), the Boers (for whom the coming of the Chinese was 'another rude reminder ... that they had lost the war'), and the British Liberal Party (which argued that Chinese workers would be badly treated and underpaid) (Cl:64). However, the Transvaal government 'helped to ease the fears of the white miners by listing 44 jobs which were reserved for whites only' (Cl:65).

Frederick Creswell, the Labour Party leader, had once managed a mine run almost entirely on white labour which, he believed, was the only way to reduce growing white unemployment. But although his views were welcomed by white labour organisations, managers preferred to continue using the cheap black migrants (RD:297). Creswell's experiment was meant to demonstrate that white labour could be re-organised in order to be less expensive, and that such an attempt was vital for the preservation of white civilisation in the country (OC:149–150). Labour leaders concurred, insisting that it was sound for both economic and political reasons to employ large numbers of white labourers at rates intermediate between the African's 3s and the artisan's 20s. The administration was at first sympathetic, 'since the proposal fitted in with the Milner-Chamberlain object of attracting as many British immigrants as would swamp the Afrikaner population' (Sn:79). Later the Chamber of

Mines converted Milner to its policy of introducing indentured Asians, and a labour commission conveniently provided endorsement (Sn:80).

H C Armstrong, who wrote a biography of General Smuts, exclaimed that: 'In England the Government was rapidly being shaken to pieces ... The cry of "Chinese Slavery in the Gold Mines" was being used freely [by Liberal Party propagandists] to excite the voters against the Conservatives' (Arm:160–161). Their tactics on this front (and no doubt others) were successful. In 1907 the new Liberal party government began to urge the Transvaal government to send the Chinese workers home. Also, to please their white voters, the Transvaal government decided that the Chinese must go. In any case, as more and more blacks were being brought to the mines by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association [WNLA] recruiting system, the mine-owners were by this time prepared to send the Chinese workers home as soon as their contracts expired. By 1910 the last of them had left (Cl:69).

By 1910 trade union membership throughout the country numbered little more than 10 000. In fact, the Transvaal Chamber of Mines, the largest employer of both black and white labour in the country, had to deal with only about a thousand unionised miners. All the trade unions rented offices in Johannesburg in a building called the Trades Hall. The craft unions were concerned, not to fight for better conditions for all, but to protect the skilled worker from competition (LH:11). As far as labour leaders were concerned, the thought of bringing the massive group of unskilled black workers into the bargaining process was 'an option too ghastly to contemplate' (RD:298). Nevertheless, there were serious warnings about the dangers of division among workers. In 1905, for example, novelist Olive Schreiner, speaking at the launch of the Johannesburg Shop Assistants' Union, emphasised that 'there must be organised union of all workers' And the *Rand Daily Mail* commented sardonically: 'In every country the Independent Labour party represents or professes to represent, the workers. Here it represents those who are desirous of watching other people work' (RD:300).

The novel

K Edge: *Through the cloudy porch*

(published 1912; set c1910–1911)

Kathleen Edge is concerned with the protests of white miners against the importation of cheap Chinese labour. Her heroine, Naomi Hestling, is filled with admiration at the stand and activism of Fenworth, manager of the Vredenberg

Mine, and closely modelled on Cresswell, at least in relation to his public, if not his private life. Both she and the authoress totally endorse his desire that South Africa should be a white man's country. A great future is foreseen for South Africa provided there is an 'ultimate amalgamation of the various white races' (106). The first step toward this goal would be the 'settlement of labour questions' (106) which have become increasingly acute since the turn of the century, and which, for Fenworth, means increasing the proportion of whites' unskilled jobs wherever possible in relation to those for blacks.

Fenworth is portrayed as totally self-sacrificing in his endeavours to persuade mining management to rethink the policy regarding Chinese labour – employment of Asiatics in his view would spell ruin. He had persuaded managers to attempt an experiment with unskilled white labour, arguing that: 'The reports that white workmen are not capable of rough work out here and that they will not work with the kaffir are false' (77). However, he eventually has to concede defeat in the face of concerted opposition from 'the capitalists, the greater portion of the large ring of financial houses ... and lastly, the Association of United Mines' (78). Arguments against his case chiefly involve resistance to trade unions, and to any possible lowering of the 'status of the white man' (78). Such arguments, according to Fenworth, are only a way of disguising a zeal for 'temporary gain' (107).

On the other hand, a group called the 'European Labour Association' ('some four thousand men, drawn chiefly from the working classes' (115–116)), do not need Fenworth's persuasion to pledge themselves against the introduction of Asiatics into mine work. His endorsement of their position comes in the form of a 'flaming appreciative article' (116) in a supportive paper, *The Reef budget*. Certain capitalists then try, though unsuccessfully, to buy up the paper. So fervently is Edge on Fenworth's side that she even has him predict that 'the Chinese question used as a political cry would be the rock upon which parliamentary interests in the mother country would be wrecked', and notes that 'he was to be proved astonishingly accurate at a later date' (129). Edge does not scruple to depict Fenworth's opponents as almost to a man (and they are, of course, only men) despicable and treacherous. He, on the contrary, is always seen as heroic, even in failure. *The Reef budget* presents him as the 'leader of the White Labour Movement' (252), and even on his entry to address the European Labour Association at a later meeting the 'working men cheered themselves hoarse to welcome the man who had thrown aside personal interest to lead them' (265).

Naomi we are to regard as splendidly altruistic. Evidence of this trait is shown in relation to her neighbours ('[W]e all come to you in our troubles,"

exclaims one of them' (163)), but chiefly in her encouragement to the neglected child of General Stannard, Jinks. (In some ways the Jinks sections of the novel are the most convincing because freest from propaganda.) Her altruism does not extend to blacks, however. One of the most disturbing episodes in the novel (evidently meant to be amusing) involves her flagrantly racist jibe against a black delivery man ('head like a gunny ball stuck over a burnt matchhead' (129), and Fenworth's wholehearted enjoyment of the comparison. Earlier we have been told that he had managed to suppress a 'mutiny' at Blumenthal, his former mine (103–104), and one wonders (without the help of further detail) what tactics he might have used.

Much of the action of the novel centres on Naomi's quasi-marriage to the feckless Bertram Hestling, whom she discovers later is actually her brother (a photograph reveals to Bertram's mother that she had loved his father under another name!). Naomi's long-suffering attempts to bear his irresponsible decisions are intended of course to heighten our sympathy. Her difficulties in extricating herself from this fraught and fruitless relationship act as a kind of counterpoint, on the domestic level, to Fenworth's difficulties in gaining adherents to his cause. Together such obstacles constitute the 'cloudy porch' of the title (10) through which stalwart, selfless and noble-minded people such as Naomi and Fenworth will sooner or later pass. Nonetheless the plot has to be rather devious to succeed in ridding Naomi of Bertie through accidental death. It then becomes possible for Fenworth to have Naomi's dedicated support in marriage as compensation for failure to promote his cause on the political front. All along he has thought of her as a woman 'whose presence at his side would have opened fresh worlds to him, as it would also have increased his power for work' (113).

'Women', decides Naomi, in a far from feminist-inspired moment, are 'the initial force in the world, wielding the dual power to enslave and chain man by the things of the flesh, or to liberate and lead him by the things of the spirit' (213). More in touch with the specific propagandist aim of the novel, but with similarly highflown rhetoric, she and Fenworth are regarded – in their support for white workers – as making a contribution to the 'divine idea' (159). Just a shade less hyperbolically, Naomi regards Fenworth's movement as one which is destined to 'alter the whole course of African politics' (219). Much less consistently, however, but perhaps with a trace of uncharacteristic authorial guilt, she sees him as working for 'all men in Africa' (219).

Contextualisation: 1912–1913

The great unrest and Pilgrim's Rest

R K Cope argues that between 1910 and 1912 the opposition in parliament (representatives of mining, industrial and commercial capital) 'were for the most part satisfied that the Government was looking after their interests', but that this situation changed in 1912 with the arrival of Bill Andrews, under whose influence a 'new spirit of militancy was injected into the small band [of five Labour members] sitting on the cross benches' (Cp:125).

In 1913 the new Botha-Smuts administration, fearful of offending capitalist interests, aroused the ire of workers through their handling of the labour situation. For Andrews this meant a chance to rally the poorer working-class people (Cp:130–131). Creswell, as leader of the Labour group in parliament, adopted a compromise course between the two principal parties. Thus, in order to avoid voting with the capitalists, Labour usually moved an amendment through which it could reveal workers' grievances (131). But the initial 1913 session ended with white and black miners in a state of serious discontent: the 'first rumblings of the July upheaval on the Rand' were to be felt (131).

A strike at the New Kleinfontein mine had started on 27 May, and was showing every sign of spreading. The trouble began when the manager instructed five mechanics employed underground to work until 3:30pm instead of 12:30pm on Saturdays. This led to a strike to demand trade union recognition, the eight-hour day, and the reinstatement of strikers (Cp:132). On 24 May the Government Inspector of White Labour warned the Kleinfontein Mine authorities that they were breaking the law and liable therefore for prosecution. However, the follow-up telegram he sent on 28 May turned out to be the last intervention by the government in support of workers (WW:32). At this stage it seems that the Chamber of Mines assumed direction, and refused to back down (Cp:133; RD:304).

In response, a strike committee of ten men representing all trades was set up on 27 May, including Harry Haynes, George Mason, J T Bain and Tom Mathews. The mineowners, however, had prepared for the fight by fencing the mine property securely and engaging a number of scabs. Accordingly, on 6 June the mine management intimated that all men who had not returned to work within five days would be locked out (WW:32–33).

Andrews took up the workers' cause in parliament, once again introducing a motion for an eight-hour day and warning members not to 'blame the workers of the Rand if something happens which will wake up Parliament and

the whole of South Africa' (Cp:132). Cope creates a dramatic impression of parliament's failure to heed Andrews's warning:

Again on June 11, a week before Parliament was prorogued, Andrews tried to bring the administration to a sense of the gravity of the position ... Again he was ignored. Three weeks later the general strike was called, and the streets of Johannesburg ran with the blood of the people. (132)

When the mine owners started large-scale scabbing with police protection, 'hatred against scabs rose to a pitch of intensity seldom equalled' (Cp:134-135). 'On several occasions the household goods of scabs were bundled out of their homes and burned in the streets. Business vehicles carrying food and blankets to the mines were overturned and set on fire - the homes of several public men who had angered the strikers were destroyed' (WW:33). Later, trials of listed scabs were held before strike tribunals which 'meted out swift and sharp punishment' (33). It is disturbing to find that George Mason, the carpenters' union leader, is actually supposed to have said: '[T]here is no scab for which there is not a pond large enough to drown him or a rope long enough to hang his carcass' (Cp:135). Walker and Weinbren report that 'small bands of strikers led by Bain, Crawford, Mary Fitzgerald, Mason and others marched from mine to mine and exhorted miners to join the strike. Crawford's method, haranguing those about to go on shift, and then making strikers stand on one side, scabs on the other, proved very effective' (WW:33). (Mary Fitzgerald had been a typist in the office of the miners' union where she had recorded the death from phthisis of thirty-two executive members in a period of eight years. As a result she was 'converted into a fiery socialist ... she partnered Crawford in his printing plant and later became his wife' (Sn:150).)³

Many white miners went to the compounds and urged the African workers to strike for more pay. This did not, however, indicate the wish for a united front with the black miners, since the appeals were accompanied with threats to dynamite the blacks if they worked with scabs. As it turned out, in fact, the white workers found that they could not stop Kleinfontein Mine without the black miners' co-operation. George Mason then succeeded in persuading them to strike with the whites, and was thereby converted into an advocate of solidarity with blacks (Sn:159). No whites were prosecuted for striking, while black strike leaders (who had stopped on a number of mines, not only New Kleinfontein) were sentenced to six months' hard labour (160).

Contextualisation: July 1913

(The great unrest; Pilgrim's Rest; Money's worth)

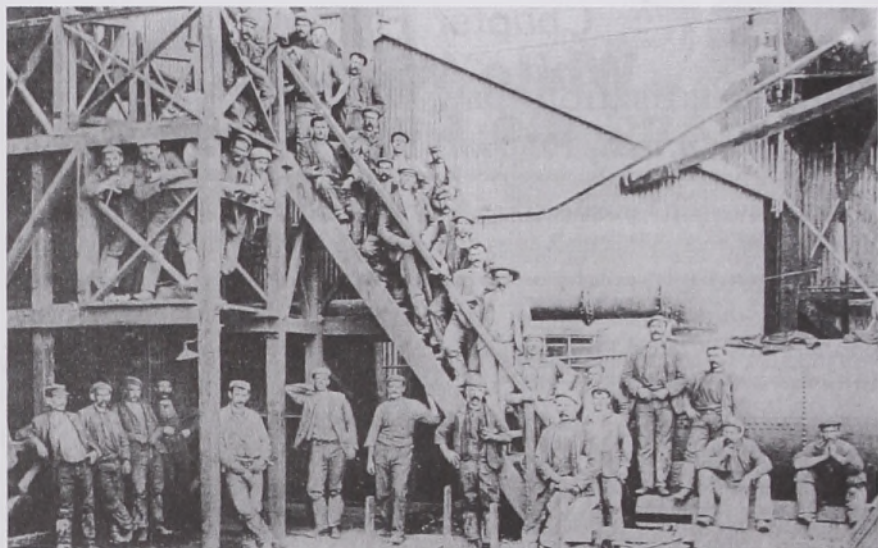
Demonstrations in Benoni on 15 and 29 June had further aroused the strikers' mood of defiance. Thus on 2 July, '5 000 of the 22 000 white miners downed tools, and on 4 July, calls by union leaders for a general strike were answered by 18 000 white miners on 63 of the 69 Reef mines' (RD:304). As the newly created Active Citizen Force was not yet ready to be brought into action for breaking strikes, Smuts decided to enlist the Imperial Garrison; accordingly 'some 3 000 cavalry and infantry were mobilised in batches and sent to the Rand to crush the workers' (Cp:136-137).

The strike committee next arranged for a mass demonstration on the Market Square in Johannesburg. By midday on 4 July (to become known as Black Friday), the square was thronged with thousands of people, many of whom came in train-loads from the East and West Rand.⁴ At this late stage the government acted, banning all public gatherings, and proclaiming martial law. Thus on the one side of Market Square police and mounted dragoons were drawn up. Walker and Weinbren supply some vivid details of what then took place:

On the wagon which served as a platform were Tom Matthews, W.H. Morgan and J.T. Bain. The Chief Magistrate (H.O. Buckle), the Commissioner of Police (Col. Truter) and the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Col. Douglas), then mounted the platform and, though the meeting had already started, tried by peaceful persuasion to induce the huge crowd to disperse. They failed. Fearing bloodshed, Morgan and Matthews appealed to the crowd not to demonstrate, but rather to go home quietly ... [As J.T. Bain started his less conciliatory speech: 'We are here to exercise our right of free speech'] the dragoons charged into the crowd with drawn swords. The police went in with pickhandles. (WW:34-35)

Cope reports that in response 'groups of workers formed up here and there and brought down a few police with stones and broken bottles' (137). Throughout that night, continues Cope:

[P]andemonium reigned. There were many riotous scenes. Angry crowds set fire to buildings at the Johannesburg railway station and, to shouts of 'Star Final', proceeded to burn down and destroy the offices and works of the Argus Company – an act which prevented the reappearance on the streets of 'The Star' until July 9. (136)



White miners at the shaft-head.

By the next day almost 20 000 men were on strike and most of the East Rand as well as Johannesburg was in their hands. Cope points out that: 'only behind their barricades on mine property did the police and troops have control. In the towns people moved about by permit from the [strike] committees' (137).

On the Saturday a rumour spread that armed mine magnates and officials were meeting at the Rand Club. Demonstrators, who then marched towards the club, found their way barred by soldiers. Although the soldiers first fired a warning volley into the air, they seemed almost immediately to fire directly into the crowd. Walker and Weinbren describe the consequences:

Scores fell, killed or wounded. [Demonstrators claimed that] from the windows and roof of the Rand Club, a number of unscrupulous members joined in the firing and accounted for a number of casualties. The fury and dismay of the crowd knew no bounds. Some with hip-pocket pistols tried to fire back ineffectually. But the great majority were peacefully inclined and unarmed ... [A young Afrikaner named Labuschagne] shouted: 'Stop shooting women and children, you bastards. Shoot a man!'. At the same time he tore open his shirt to bare his chest. From point-blank range a trooper deliberately shot him through the heart. (35)

In the first two days of the stayaway more than 100 strikers and onlookers were killed, and these casualties caused public opinion to favour the miners (RD:305).



A white miner operates the drill with a black helper



'Pickhandle' Mary Fitzgerald

Botha and Smuts decided at last to intervene through a meeting with strike leaders whom they informed of the free hand given them by the mine owners in order to effect a settlement (WW:36). The strike leaders, explain Walker and Weinbren, 'fully aware of their responsibility and wishing to put an end to the rioting, were content to put forward only one definite demand – the re-instatement of the Kleinfontein men. No advantage was taken of the emergency to force agreement on numerous other grievances' (36).

The terms of the agreement, according to Cope, were as follows:

- 1 The strike to be immediately declared off and all further disturbances to cease.
- 2 The New Kleinfontein strikers to be reinstated, and the government to grant suitable compensation to the strike-breakers, who will in no way be victimised.
- 3 The strikers on other mines to return to their work, and to be taken back as mining operations are resumed on the mines, and no victimisation to take place.
- 4 Representatives of the workers are at liberty to lay any other grievances before the Government, who will inquire into them. (Cp:140)

What actually followed is that: 'Apart from paying out [pounds] 47,000 to the 120-odd Kleinfontein scabs, practically every one of the Government's promises remained unfulfilled. Having been beaten to their knees, they temporised in order to gain time for a counter-stroke [viz to smash the entire trade union movement]' (141).



Dragoons and police clearing Market Square, Johannesburg, 6 July 1913

Not surprisingly, the majority of strikers did not regard the settlement as at all satisfactory. However, on Sunday 6 July when Bill Andrews and the federation leaders urged the men to accept the settlement, support was given by a three-to-one majority. The radical socialists who arrived late, including Crawford and Mary Fitzgerald, argued that the federation had been bluffed (Sn:158) and demanded complete repudiation of the agreement (Cp:14). Despite their clamorous intervention the strike was not resumed (WW: 40-41). On the other hand, the actions of the government in 1913 caused thousands all over the country to join the existing trade unions, while new unions were established in many areas (41).



The 1914 deportees

Contextualisation: 1914 Strike **(*The great unrest; Money's worth and The toll*)**

The origin of the next major strike, that of January 1914, was the government's decision to retrench a large number of railway men who were then organised in Nurahs (the National Union of Railway and Harbour Servants), a strong well-run trade union with an able executive and a capable general

secretary, H J Poutsma (WW:47). The Minister of Railways with astonishing ineptitude chose Christmas Eve as the appropriate time to act: many skilled men were handed notices of dismissal as they were about to go on annual leave with their families (47). A ballot of the unions on the question of a general strike resulted in a four-to-one majority in favour. However, the combined executive of the Federation of Trades and of Nurahs chose not to declare a strike until 12 January when 'the rank-and-file railwaymen at Pretoria, exasperated by the uncompromising attitude of the Government, struck work' (48).

This time the government was ready to use immediate force. An amendment to the Riotous Assemblies Act gave the government power to ban meetings which threatened public order (RD:305). Although the British government apparently refused the Union government's request for imperial troops because of the events of July 1913 (WW:49), by 9 January Smuts had already mobilised his alternative, the now available Active Citizen Force, at the same time ordering the arrest of union leaders (RD:305). Then on 14 January martial law was proclaimed which rendered gatherings of six or more persons unlawful (OC:165), and 70 000 troops were on countrywide alert; more than 10 000 of them on the Witwatersrand (RD:305).

Meanwhile, the Federation of Trades' executive committee (including Andrew Watson, J T Bain, George Mason and Archie Crawford) had barricaded themselves in the old Trades Hall, threatening to shoot anyone who tried to arrest them. When an ultimatum ordering surrender within 24 hours was read to them from the street below on 14 January, there was no response. Next day a large force of police and armed burghers surrounded the Trades Hall and commanded all exits. This time the committee were given five minutes to reach a decision and they agreed to surrender (WW:52). Harrison, and other leaders, Creswell and Boydell, were arrested in Cape Town (Hr:40; RD:305). The strike was declared off on January 17 (WW:53).

The government then took a further drastic step. Nine strike leaders, including Bain and Crawford, were deported on 30 January, having been kidnapped from prison in Johannesburg, taken secretly to Durban by train, and sent to England on the steamship *Umgeni* (Hr:39).⁵ Creswell, who had been released by this stage, together with two advocates, made a vain attempt to intercept the *Umgeni* by tug outside Table Bay. When parliament met, Creswell demanded its intervention. Cunningly, however, Smuts had already given notice of his intention to introduce a Bill indemnifying the government,

and so discussion could not be permitted. By the time the House reassembled the *Umgeni* was too far at sea to permit intervention (WW:54).

In the parliamentary debate on the Indemnity Bill (4 February) Smuts spoke for five-and-a-half hours to try to justify his imposition of martial law and his suppression of the strike by force: 'Syndicalist doctrines were being introduced in the most open form ... and there the Terror started – the Red Ruin' (WW: 53). The deported men, especially Poutsma, were thoroughly denounced. Referring to the 1913 strike, Smuts claimed that: 'Crawford and Mrs Fitzgerald led a large mob to Park Station; they shot some people, killed some, wounded others and burned down the station' (53). However, Walker and Weinheim note that in 1913 'the courts found Crawford and Mrs Fitzgerald not guilty because it was proved in evidence that Mrs Fitzgerald did not go to the station with the crowd, that Crawford tried to stop the crowd going there, and that neither of the accused was present at the burning of 'The Star' premises' (55).

Severe victimisation followed the suppression of the strike. 'Any one who had taken part in the strike was in danger of being forced to walk the streets ... Black-lists had been compiled and were widely used, particularly on the mines, to ensure that no workman whose name was on any such list was given employment' (WW:57–58). Although the high-handed methods of Smuts and Botha were successful in crushing this strike, Roux points out that it was 'at the cost of their popularity with the electorate' and he therefore thought it 'extremely likely that the Botha Government would have suffered defeat in the General Election of 1915 if the war with Germany had not broken out' (Rx:147).⁶

The novels

F E Mills Young: *The great unrest*

(published 1915; set in 1913–1914)

Of the novels that deal with the actual strikes of 1913–1914, F E Mills Young's *The great unrest* adopts the most generalised perspective, which enables her to avoid becoming too embroiled in sociopolitical or economic vantage points. The great unrest of the labour strikes is, however, to be seen only as a prelude to the great unrest of the World War I – the narrative voice speaks of the 'unrest of the age' (177). Thus, book 1 gives us Dam's English background, while book 2 involves his concern with the strikes as a journalist in

South Africa working for a socialist newspaper. Having shifted, as a result of the strikes, from his avowed socialism to what Mills Young would regard as a more moderate, and sensible, position, he returns to England in book 3. Hardly has he made a new beginning there, however, than he feels duty-bound to join up and is killed in the early stages of the war.

Romantic interest is privileged at all points of the novel. Dam's 'strong socialistic trend' (69) is initiated by the surprising refusal of his advances on the part of a fisherman's daughter in southern England. While Mills Young permits a certain amount of debate about the merits of strikes (an aspect I shall return to), the action of the novel avoids intersecting with any particular events. Its main focus is, indeed, Dam's unrecognised love for his stepsister, Patricia. His interim experience with two manipulative women in Johannesburg, the unmarried Nora Chalmers, and the married Flora Wainwright, is the chief element in the educational process that his authoress has designed to achieve the opening of his eyes in relation to Patricia. His socialist phase is shown (implicitly at any rate) as a kindred aspect of this immaturity, and his relationship with women is shown as the key to his development.

Dam arrives in South Africa in time for the July strike of 1913 (Johannesburg is in a state of 'seething discontent' (110)), and leaves after the January strike of 1914. By means of debate with Flora Wainwright's husband and a railway official, Mills Young suggests what she regards as the narrowness and dogmatic onesidedness of Dam's views. Wainwright is strongly opposed to Labour Party views (130), though his particular concern is the danger of a black uprising as a consequence of strikes (130-133). As Mills Young does not portray him in a sympathetic light, we are inclined to distance ourselves from his position. Flora's clearly ill-informed state leads the reader not to place much weight either on her belief that Dam is 'hand in glove with a parcel of syndicalists and political agitators, and write[s] inflammatory articles in a wretched socialist paper' (140). Mills Young's initial strategy therefore seems to create opportunities for partiality towards Dam. And given Mills Young's large degree of abstraction from actual strike events, she can afford a certain degree of sympathy in relation to what are acknowledged as grievances. Later however, when Dam argues with Wainwright as well as a railway official friend of his, the novelist's perspective becomes clearer. The friend insists that the 'overthrow of the present Government is what your people are aiming at' (183), and that the 'labour grievances are only a means to a larger end' (184), though Mills Young attempts to lighten the scales somewhat by having the railway friend comment that perhaps it is unfair for both Wainwright and himself to be opposing Dam. The sombre reminder of

the communistic objective is probably a turning point in the way we have been previously invited to respond with relative sympathy to Dam's views. Although shortly before this argument, we have been informed that Dam's unexceptionable watchword is 'wherever there is social unrest, there is social injustice' (176), the motto is enclosed within narrative commentary which takes pains to contrast justified grievances with unjustified methods.

Mills Young's overriding concern with social order and the prevention of suffering for innocent victims of strike unrest emerges largely through Mrs Drew, wife of Dam's newspaper chief. She emphasises to Dam that: 'You can't force things ... Set forth the wrong in sane and temperate light and suggest a remedy. Reform is bound to follow, because right is might' (149). Accordingly, in her view, strikes are the product of reckless hotheads who derive relish from violence, and are unconcerned about the real sufferers, defined by her as 'people who couldn't afford to lay in stores, people who didn't anticipate this – who are hungry ... women – and little children' (190). In stark contrast she believes that the strike leaders themselves 'have plenty'. We have then a very sentimentalised and inadequately thought-out version of the argument that in strikes the larger needs of society are neglected. However, as Mrs Drew is drawn with much sympathy, her position has more potential persuasive power than that of Mr Wainwright, though finally both represent more or less the same standpoint.

Mills Young gives only perfunctory attention to the July 1913 strikes. More concern with authentic detail of the January 1914 strike is a convenient strategy for bringing book 2 to a fairly dramatic conclusion as well as providing the essential material for Dam's change of mind. An interesting detail that I did not come across in the strike accounts I read is the way members of the middle-class flock to get permits to leave Johannesburg at the height of the confrontations. Particular attention is given to the surrounding of the Federation of Trades Hall and the surrender of the leaders (Bain's name is singled out for mention) because in the ensuing *mêlée* Dam is badly hurt. His mood has been one of 'fierce revolt against authority' (216), as a result of which he 'hurled himself, unarmed with the rest, upon the escort which guarded the strike leaders' (216). Thus his predicament when the police charge and he finds himself trampled underfoot, has the force of a just punishment for one who has participated in what Mills Young regards as 'unjustified methods'. Together with a subsequent discussion with Mrs Drew in which she has of course every opportunity of endorsing her previous condemnation of what seems to her merely destructive violence, Dam's mishap brings about

a startling shift in political attitude: he finds himself admiring Botha (237) and wishing to work for a non-party paper (257).

The one aspect of the strike which seems to have intrigued Mills Young most is the deportation of the nine leaders. While she attempts ambivalence in her response – one gets an initial impression of a forceful protest on her part – it becomes clear that she felt the manoeuvre was justified by its success. Dam, now well on his way to conversion from Socialism, is described as sharing the amusement of a mythical ‘majority’ (220), and is made to reflect as follows: ‘Botha’s right ... But he’s only right, because he pulled this thing off successfully’ (223), more or less a reversal of Mrs Drew’s fine-sounding belief that ‘Right is might’. So keen is Mills Young to sustain her support of the two political leaders that she writes of the general public as being won over by the action (220), while the Labour Movement is virtually defeated (214). A very different account emerges from the memoirs of W Harrison, who describes the vain tugboat effort to reach the *Umgeni* as anything but amusing. The consequence of the deportation was that the nine strike leaders were heralded and fêted by British Socialists (Mills Young can grant only a ‘few ardent supporters’ (221)), while the Labour Party actually gained two parliamentary seats as a result! It also won some provincial council seats, including twenty-three out of twenty-five in the Transvaal.

In having Dam marry his English stepsister, Mills Young departs from the English-Afrikaner pattern she employs in *The shadow of the past* (and again in *Valley of a Thousand Hills*). Indeed Afrikaners simply do not exist in this novel. Blacks are mentioned only to add weight to Mr Wainwright’s strictures on the dangers of strikes. However, the novels are similar in terms of Mills Young’s unswerving support of Smuts and Botha.

F Brett Young *Pilgrim’s Rest*

(published 1922; set in 1913)

Although Brett Young’s novel, *Pilgrim’s Rest*, is the last one to be published of those I am concerned with, it may appropriately be considered at this stage because of its involvement with the 1913, but not the 1914 strike. The larger but not altogether adequately sustained purpose of the novel is an outcry against the greed for gold. The protagonist, Hayman (whose first name is not mentioned), has a weakness for gambling which has led him into a good deal of trouble. His love of mine work has been very closely allied with this weakness. The warning given him by a hobo early in the novel that the worst

disease is gold (65) acts as a hint of an important transformation that Hayman will undergo in the course of the novel. So the plot accordingly hinges on the shift in Hayman's motivation from tracking down a possible hidden fortune to discovering the joys of marital bliss with Beatrice (no less) Wroth. Reinforcement of this shift is created through the fact that Beatrice's former lover's obsession with gold led to their separation and his death from fever. The hidden fortune that Hayman seeks is ironically the same one that lured Beatrice's lover.

The more immediate focus of the novel is a vindication of scabbery. Hayman, like his friend and fellowminer, Reece, is resolutely opposed to trade unions and to strikes. Although he acknowledges how unjustly fellow-workers have been treated (at the New Kleinfontein mine at Benoni), and although he is himself the victim of both injustice and treachery, he is adamant – and Young would seem to be equally so – that all such collaboration is mob rule. Although Hayman is described as having an 'Englishman's dislike of extremes' (159), he is resolutely against compromise: he will not join a trade union just to be left alone (162) and he is bent on working as *he* pleases (164). Inevitably he finds himself branded again and again as a 'scab' (162, 185, 223), facing a 'tightening net of malice' (225). The culmination is a threat to 'get out of the Diadem [mine]' (230). Yet, although he is injured in a less than accidental explosion shortly afterwards (235), he becomes even more determined to fight against union militancy (261). Beatrice's support for his struggle naturally helps to sustain him.

The plot gains momentum at the time of meetings in Reitzburg which seem to correspond to the historical meetings of 15 and 29 June 1913. At these meetings union leaders whom Hayman knows from his own mine and hostel are depicted as inciting the workers. Benoni, we are informed, is isolated (369) and scab-hunting indulged in (370). In Young's account the already destructive spirit of the strikers is further inflamed by an apparently endless supply of liquor (370). 'One afternoon', we are told, 'a wagon-load of mattresses made a bonfire round which hosts of drunken men and women danced' (370). The chief inciter, the ruthless Jago, has a 'lust for politics' (157) and employs a 'violence of words' (161) in his speeches. What he and his cronies seek, in Young's view, is 'industrial war' (371). At this stage union membership rises by 400% in Young's account since three-quarters of the men had joined (371–372). Jago acts in cahoots with a man called Williams, who encourages the murder of scabs (363), and a woman called Clara Lyon, Jago's 'virago' (377) mistress, presumably a version of Mary Fitzgerald, just as Jago is probably intended as a sinister and lurid version of her

lover, Crawford. At a meeting presumably corresponding to the one of 29 June, Clara Lyon speaks with contempt to Beatrice as the companion of a notorious scab (377) – when she does so the narrator slyly invites us to note that ‘her breath smelt of whisky’ (377). Although Beatrice has some admiration for what she regards as the sincerity and conviction of Williams (366), Hayman will have none of it. The general portrayal of the strike leaders, especially that of Jago and his mistress, is such as to incline one strongly to Hayman’s refusal to take orders from a ‘mob’ (368).

Hayman has prided himself on his special relationship of trust with his black co-mineworkers. So confident is he of their loyalty and competence that he allows them to enter the mine before him (226) – a forbidden practice for which he is duly tried at a mine hearing (304 ff). This is the only novel in my group which mentions the way in which blacks came to be included in the strikes. For Hayman of course this concept of solidarity is completely anathema, even worse than white union solidarity. When an emissary from Williams urges black mineworkers at Brak Deep to stop work and earn five shillings a day, Hayman assaults and almost strangles him (373). Further information is provided later by Hayman’s ‘boss-boy’: if they *do* work they will be locked up and their compound burnt down (374). Hayman’s counter-threat of sjambokking if work stops proves effective, though neither he nor the novelist seems adequately aware of the ironic quasi-contradiction in Hayman’s response. One is clearly meant to be left with the impression that it is Hayman’s bond with his ‘boys’, rather than his threat, which spurs them to remain on his side.

Hayman’s reputation for defiance grows till he is regarded as ‘scab king’ (397); and the climax of the novel involves the consequent retaliation by the strikers: the destruction by fire of Beatrice’s family home (where Hayman has lodged for a time). The desperate flight of the family, together with Hayman and Beatrice’s sister’s fiancé, gives one a vivid idea of what the experience of a hunted scab must have been like. Here the novel is perhaps at its most compelling. However, since Young’s purpose in representing the strike in his novel has now been satisfied, he makes the Johannesburg stage almost like an anticlimax. Thus when the strike action at Reitzburg and Benoni begins to lose momentum, and ‘Clara Lyon waved her red flag in vain’ (420), Jago is portrayed as charging into the city ‘determined to do what damage he could in the little hour that remained to him’ (420). The violent events are not ignored: ‘For two days and a night the streets of Johannesburg were given over to terror. Hayman, from his post at the Brak Deep, watched the tongues of flame that arose from the ruins of Park Station and the offices of the *Star*’ (420–421). Yet this sentence ends in a deliberately reductive way: ‘and heard

the clatter of musketry that was like nothing so much as the sound of an urchin beating a tin drum' (421). Thus, in the very next paragraph, Jago's enterprise is steadily deflated: '[O]n the third day peace returned. The mine gates were opened. Slowly, steadily, half-bashfully, the men began to return, excusing themselves, pleading compulsion, asking to be taken back in their old jobs' (421). Fortunately for Hayman, a former manager of his arranges for him to have a mining job at Pilgrim's Rest, where he can live with Beatrice safely away from any further urban industrial unrest.

F Bancroft: *Money's worth*

(published 1915; set in 1913)

Bancroft's *Money's worth* is the only novel I have found which takes the strikes and union activity generally with great seriousness (though, of course, one has to remember that the cause is that of white workers only). The novel is a kind of *bildungsroman* by which her heroine, Everal Addison, shifts from carefree cynicism to an appreciation of union leaders' work. Bancroft fortunately avoids a sentimental transformation from spoilt middle-class affluent young woman to ardent socialist worker. Everal has already been feeling an increasing sense of isolation from her kin (110), and therefore her falling in love with Enfield, the union leader, comes at a time when she is groping for a new philosophy of life. Astonished by his disinterestedness and readiness for sacrifice, she feels that Enfield holds the key to the 'puzzle' of life (114). Moreover, his wish to help her become socially concerned leads her to regard him as 'the human saviour who alone could save her from descending to the lowest' (151). Unfortunately she had expected him, after marriage, to give up everything for her sake (the spirit of sacrifice applied solely to her!) so that his sustained devotion to the workers' cause gradually becomes intolerable. Enfield, in his own reflections on the growing impasse in their relationship, concludes that: 'Men, unfortunately for themselves, apportioned to women the narrower lot and then blamed them for their inability to take wider views when such were required of them' (235). Everal's explicitly stated grievance takes a different form: to her it is as if *only* his work counts. Furthermore, she is jealous of Mary Waugh, Enfield's fellow union leader (another version, probably, of Mary Fitzgerald, though portrayed with much sympathy by Bancroft). The marriage is indeed almost wrecked until Enfield takes her back to England for the birth of their child, and for what is suggested as a period of respite. Mary Waugh, who openly expresses her admiration and gratitude

to Enfield and regards him as a 'king among men' (140) is not, in fact, competing for his heart. Having from the outset felt that Everal would be 'the real thing in life' (143) for Enfield, Mary's view is that his marriage is of primary importance.

The novel starts dramatically on what is a fictional version of Saturday 5 July 1913 (Bloody Saturday). Everal, her aunt and a wealthy suitor are having lunch in a building adjacent to the Market Square (probably the Rand Club), from which they are able to watch the firing by the troops and the death of a defiant young challenger (corresponding to Labuschagne). Mary Waugh and another young woman are there waving red flags just as particular women were seen to do on the actual occasion. Although we do not know anything about Mary or her companion at this stage, there is no authorial hint that we are to regard the spectacle of their participation with disdain (as in Brett Young's case).

To increase tension from the start, Everal's brother John Addison, more ideologically right-wing than his sister, is one of the members of the citizen force which joins the imperial troops to quell the protest gathering. His argument, very like that of Mr Wainwright in *The great unrest*, is that the society cannot afford a strike because 'the natives would wipe us out' (24). Mary Waugh is determined to prevent her sister, Serena, from marrying John for this very reason. The clash between Everal and himself is thus the first step in her newly found outlook. It is hardly surprising that Everal has begun to feel alienated from her kin: her uncle, Zeechy Wendell, even more to the right than his nephew, is a crass exponent of a viewpoint very like that of Hayman in *Pilgrim's Rest*. We first meet Zeechy as he savours with much relish the 'blazin' blue murder' actions of the police and soldiers against the strikers. Later he denounces the strike leaders as 'arch-scoundrels' (108).

Also in counter-tension to Everal's development towards a more enlightened outlook regarding unions and strikes, her former lover, Bertie Crowte, a retrenched worker – one of those who was promised a job by the government – becomes steadily less committed to worker solidarity, and more bitterly intent on finding some way to avenge his loss of Everal to Enfield. (Ironically it had been Everal's interest in Bertie's plight that in the first place made her accessible to Enfield's influence.) Knowing of Everal's discontent in marriage, Bertie incites her to rebel (246), but retains our sympathy by oscillating between vengeful and remorseful thoughts (268–270). To add to the irony, Enfield, who is very anxious because the miners are determined to come out in further strike action, actually asks Bertie to help him deal with his domestic crisis!

Bancroft's interest unfortunately does not extend to black workers. In fact earlier in the novel, at the white workers' meeting which probably corresponds to one held after July 1913, they are insistent – inspired by Enfield's unreported, passionate address – that blacks will not be allowed to join the movement. Here Bancroft is fully in line with the reality of white worker opinion in 1913, but she shows no sign, via Enfield or Mary Waugh, that she would in the least oppose such a view. As Everal leaves this meeting, she is very uneasily aware of blacks passing her on the road, and here too Bancroft does not indicate that we should undervalue her apprehension.

Bertie's scheming has even worse consequences than he intends. Enfield comes to believe that Everal wanted to destroy his work and that she has somehow contrived the arrest of the strike leaders as occurred in January 1914 (288). He accuses her of treachery, and is so enraged and disillusioned at one point as to feel an impulsive wish to murder her (297). Ultimately, however, Bertie's plan backfires completely and leads not only to his own tragic death in a reckless horse and trap chase, but to what he sought to prevent: the reconciliation between the spouses that I have already referred to. The outcome is thus markedly different from that of *The great unrest*: there is no question of Enfield's ultimate reneging on his socialist commitment, or of Everal's being converted to a position like that of Mrs Drew.

W Westrup: *The toll*

(published 1914; set 1914)

As Westrup refers explicitly to the 1913 strike in the past, one assumes that his plot relates to the 1914 successor. For this reason I have left it till last in this group. *The toll* is largely preoccupied with the appalling everyday lives of miners. Early in the novel Westrup gives a telling description of the deadly effects of mine dust (15), stressing the drastically weakened state of the miner protagonist, Hugh Elliott, on account of his employment. The title refers to the toll that mine labour takes on human lives; from one-third of the way through the novel the warning given to Elliott about his cough is a signal of his impending doom.

Apart from Westrup's ability to offer a convincing and apparently first-hand account of actual work in a mine, he creates several intimate impressions of what it was like to be a white mineworker's wife at the time. Even at tennis 'they played at merriment with an ever intangible dread in their hearts' (119). Apart from the constant, overpowering presence of the battery stamps (even

at the mine dance), there is Molly Elliott's terror of the 'native' compound. Although one of Molly's fellow wives is said to have a 'savage intolerance for all natives' (120), there is no critical irony in Westrup's use of the word 'savage'. We are made to feel that, while Mrs De Bruyn's attitude is rather excessive, her general policy, encapsulated by the advice, '[T]hey're beasts, but it's very easy to keep them in their place' (120), contains inescapable wisdom for whites. In seeking to justify what becomes an increasingly hysterical kind of response on Molly's part, Westrup manages to include some sympathy for the 'natives', even if his over-riding concern is with Molly:

Animals, they were; savages lured to the haunts of white men by the promise of wealth beyond the dreams of savages, purged of their virtues by the kind of civilisation they encountered, and turned into brute beasts by the efforts of the low whites who fraternised with them and sold them liquor. (132–133)

In the passage following the one just quoted, Westrup, entering into an exposition of Molly's awareness of 'the tremendous difficulties of the native question' (133), acknowledges that there are 'white men underground who bully' (133), yet his general principle is clearly that impudence from a 'native' is not to be countenanced by a white.

In any case Elliott is not portrayed as one of the bullies; he considers himself to have a good working relationship with his gang of 'boys'. Westrup's major concern, in describing Elliott's involvement with them, is to draw attention to his taxing and pervasive responsibilities as 'shift boss'. Even when the problem is a boy's injury, Westrup's sympathetic focus scarcely wavers from Elliott:

All part of the day's work! And to half clamber, half slip down to the next drive, to learn that a boy has had his arm crushed by a small fall of rock. His arm crushed, or his foot taken off, or perhaps his skull smashed in. It is all part of the day's work, and it is significant that a shift boss must always possess a First Aid Certificate ... He works on, callous to insults and abuse, indifferently shouldering the blame that rightly belongs to others, taking daily risks that would make the bravest shudder – the most bullied, overworked, harassed man in the whole mine. (86)

Like Brett's Hayman, Hugh Elliott is firmly opposed to unions and strikes. The sacking of six fitters, a situation roughly corresponding to that at the New Kleinfontein Mine, sparks off a strike at Elliott's Baxter mine. Elliott and his

friend, Penton, had already been attacked as scabs during a previous strike (252), which intensifies their opposition to such undertakings. Westrup does make some effort to take into account the viewpoints of both sides. When one of the would-be strikers, Polhearn, argues with Penton that the men are fully justified on this occasion, Penton knows he is right but refuses to admit it openly. Elliott in fact eventually succeeds in persuading the new manager, Griffiths, to deal with the men's legitimate grievances. Nevertheless the central emotional emphasis of the narrative emerges in the following passage:

[Elliott] knew the suffering which a strike entailed and he was sorry for the men. Not for the actual strikers, but for their wives and children, and the thousands of innocent people in town who would be thrown out of work if a general strike was declared along the Reef. (257)

Furthermore we are invited to distinguish carefully between Elliott's hatred of the strike leaders (260), and his concern for 'the men, and their families, and the thousands of minor people who would be dragged into the maelstrom if those leaders seized the present dispute as an excuse for calling the strike all along the Reef' (260). Although Elliott is cheered by his fellow workers for his victory over Griffiths, he soon loses his job, under the pretext of medical unfitness, as a result of this confrontation with management. In no way does this disastrous consequence of individual, self-sacrificing action lessen Elliott's abhorrence of strikes. When the general strike is called he compares it to a state of war: 'a war between a few despotic and purblind representatives of labour, and the rights of a whole community' (284).

The sub-plot involves Elliott's accidental discovery of illicit gold dealings on the part of Osmand, a long-standing enemy of Elliott (frustrated in his attempt to ingratiate himself with Molly). Osmand concocts a sinister plan to discredit Elliott entirely through implicating him in the sale of liquor to 'natives'. What is particularly malevolent in his plan is his knowledge that 'with Martial Law actually in full force and everybody talking of the danger of a native rising, the man who sold liquor to natives would be utterly damned. It was too good an opportunity to be missed' (299). Elliott's quick-witted retaliation saves him from immediate arrest but he has to flee from the police.

To his rescue at this stage comes the Jewish shopkeeper, Salewski, father of Molly's friend, Julia. In this aspect of the plot we see Westrup engaged in a vigorous and persuasive campaign against prejudice, yet without being irritatingly programmatic. Even though Elliott has gradually come to respect the Jew, whose views on labour grievances are much the same as his own, it is a

considerable shock to him to realise that Salewski actually went out of his way to save him by misleading the police in the chase. While I have no wish to endorse the superficially sardonic comments with which Westrup credits Salewski ('How can we talk of grievances and more pay when we see the pay wasted on drink?' (202)), the spirit of the enterprise deserves credit. Had Westrup's imaginative sympathy extended also to blacks, the general appeal of his fiction might have exercised a strongly anti-racist influence on his readers.

As against Brett Young's extensive interest in meetings, union leaders and the victimisation of scabs, Westrup engages more steadily in depicting the deadly effects of phthisis on Hugh (as well as other white fellowworkers), and on the pathos of a doomed yet promising marriage. Elliott, at this stage seriously ravaged by phthisis, goes to work finally in a bushveld mine, but when Molly finally comes to join him Westrup secures a *Mill on the Floss* kind of tragic ending by having them both drown in a flooded river. This of course offers the maudlin satisfaction that Molly will not have to endure a lonely widowhood after her husband's swiftly approaching death.

Contextualisation: 1913 **(mid-October to early December)** **relevant novel: Valley of a Thousand Hills**

Roughly midway between the white miners' strikes of 1913 and 1914 occurred a strike by indentured Indian labourers which started in the coal mines, then spread to sugar estates and other plantations. Later it spread to all industries and employments, even domestic servants. On 16 October 1913, 78 workers at the Furlough Colliery came out. The next day the number of strikers rose to 2 000 and by 31 October was between 4 000 and 5 000 (RD: 279).⁷ By the end of November, the Durban and Pietermaritzburg produce markets had come to a standstill, sugar mills had been closed down, and many hotels, restaurants and private homes were without domestic workers (RD:279).

The police clashed with armed strikers on the plantations, killed nine and wounded twenty-five Indians. Gandhi wanted the strike to spread. But a low-key government response to the stoppage made this extremely difficult. Finally, in desperation, he decided to court arrest by threatening to lead striking workers out of their compounds and over the Transvaal border. On 29 October he carried out his threat by leading 200 strikers and their dependants out of Newcastle towards the border; the next day he was followed by a second party of 300, and a day later by a third party of 250 (RD:279). The leaders,



Indian strikers on march, October 1913



Gandhi confronted by police, October 1913

Gandhi, Pollak and Kallenbach, were arrested and each sentenced to nine months' imprisonment; the marchers were railed back (WW:46).

India's government and press denounced the brutality; Botha appointed a commission to inquire into the causes of the disturbance; and Gandhi, released from jail (in order to negotiate with Smuts (RD:279)), came to an agreement with him (Sn:161). The arrested leaders were soon released because of British intervention (WW:46). The Simonsons quote an unnamed sociologist who felt that a great opportunity had been lost: '[A]t a time when it appeared obvious to all that the government had been brought to bay, [Gandhi] chose to demonstrate Indian magnanimity of heart, rather than exploit the situation for the immediate rectification of Indian rights' (161). Bitterly the Simonsons themselves note that 'by calling off the Indian campaign, Gandhi left the government unhampered to suppress the miners' strike' (161-162). He sailed from South Africa to India as the 1914-1918 war began, and he never returned (WW:46).

The novel

F E Mills Young: *Valley of a Thousand Hills*

(published 1915; set 1913)

Maintaining her usual annual average, Mills Young managed to write two novels in 1915, although *Valley of a Thousand Hills* was probably written before *The great unrest* (if one takes the historical scope of the two into account). Also, there is no indication in *Valley* of an impending world war. Apart from the scenic interest promised by the title (which Mills Young, incidentally, does not go to special lengths to gratify), she weaves fairly skilfully into her plot the strike by indentured Indian labourers in late 1913. The Indians in Mills Young's novel are either workers on a wattle plantation or domestic servants, but all come from the same set of families.

Unlike Dam in *The great unrest*, Heckraft, the young Englishman of this novel who 'wants to conquer life' (9), is far from Socialist in his views. When he is on board ship, bound for a Thousand Hills wattle plantation where he is to be a manager, and observes a 'native' being kicked by the chief officer, he wonders whether he will 'ever sink to the level of kicking his coolies' (29). The narrator reassures us, however, that, although 'colour prejudice was no less strong in him than in most Europeans', 'a sense of fairness adjusted the scale of his judgement, and inclined him to be tolerant of what he failed to understand' (29). Given this reasonable potentiality for progress, part of his

education is to come to a deeper appreciation of the more sympathetic attitude of the plantation engineer, Gomet. This will ensure that he is distinct from the egoistic and caddish son of the plantation owner, Harold Johnson, and therefore worthier than Harold of the hand of the neighbouring farmer's daughter, Alieta van der Wyver (Mills Young using again the formula for Boer-Briton union, so much the ideological cry of the Botha-Smuts coalition at the time). Much of the plot revolves round this love triangle. Alieta, already engaged to Harold, falls in love with Heckraft, but does not realise that the feeling is reciprocated. When Heckraft *does* reveal his love, she cannot – at that stage – accept because of her engagement (166). The Indian riot is an important facet of the mechanism by which Mills Young manages to sever the engagement, and bring Alieta and Heckraft together.

When Heckraft comes to inform Gomet that the 'Indian disaffection is spreading rapidly' and that 'in Durban and Maritzburg the strike seems to have become general' (232), discussion of the situation ensues. Gomet's belief that the Indians have been treated very unfairly leads Heckraft to label him a red-hot Socialist (234). Further discussion shows, however, that the label is exaggerated. One part of Gomet's answer shows a generous estimation of the Indians' grievance: 'The disaffection among the Indians is a dignified revolt against injustice' (235). However, the nature of the second part is a good deal less than altruistic in its expediency (though I am not sure how critical Mills Young herself is of this position): he regards the black-Indian antagonism as an asset to the whites. In any case Gomet is certain that, had he been plantation owner, the local Indian workers would not have joined the strike, and he actually tries his best to influence them against it. Ironically, local participation in the strike starts in Gomet's own household when his wife – a rash and immature woman who, to enrich the plot's complications, has been Harold Johnson's mistress – antagonises the younger Indian servant. Her provocation shows Mills Young at her most observant. Regarding Indians as 'treacherous and vindictive' (244), Mrs Gomet succeeds only too well in engineering such attitudes towards herself.

Harold, who grows steadily nastier and meaner as the novel progresses (inflamed with jealousy of Alieta's growing interest in Heckraft), comes – as he had threatened (218) – to drive the striking Indians off the plantation with a gang of blacks whom he has brought for this very purpose from Umlaas/Umkimaas (sic). He persists in his violently racist manoeuvre despite the interview he has with a 'courteous and intelligent Indian', Mafuza, in which the Indian points out that:

[His people] demanded the rights of citizenship, and the removal of the poll-tax. The former was an old grievance, the latter a later and greater indignity. As subjects of the Empire they resented being taxed for living in any part of the Empire's dominions, and from being restricted in their movement from province to province. (259)

In the ensuing violence, which Heckraft tries to prevent, he is ironically almost killed by the semi-hysterical Indians, and Harold's final villainy is revealed by his deliberate refusal of help to Heckraft. The trapped protagonist is saved both by a group of calmer Indians (led by Mafuza), and by Gommet's haranguing of the others. Harold is checked by the sight of Gommet's aimed revolver, but Heckraft, with appropriately heroic mercy, prevents Gommet from shooting.

As prelude to the strike, Mills Young has Gommet's two servants, aunt and nephew (Tapetu, who was provoked by Mrs Gommet), join the passive resisters in one of Ghandi's protest processions to the Transvaal. Her attitude towards this action is, however, reductive and unsupportive, and she seems to derive some relish from arranging that Tapetu should lose his dominating aunt on the way back. Although Mills Young reveals a fair understanding of the Indians' grievances, their strike has importance for her mainly insofar as it provides a useful and fairly powerful climax that will highlight the viciousness of Harold on the one hand and the generally humane, if inadequately focused, instincts of Heckraft on the other. Gommet has the wisdom which Heckraft needs to imbibe, but at least he is the kind of Englishman whom Mills Young clearly favours for white rapprochement and benevolent rule over non-whites. Commenting generally on the 'present system of rule in young countries peopled by alien races', she considers that the chief 'drawback' is the 'power vested in the individual' (268). Such power, she emphasises, becomes a 'menace to society when it rests with men of Harold Johnson's type, men who have no qualification for ruling because they cannot govern themselves' (268-269).

Contextualisation: The 1922 Strike

Relevant novel: The Jordans

During World War I mine owners and the government, concerned about the possibility of strikers interfering with war production, negotiated with the South African Industrial Federation (SAIF) unions, persuading Crawford

and other union leaders not to support any strikes. Mine owners would reciprocate by recognising the unions, as well as offering higher wages and improved work hours. More crucial still was their promise, enshrined in the 'Status Quo Agreement' of 1918, to reserve skilled jobs for whites, and not replace them with blacks (LH:25). At this time there were about 20 000 white miners and 2 000 000 black miners (5).

However, after the war the struggle between the Chamber of Mines and white workers was passionately resumed, culminating in the Great Strike of 1922 (often referred to as the 'Red Revolt' (Rx:147). This resulted from the attempt by the Chamber of Mines in November 1920 to abandon the Status Quo Agreement. Their motive was *not* the wish to bring black workers up to the level of whites, but the fact that a black mechanic was cheaper at two pounds per month than a white one at one pound per day. Accordingly 25 semi-skilled jobs were reserved for black workers.

In vehement response SAIF had, by 10 January, brought out successively on strike the coalminers, goldminers, engineers, and power workers, to be backed on 14 January 1922 by the Labour Party. After negotiations between the Chamber of Mines and SAIF had broken up in failure, the Chamber announced further inflammatory proposals: an increase in the ratio of black to white workers which would have entailed the loss of up to 2 000 more white jobs; and the abolition of paid holidays on May Day and Dingaan's Day (RD:307). The Simonses argue, however, that Labour leaders were 'concerned less with the hardships of 2 000 men retrenched out of a working force of 21 000 than with a racial or national ideology' (278). In support they cite the declaration by the Mine Workers' Union and SAIF 'that they were fighting ... "to preserve a white South Africa"' (278).

In his book about the Internationalist Socialist League (ISL) and the Communist Party in South Africa (CPSA), Sheridan Johns points out the significant fact that 'Only the tiny, but vocal, avowedly Marxist and semi-Marxist propaganda groups remained outside the main political and trade union organizations of white labor' (34). The absence of influence from these groups meant that 'the most forthright advocates of greater attention to non-whites were isolated from the mainstream of the white labor movement' (34). During the second half of the war the ISL engaged in sustained approaches to black workers. For such activity, however, its leaders suffered in terms of election polls and support within the white trade union movement (75).

Johns gives the most comprehensive account of the organisation of the 1922 strike that I have found:

The supreme authority of the strikers was the Augmented Executive, an improvised body of trade-union officials organized by the weakened SAIF Executive in December in response to the challenge of the Chamber of Mine's ultimatum ... Yet the day-to-day activities of the strikers were in the hands of *ad hoc* local and district strike committees, coordinated together in a Central Strike Committee, which was responsible in theory to the Augmented Executive. The third, and most distinctive, organization of the strikers were the commando units which began to be organized spontaneously within two weeks after the start of the strike. The commandos originated among the Afrikaner workers, now in a majority, who introduced their traditional means of military organization into the new industrial strike in which they now found themselves. (131)

The CPSA felt itself marginalised in these arrangements, which had actually taken it by surprise (Js:132-133). Nevertheless its journal, *The International*, quickly seizing the opportunity, urged workers of all races to regard the strike as 'a part of the inevitable and continuous struggle of the exploiters and the exploited' (133), while CPSA leaders offered their assistance to the Strike Committee (133). The racial factor, however, remained a serious difficulty for the CPSA. Even before the commencement of the strike, writers in *The International* had been stressing the need for unity amongst white and black workers (135), but the Communists proved to be 'out of step with the strikers and much of the strike leadership' (135).

While enthusiasm for the commandos had been confined mainly to Afrikaans strikers, economic pressure was brought to bear on all strikers to link up with the commandos (Ut:4). At first the commandos were so effective in the maintenance of law and order that for several weeks, although 22 000 men were on strike, there was a notable absence of serious crimes. The less favourable aspect was not only that respect for the government was greatly diminished, but that the trade unions themselves suffered a loss of power and prestige (52).

The Chamber of Mines was persuaded by Smuts to modify its previous terms, but this concession did not satisfy the SAIF. Thus on 7 February Johannesburg was greeted by the sight of striking miners marching through the streets under a banner proclaiming: 'Workers of the World Fight and Unite for a White South Africa' (RD:307). However, while the executive of SAIF rejected a call for a general strike on 8 February, there was no way



Police prevent raid on General Post Office, Johannesburg (7 March 1922)



Strike leaders being escorted into detention (probably 14 March 1922)

of halting the momentum of vociferous protest. Thus, on Monday 6 March, in response to an excited and militant crowd outside the Trades Hall, the joint executive of SAIF declared a general strike. The Labour Party and the National Party supported the 22 000 strikers (LH:31). Indeed Hertzog apparently chose to believe that 90% of the country was in support (SAY:272). It is hardly surprising, however, that *The International* showed 'little enthusiasm for the Nationalist and SALP politicians who were supporting the strike' (Js:134).

According to Urquhart, Fisher (who was to become the main strike leader) and other militants now preached violence at every opportunity. As far as Urquhart was concerned, however, 'Bolshevik propaganda was not a new development ... The new and important development in the industrial situation was the commando system and the fact that every commandant on the reef was a Nationalist' (67). Furthermore he notes, somewhat sardonically, that the only ground '[these extreme Nats and Bolsheviks (sic)] have in common is their hostility to the present form of government'. Moreover, he emphasises the all too obvious point that the 'ideal of "A white South Africa" is the very negation of communistic doctrine' (68).

As with the 1913 and 1914 strikes, scabs were seriously at risk. In this connection Urquhart is eager to mention that 'the women's commandos drifted into unmentionable barbarities by rapid stages' (55). He had evidence also that there were 'deliberate attempts by the revolutionaries to embarrass the Government by fomenting trouble amongst the natives' (73). In support Herd refers to the official report by the Director of Native Affairs who 'found many Blacks arming themselves and anxious to attack the Whites [because, for example, at Ferreirstown Blacks were being chased and indiscriminately shot at]' (47-48).

The climax of the strike was reached at the end of this week of turmoil. On 9 March the Red flag was hoisted in front of the Town Hall and the ACF was mobilised (Ut:74). The next day, however, was the momentous one, to become known as Black Friday, when there was open shooting and fighting in the streets of Johannesburg as 'strike commandos' engaged in open battles with policemen and troops (Cl:82). There were also street battles in several of the Rand towns. By this stage it seems that the strike leaders had lost control to the Afrikaner commandos, who 'had seized virtually the whole of Johannesburg and were calling for armed insurrection and the overthrow of the state' (RD:308).

On Saturday 10 March Smuts had little alternative but to declare martial law (for the fourth time in ten years, according to the Simonses (295)), ordering 20 000 troops into the conflict, and personally taking control of

them, backed by aeroplanes, tanks and field artillery (RD:308). This was the first time that the South African Air Force, established in 1921, had gone into action (Hd:96). Not surprisingly, given the massive governmental onslaught, the tide had turned by Sunday morning, 12 March. Troops occupied Market Square in the working-class suburb of Fordsburg, where the strikers (under their leader, Percy Fisher (SAY:273)) had their headquarters in Market Buildings. To confirm the view that Fisher did not think of the strike as requiring the avoidance of bloodshed, Herd quotes him as saying: 'Whoever heard of a strike without bloodshed? ... We are out to win this fight ... and, by God we will, if we have to raze Johannesburg to the ground' (69).

On Sunday night the worst was over as the burgher commandos had arrived (Ut:89). Fisher and his assistant, Spendiff, having been advised how futile it would be to prolong the struggle, 'showed appreciation of the position but felt that drawing back would be regarded as cowardice' (Hd: 147). 'Fisher wanted no talk of surrender' (153). Leaflets were dropped, warning women and children to evacuate Fordsburg, while Market Buildings was kept under fire. As Herd puts it: 'The strikers were [thus] caught in a narrowing trap. They could neither advance nor retreat. They had to fight on or surrender – and they chose to fight' (156). Finally, at 2 pm on 14 March the rebel headquarters surrendered, and the end of the strike was formally announced on 16 March.⁸ As it turns out, however, the eventual fate of Fisher and Spendiff remains mysterious: it is not known whether they committed suicide or were shot (154). At any rate when the police entered Market Buildings, they reported finding both of them dead (157).

After 1922 the mine managers persuaded the government to pass laws which told the unions what they could and could not do; in exchange the white worker was given a privileged place in terms of having a choice of the best jobs and high wages (LH: 40). Furthermore, the number of white worker strikes fell markedly subsequent to the passing of the 1924 Industrial Conciliation Act. Between 1916 and 1925 there were 214 strikes; between 1925 and 1935, only 137. Indeed with their guaranteed state of privilege, many white workers had little reason to retain interest in the unions (40).

In Herd's view: 'This powerful strike lasted longer, was if anything more bitterly fought, and raised more clearly the fundamental issues at stake than any of the previous struggles ... What was remarkable was the ferocity it aroused on all sides and the far-reaching changes it brought about ... but, viewed in perspective, it was an unheroic defeat for labour's basic principles' (15). Herd also emphasises the inaccuracy of claiming that the 1922 strike was a 'Red revolt',⁹ concluding that 'it could be more properly labelled a Nation-

alist revolt ... The 1922 revolt canalised the opposition against the government. Out of the confusion of sounds two signals arose with the clarity of a bell: Save white civilisation and Destroy Smuts' (20-21).

The novel

S G Millin: *The Jordans*

(published 1923; set c.1867 to 1922)

The 1922 mine strike provides the climax of Millin's novel. Although the novel is not in any way concerned with the intimate lives of miners or with their work conditions, the strike is crucial for the final, poignant, semi-tragic encounter between the Jordan brothers, Daniel and Charlie. They epitomise bourgeois and working-class Johannesburg respectively, but Millin's fundamental point is that they belong to the same family. The antagonism represents the friction between the two classes based largely, in Millin's account, on jealousy.

Charlie has not had the same opportunities as Daniel, though Millin implies that he would not have made as good use of them had he been in Daniel's place. To flesh out this basis, Millin takes us back to the father's generation: Henry Jordan and Benjamin Jessel come out from England and form a digging partnership soon after the first diamonds have been discovered. We thus have two men in equal circumstances but with vastly differing personalities, as well as attitudes to life and to themselves. Jessel's shrewd business sense – drawing on a readily available stereotype, Millin makes him Jewish – soon puts him far ahead of his partner. Nevertheless, Jordan's action in saving Jessel from a vicious assault enables Daniel, thirty years later, to benefit from Jessel's achievement through the granting of a return favour (Jessel having by this time become a magnate). Initially Daniel thrives on this patronage in terms of a college and Oxford education. Moreover, Jessel loves him, to the extent of feeling envious of his father. Accordingly, it becomes generally assumed that Daniel will be Jessel's heir, though the information that Jessel finds Daniel 'not as good in the money game' (142) as he had expected creates an element of doubt.

Charlie, on the other hand, is not in the least interested in education himself – besides, no alternative patron is available to him, though he tries to exploit Daniel's access to *his* patron. Daniel's sense of the gap between himself and his family naturally becomes magnified through his advantaged educa-

tion, thus intensifying more and more the early hatred (springing from embarrassment) that he has felt.

Despite his advantages, Daniel's family situation blights his potential marriage. Celia Failworth with whom he falls in love, and who comes from an affluent middle-class family, is nauseated by the tawdriness of his home (133). Millin gives much attention to the painful oscillations in their relationship; about half the novel is devoted to this concern. Ironically Celia's own domestic circumstances prove eventually to be morally unsavoury: her father is severely injured by a rival in the flat of one of his mistresses, and left a helpless invalid for the remainder of his life. Celia tries too late, and in vain, to win Daniel back, and then makes a superficially successful marriage to a much older man whom she does not love (241). When Daniel returns from five years army service – the war having provided a convenient temporary escape for him from Johannesburg – Celia is already married. Daniel then decides that he will need to make a similarly expedient marriage (255). Meanwhile he feels more and more trapped by Jessel's patronage, and alarmed at Charlie's new role as union leader on the Eastern Rand.

In the course of Millin's treatment of Charlie and the 1922 strike, she reveals some conventional middle-class prejudices. Indeed her choice of Charlie as focal character for the strike has a strong satirical edge. He discovers a 'talent' in himself for heckling; and as his name changes from Charles Jordan to Charlie Jordan, and finally simply to Charlie, he is in the process of becoming a 'Johannesburg character'. In emphasising his charisma or popular appeal, Millin's purpose is chiefly to show his self-delusion and aptitude for deluding others – he can convince even those who, unlike himself, *do* have principles (265). The workers in this process are portrayed as ignorant dolts who are capable of being told what to think (268) by unscrupulous, inadequately informed leaders like Charlie. To reinforce her sense of the worker's susceptibility to being deluded, Charlie is described as one of the 'most violent' of the speakers, as if rational logic is positively antipathetic to his audience. Through Daniel, Millin notes in particular Charlie's hypocrisy in his apparently ardent concern with the workers' families (272). Charlie in fact deserted his own family and yet was enraged, on returning after several years, to find that his wife had divorced him and remarried. Furthermore, although he exhorts his mass audiences to 'Vote for White South Africa' (26), the reader has been previously informed about his 'slightly coloured' mistress (taken in response to the divorce), who produces for him a 'slightly coloured child' (266). With bold, sardonic economy Millin thus seeks, almost entirely through the figure of Charlie, to make a travesty of the strike, its leaders and

its aims. Charlie appears to be a caricature of Fisher, the actual strike leader, and Millin's version of the conflict as a whole reveals a rather narrow and selective interest in the actual causes and development of events.

Nevertheless, one must acknowledge Millin's further daring as she switches her focus at the end of the novel almost entirely to Charlie, trapped and desperate in his Fordsburg headquarters (278–280). What is remarkable at this stage is her partial shift from a satirical mode. She enters with some intensity into Charlie's kaleidoscope of feelings, his rationalisations, his fantasies of power, his despair. In this process, while noting his craving for power through the storming of Johannesburg that he had argued for, she also has him acknowledging to himself Daniel's generosity. Our culminating glimpse of Charlie is his refusal to let his fellow strikers shoot the soldier at the end of the street because he recognises that it is Daniel (288). The strike-breaker brother, who had joined an infantry regiment when 'bourgeois Johannesburg [rose] up to defend itself' (277), finding the now dead Charlie (killed by a shell fired by Daniel's fellow officer), is similarly moved by compassion to exclaim: 'My brother' (289).

After this final moment of the action of the novel, Millin moves rapidly to closure by means of rather abstract moralising:

How they had always hated one another, he and Charlie! How the world was full of hate! And what an irony that man, so small, so predestined to suffering, so helpless in his loves and in his longings, should be godlike only in this – in the power of his hate! (292)

What is interesting here is the very selective nature of the moralising. Yes, there *has* been hatred between the brothers, but the feeling each has at the end is shown to be much closer to compassion than hatred. As I have already noted, compassion is the feeling that constantly invades Daniel, and which originally motivated his father to rescue his victimised partner, Jessel.¹⁰ It is a simplistically cynical grid then that Millin tries to impose on her material, sign of an inner clash between instinctive compassion and a sense of irony that seeks to unmask all pretension and deceit. Sometimes the two are counterpoised in the novel, as when Millin insists (relying on another convenient middle-class prejudice) that the women strikers were generally the most violent, and yet also notes with implicit pity how their heavy serge dresses (272) were a better sign of their state of need than their leaders' speeches. That she should have felt drawn, however, to enter so fully into Charlie's consciousness in a vividly imagined final episode is sure testimony to her fictional talent. On the other hand, that a lament about hatred should form her closing observa-

tion shows how inadequate was her grasp of class conflict, and how middle-class bias keeps interfering in the novel with her better judgement.

Conclusions

The myth pervading all the novels surveyed in relation to the mine strikes, whether the writers support the strikers or not, is that non-whites need whites to rule over them. Those who support the strikes are in any case motivated by concern for white worker solidarity in view of the threat that blacks may usurp their jobs. Those who oppose the strikes are primarily disturbed at what is regarded as an erosion of individual choice, yet there is also a lurking fear that such activity will incite blacks to dangerous mass action. Despite this fear Westrup and Brett Young cling to the belief that the white miner can maintain a good relationship with his 'boys', provided they are kept firmly in their subordinate place.

Both male writers in this group, once again Westrup and Brett Young, are totally opposed to unions and strikes. Westrup takes some cognisance of the views of both sides and his protagonist, Hugh Elliott, actually persuades the manager of his mine to deal with legitimate grievances. Brett Young also acknowledges workers' unjust treatment. Westrup, however, is not specially interested in representing meetings, union leaders or scab victimisation. Brett Young goes much further in seeking to brand unions and strikes as forms of despotism or, alternatively, mob rule. By raising the spectre of 'red terror' and emphasising female incitement of strikers he also ensures a strong melodramatic appeal. Two of the women writers are very supportive of unions and their leaders. Edge wrote before the 1913–1914 strikes, but Fenworth has her unwavering support and her heroine's devotion. Bancroft, writing in 1915, takes unions and strike activity with great seriousness, showing whole-hearted, sustained support for Enfield, the union leader, and his associate, Mary Waugh.

Bancroft's *Money's worth* is indeed mainly concerned with the shift of her heroine to a dissident position, culminating in her marriage to Enfield. Bertie Crowte, Everal's erstwhile lover, shifts in the opposite direction and at the same time degenerates morally. However, as his bitterness arises from the loss of his job, Bancroft maintains a degree of sympathy for him. Some respect is also maintained for Everal's mother, brother and aunt, who are not converted, but her uncle is portrayed as the crudest and most ill-informed version of bourgeois, anti-syndicalist feeling. In *Valley of a Thousand Hills* Mills Young

reveals a good deal of sympathy for the Indian plantation strikers especially via the resident engineer, Gommet. Although her protagonist labels Gommet a 'red-hot Socialist' on this account, Heckraft undergoes a degree of conversion (not as far-reaching as Bancroft's Everal, but then nor is Gommet an equivalent of Enfield in terms of working-class solidarity). At the other extreme in her collection of mainly non-dissident characters is Harold Johnson, who reveals white racism at its most opportunist and nasty. Mills Young's other 1915 novel, *The great unrest*, is almost the reverse of Bancroft's *Money's worth* in that the protagonist, Dam Manners, matures by growing *out* of a reckless Socialist phase. Here, the novelist reveals a certain sympathy for workers' acknowledged grievances, though she regards strike leaders as selfishly unconcerned about the consequent suffering of families, and is vigorously opposed to what she detects as an underlying Socialist plot to overthrow the government. Accordingly she finds the deportation of the nine strike leaders a satisfying manoeuvre, even though it is in conflict with the 'Right is might' philosophy she has sought to espouse.

Edge's protagonists have agency and legitimacy unlimited in her eyes. Though Fenworth is a persuasive speaker who arouses great enthusiasm, there is no suggestion that his white worker audience is emotionally swayed or hypnotised by him: their support is presented as governed by solid principle. At the other extreme is Millin, whose Charlie Jordan lacks both agency and legitimacy; his followers, accordingly, can be credited with even less. In Mills Young's *Valley of a Thousand Hills* Gommet regards the Indian strike as a 'dignified revolt against injustice'. Their leader, Mafuza, shows integrity, self-command and intelligent comprehension of the situation that develops. However, while the writer grants the group legitimacy, she diminishes their agency when they become hysterical (though she leaves us in no doubt of how severely they have been provoked by Johnson). The more her protagonist, Dam Manners in *The great unrest*, is drawn into Socialist-type action, the more he loses agency, climaxing in his being trampled underfoot in the January 1914 strike. Westrup's Hugh Elliott is always, for his author, on the side of legitimate action; even his debilitating phthisis only increases our admiration and sympathy, while scarcely diminishing his agency (as shown, for example, by his amazingly quick-witted realisation in the Osmand incident). As with Millin, Brett Young's workers are incited by a 'violence of words', when already well primed with liquor. Whatever legitimacy the workers may have in their need to strike is undermined in Millin's portrayal by the way they become stooges in the hands of what she represents as viciously anarchic, half-depraved leaders.

No violence disturbs Fenworth's meetings in Edge's novel. We do not hear, however, just how he manages to quell a mine mutiny. Chiefly Edge creates the impression that she would not endorse or encourage violence; her highminded wish is rather to promote the 'things of the spirit' (213) in which women's (presumably benign) influence would be powerful (as it is of course in Naomi's relationship with Fenworth). Mills Young in *The great unrest* distinguishes firmly between justified grievances and unjustified methods (that is strike action which for her increasingly produces destructive violence), though it is never made clear what *justified* protest methods would be. The Indians in her other novel only turn violent when confronted by Johnson's unscrupulous and humiliating solution to their strike. Strangely, though, Mills Young does not give more wholehearted support to the Indian passive resistance campaign (which would surely count as a 'justified method'). For Westrup, strikes are in general intolerable because they are equivalent in his eyes to a state of war; as in Millin's view, destructive violence is unavoidable. An interesting aspect of his novel, though, is the way the mine itself comes to seem like an instrument of violence, steadily pounding health and life out of the workers. Brett Young's strike leaders will stop at nothing, not even encouragement to murder scabs and destroy their homes by fire. However, he appears to have no qualms about Hayman's threat to sjambok his team if they respond to the strike. In *The Jordans* Charlie is actually explicitly characterised as a violent speaker – this, in Millin's view, seems to guarantee an irresistible appeal to his blind and ignorant audience. In such a situation Millin is ready to accept that violence is imperative to end the volatile rule of grossly misled strikers.

Edge, unswervingly committed to white worker solidarity, envisages a great future for South Africa through the ultimate amalgamation of the white 'races'. What would happen to the blacks in this process scarcely arouses her interest for a moment. Mills Young's endorsement of white supremacy is qualified in *Valley of a Thousand Hills* by anxiety about the kind of power that can be exercised by a man like Johnson. In her other strike novel, Mills Young is more concerned with trying to imagine some kind of hopeful future beyond the 'great unrest' that has engulfed most of the world. Westrup and Brett Young seek escape for their protagonists from the menacing, disruptive violence of the Reef through consoling, quasi-pastoral lives elsewhere in the Transvaal, though both continue to engage in small-scale mining. Bancroft's ultimate vision is of the need for marital reconciliation and harmony before political commitment can flourish. Millin contemplates the thought of a world without hate, though without any conviction of its possibility. She

seems unaware of how fruitful for a utopian vision would be her implicit endorsement of the value of compassion via Daniel's and Charlie's final stance with regard to each other.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

White Political Conflict in the Twenties and Thirties

For the first time in the history of the United States, the political arena was dominated by a single party, the Democratic Party, for the first time since the Civil War. This was the result of a combination of factors, including the economic depression of the 1930s, the rise of the New Deal, and the decline of the Republican Party. The Democratic Party's victory in the 1932 election was a turning point in American history, marking the beginning of a new era of political and social reform. The New Deal, a series of programs and policies implemented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, aimed to address the economic crisis and provide relief to the unemployed. It also sought to reform the financial system and regulate industry. The Democratic Party's dominance in the 1930s and 1940s was a result of its ability to appeal to a broad cross-section of the American population, including the working class, the poor, and the elderly. This period of Democratic dominance is often referred to as the "New Deal coalition" and is considered one of the most significant eras in American political history.