



Western Cape
ROOTS and REALITIES

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE TRAMWAY UNION 1930 - 1945

MR. C GIFFARD

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

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Information: 021-698531 ext. 544

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Chris Giffard
Dept. of Economic History
University of Cape Town
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Introduction

The Cape union movement was dominated by the Cape Federation of Labour Unions (CFLU) throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Bob Stuart, known to some as the "father of Cape unionism", was the Secretary of the Federation. Surrounded by a group of officials who worked also in the affiliated unions, Stuart resisted any attempts to draw the CFLU into a national federation. Their particular form of trade unionism, which has been called "Cape Chauvinism", was opposed by some Cape unionists, but through various methods, they managed to retain a tight control over trade unions in the Western Cape.¹

The Tramway Union was the first union that successfully rid itself of Stuart's influence. But this only happened in 1936, after years of struggle in the industry. This is the story of the struggles against Stuart in the Tramway Union- an examination of the first defeat of Stuart, and the attempts by militant left-wing workers to change the course of the Union's history, and introduce more democratic procedures into the Union. But it is also the story of the failure of the left-wing to remain dominant in the Tramway Union for a lengthy period, for by the early 1940s this dominance was beginning to flag, and by 1945 had all but disappeared.

The Tramway Union was, from early on in the history of the Cape Federation, one of its strongest and more important unions. After several early attempts to organise the Tramway workers had not been successful for more than a few years at a time, the Cape Federation formed the Cape Town and Camps Bay Workers' Industrial Union (later the Tramway and Omnibus Workers' Union (Cape)) in 1918.² Bob Stuart was the Secretary from its inception. The first few years saw many outbursts of militancy, resulting in vastly improved wages and working conditions, as well as the recognition of the Tramway Union. Thereafter, for a period of over a decade, there were no strikes and disputes.

This history begins in 1930, when the forces of the depression and the "bus war" of the late 1920s began to put pressure on the Tramway workers and when, at the same time, the "sweated labour" of the small independent companies began to play a greater part in the struggles in the industry.³

The Tramway Workers

By the early 1930s, the Tramway industry was emerging from a state of chaos. On the one hand the Tramway Company, which had lost its monopoly through the bus war of the 1920s, was only just beginning to reassert its control, and the surviving independent companies were grouping together to form companies capable of remaining competitive on the feeder routes. On the other, the bus war had also thrown the Tramway Union into turmoil. It was only by 1930 that they began to consider the organisation of the independent companies.

The Union had up to now made little attempt to organise the workers in these independent companies. The Tramway Union expected the workers to flock to them wanting to join up, and were reluctant to put any time, money or energy into the effort.⁴

Although its workforce was fairly decentralised, the industry nevertheless had certain organisational advantages:

"(The workers') conditions of work bring them together in garage and depot canteens where they can discuss grievances; the garage as a unit of organisation is compact and manageable; and there is easy and rapid communication between garages."⁵

The Union at this stage organised a wide range of workers into its ranks. Besides the 2 obvious employment categories, drivers and conductors of trams and buses, there were also a number of categories in the sheds- cleaners, greasers, labourers, blacksmith strikers, painters, overhead linesmen, and trimmers, and a small number of skilled shed foremen, woodworkers and mechanics. The skilled artisans were organised into the ASW and the ASE.

Within the Union, the traffic men (drivers and conductors of trams and buses) were dominant. They formed an "aristocracy" in relation to not only other Tramway workers, but also other workers in Cape Town. What is important here is not so much whether the traffic men should be defined as an "aristocracy", but rather whether they perceived themselves as such, and the effects that this self-perception had on their trade union practices.

Wages in the industry, the Company never tired of informing the Union, were higher than semi-skilled wages in other industries in Cape Town. The skill involved in driving a bus and the responsibility that went with it, ensured a measure of pride in the work, and restricted employment to those able to obtain licences, thus strengthening the bargaining power of the traffic men. In addition, the fact that the drivers and conductors come into contact with the consumers (passengers) meant that the worker was also unavoidably a "representative" of the Company, rather than being hidden away in a factory or workshop. The Company was therefore restricted in its recruitment to "the better type of employee".⁶

Finally, the racial division in the Tramway workforce in Cape Town was a crucial factor in setting the traffic men a step further up the ladder. By the 1930s the traffic men were all white while the shed workers were largely coloured, with a few African labourers. This division was enshrined in an unwritten agreement with the Tramway Company, and strengthened the self-perception of the traffic men as an aristocracy. The division was almost unassailable, so long as the agreement with the Company remained.⁷

Fuller, in his history of London busworkers, argues that the busworkers formed a new "aristocracy" on their own, distinct from the traditional "aristocracy of labour" confined to the skilled trades in 19th century England. He suggests that beside the fact that wages in the industry were the second highest semi-skilled wages in the country, there were a number of other reasons for this.

First, the use of motor buses as opposed to horse-drawn vehicles demanded a new more skilled workforce, which would carry with it "a greater measure of self-esteem and pride", in addition to the higher standards reducing the number of serious applicants for each vacancy, thus increasing the workforce's bargaining power. Second, he finds constant references to "the trade", "giving the impression that the members ... looked upon the occupation as being rather more than a means of earning a living." And third, the fact that the drivers needed to be licensed by a State authority strengthened their notion that they belonged to an elite.⁸ All these factors, writes Fuller, "which

contributed to the sense of 'aristocracy' would also have fuelled the urge towards trade union organisation as a means of safeguarding status."⁹

Fuller's study is restricted to the Traffic men in London. This study of the Cape Town Tramway Union, necessarily includes discussion on the non-traffic workers in the industry. Because the protection that the traffic men gained from this aristocratic status was never what it could be if they were a "real aristocracy", it was also necessary to organise into the Union the other categories of workers in the industry, making clear the character of the Union as an industrial, rather than a craft union. The reason for this industrial character of the organisation goes back to the days of the trams. In this era, the group of workers that held the key to the balance of power in a dispute were those in the power station. It was they who could make the decision to "douse the fires and cut the current" or to keep them going to allow scab labour to keep the trams moving.¹⁰

But once again, the important question is how the workers actually viewed themselves. The traffic men certainly saw themselves as superior to the shed men or road teams. When wage negotiations were discussed, it was on the terms of the traffic men. Their interests, as we shall see later, were presented as the interests of the Union as a whole. But by having some control over the organisation of the non-traffic men, it was possible for the traffic men to have some amount of control over their biggest threat from below- the potential of being undercut by coloured labour.

Stuart and the Industrial Legislation

The period of Stuart's dominance in the Cape Labour movement cannot be understood without reference to the legislative context in which it was based. In 1924 the State, responding to the 1922 crisis on the Rand, introduced the Industrial Conciliation Act. The Act allowed for the legal recognition of trade unions for the first time, although African workers were largely excluded from the provisions.¹¹ The most important aspect for our consideration is that trade unions could apply for registration to the Department of Labour. Similarly,

employers' organisations, organised along lines of industry, could also register. Industrial Councils, with an equal number of employer and worker representatives, could then negotiate legally-binding Industrial Agreements.

Both Davies and Lever have argued that the ICA had debilitating effects on the growth of a militant union movement: the number of strikes was reduced; bureaucratisation increased; the struggles of white and black workers were legally separated; the union membership became apathetic and numbers declined in the short term; and the union officials and employers developed a new "relationship of understanding", leading to a reduction of militancy.¹²

Lewis, however, has shown that in some industries "the techniques of militant trade unionism did survive, particularly amongst semi-skilled factory workers, but also, to some extent, amongst skilled workers."¹³ But more important for us is Nicol's argument that the above points are "inadequate and misleading when one considers the effects of the laws on the class struggle in Cape Town."¹⁴

Nicol argues that the effect of the laws on the Cape unions were entirely different from their effects in the Transvaal. The ICA was the product of class struggles on the Witwatersrand,

"and was, followed by fewer strikes, falling membership and chaos in the Transvaal union movement. In Cape Town, on the other hand, (which was free of any strong or militant unions), the Act resulted in a flowering of organisation and the rebirth and registration of new trade unions."¹⁵

In fact, he argues,

"the new industrial laws of 1924 and 1925 allowed a function to be created for these trade unions. The laws were the precondition for the growth of a more permanent labour movement in the city."¹⁶

Nicol shows how what he calls the "Stuart Machine" used these industrial laws to entrench its dominant position in the Cape labour movement, developing new relationships with the employers, but in a different way from that in the Transvaal. New

unions were formed and recognised by employers directly as a result of these laws. Cape employers, in order to escape the possibility of high wages being imposed on them by the Wage Board, were only too happy to set up Industrial Councils and encourage unionisation of their workforce. The "Stuart Machine" made good use of these fears.

"The Stuart Machine," writes Nicol,¹⁷ relied on two supports: industrial legislation and an alliance between union officials (based in the Cape Federation) and the employers, organized in affiliates to the CCI".

Stuart, with his experience of industrial council bargaining in other industries, tried to foist the council system onto both the companies and the Union. But unfortunately for him, in the tramway industry industrial councils came and went. Especially during the late 1920s and early 1930s, under pressure from both the depression and the bus war, the main concern of the Tramway Company was to reduce wages quite substantially. This the Union representatives on the Industrial Council refused to agree to, despite Company arguments that their wages would remain among the highest in Cape Town. Each of Stuart's efforts ended in deadlock and the deregistration of the Industrial Council.

Nevertheless, Stuart became almost indispensable to the union because of his status as a skilled bureaucrat. He used this position to get his own way in the union. In fact he probably threatened the workers with the withdrawal of his skills more often than he threatened the companies with the withdrawal of union labour- during the 1930s he threatened to resign, and even did so on several occasions, at least once a year.

In addition the financial position of the union even after 1924 (as with most other Cape unions) was such that they could not afford to employ a full-time secretary. And "as long as a union was unable to pay the full salary of its secretary no challenger would seek to unseat him. No one could afford to."¹⁸

The structure of the union itself was moulded to the needs of Stuart. A top-heavy structure, the executive consisted of a chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and four other members, as well as the secretary. The shop stewards, the only direct

contact the Executive had with the rank and file, while attending executive meetings, were considered less important, and were at times prevented from voting on contentious issues. Executive members were paid for attending meetings, and "reliefs" had to be found to fill in their schedules. The Executive members placed themselves "above" the rank and file.

Election to the Executive was considered a promotion by many, and it was from the Executive that the Tramway Company recruited inspectors. This was done for three reasons. Firstly the Company needed inspectors who had had some experience of discipline, and this was often gained on the Executive, where often the members would see to the interests of the Company. Secondly, as the workers at one depot complained, "as soon as the men obtained a good Shop Steward or Executive member he was taken away from them by being offered an Inspector's position."¹⁹ The Company thus contrived to deprive the workers of their more efficient representatives. Thirdly, the Executive member concerned was offered a choice between a salaried position with a much higher income, and a commitment to the union. Although some members decided that their first commitment was to the union, it was not unusual for one of the more militant Executive members to bow to family and other pressures and accept the post. The Executive thus became a "training ground" for the Tramway Company and a "launching pad" for the careers of some of the membership.²⁰

As well as the more conventional tasks of the Executive, such as the negotiating of agreements, it also played a disciplinary role within the industry. Personal disputes were referred to the Executive, which always tried to settle them amicably. Added to this, it was the Executive which decided on the issues of seniority.²¹ The social security role of the Tramway Union was, in the absence of any security from either the Company or the State, an important one. The provision of victimisation pay, especially in the early 1930s, to the independent companies' workers for giving evidence to the Wage Board or Industrial Agents, or for being a member of the Union, was a large drain on the Union's funds. In addition the Union had a Distress Fund and co-operated to form a separate Sick Fund, which was later taken over by the Company.²²

Involvement of the rank and file in union affairs was restricted to quarterly general meetings (or Special General Meetings in times of crisis) and depot meetings, the frequency, or even existence, of which depended on the dynamism of the shop steward in question.

Unorganised opposition to Stuart's dominance had begun as early as 1926, the first time that Stuart resigned. Stuart reported to the CFLU that

"some difficulty had arisen as to his position and the Tramway Union had chosen to appoint him for 3 months which he raised no objections to but he felt after the service he had given that the Tramwaymen were treating him with a good deal of suspicion and for that reason he had decided to give up the position."²³

Workers in the independent companies, in fact, provided some of the first organised opposition to Stuart's dominance. But these workers from the smaller companies had begun to trouble Stuart an inordinate amount and it is possible that it is for this reason that the Union had an ambivalent position towards organising them. While it was necessary to organise them in order to persuade the Minister of the Union's representivity, they constituted the most vigorous opposition to Stuart's policies.²⁴ The main problems came from the workers of the Peninsula Transport Limited (PTL). These workers had a fairly high proportion of Jewish immigrants. The four owners of the PTL were Jewish, and they reserved the conductors positions for Jewish immigrants, some of whom were unable as yet to speak English. As in other areas, some of these workers brought with them radical traditions, and were a potentially strong force in opposition to Stuart's reformism.²⁵

An organisation of the independent busmen, the Private Omnibus Employees' Union, based in the PTL sheds and buses was in contact with the Tramway Union since mid-1930. There was some conflict between the two unions, it seems, until the private union wrote to the Tramway Union expressing a wish to end the "war of the unions".²⁶ The private union, began to pose a threat to Stuart when the two organisations discussed amalgamation in mid-1931. The private union made a range of demands including

that for a joint secretary, but the more powerful Tramway Union resisted them. Eventually the PTL was given one Executive position and two shop stewards (one each for buses and sheds) as representation in the union. Emmerich was one of those elected and immediately became a thorn in Stuart's side.

It was no easy task to get the PTL workers into the Tramway Union. Any one attempting to join it in the past was immediately dismissed. Ernest Stokell, another PTL unionist working with Emmerich described it like this:

"If any man went to the Tramway Union he'd get dismissed. Well, Emmerich and I would go round and meet Murray (a long-time Exec member -later Industrial Agent)- Murray lived in Woodstock. And in those days you had the back lanes in Woodstock. And we used to go to Murray's house through the back lanes- zig zag so no one could see where we were going. And then we had to see Bob Stuart. You see, the Company used to spy on us and we climbed through a window into the Trades Hall to go and see Bob Stuart."²⁷

The 1932 Strike

In mid-1932, when the PTL workers joined the Tramway Union, the opposition to Stuart began to take a more systematic form. Emmerich, an active member of the Friends of the Soviet Union (FSU), the workers' Defence League and other left-wing organisations, came into contact with Douglas Wolton, previously Secretary of the Communist Party, who came to Cape Town after being banned from the Witwatersrand. The policy of the Party was to foster "direct class struggle", exposing the conflict between capital and labour. The CP's trade union organ, the African Federation of Trade Unions (AFTU), had been revived in 1931 as the successor to the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions, with the object of creating:

"a revolutionary class struggle, uniting all workers, black and white, against the Government, Employers and Trade Union Bureaucrats who now form a united trinity against the workers."

Any use of "class collaboration legislation" was opposed, in contrast to the earlier approach of the CP of using the legal machinery available. The AFTU was never a Federation as such, but confined itself to developing rank and file "revolutionary opposition groups in the existing unions."²⁸

The AFTU, after having failed in a strike at the African Clothing Factory, now directed all its attention to the Tramway Union.²⁹ The organisation used precisely the approach outlined above in dealing with the Tramway leadership. At least 8 leaflets were distributed to the tramway workers between August and November of 1932. And, as a follow-up, they worked closely with a group of militant workers, urging them to press for "direct strike action".³⁰

Although the leaflets dealt with specific issues that arose during this period, some common themes are evident. Firstly, there was an attack on the company for retrenchments, "trapping" and attempting to cut wages yet further. Secondly, they attacked "Stuart and Co." for selling out the workers by trying to "break their fighting spirit" and channel it into an Industrial Council where Stuart could retain control. They also accused "Stuart and Co." of assisting the Company to carry out wage reductions. Thirdly, the leaflets urged the workers to "prepare for strike action", and to set up "rank and file Committees of Action" to coordinate a strike.

The organisation of a militant pro-AFTU faction within the union took place in a clandestine manner. Ray Alexander and Wolton would meet individual workers at the beachfront, and persuade them to argue for strike action. Ernest Stokell later described Wolton's method of operating as "sort of behind the scenes, like a mole kind of thing. He didn't come into contact with the union because Bob Stuart went wild when he knew we were talking to him."³¹

Stuart's response to the intervention of the AFTU was a heavy-handed one. He took the leaflets to the CID and laid a charge. The CID then raided the Long Street offices of the FSU, from where the AFTU operated. Accusing Emmerich of providing the AFTU with the information for their leaflets, he refused to continue with union business while Emmerich remained on the

Executive. The Chairman thus summarily suspended Emmerich until the matter was cleared up.

The general mood of militancy amongst the rank and file at this time, however, was not possible to quell so easily merely by suspending individuals. By November 1932, the build-up of tension surrounding the Tramway Company's intransigence had reached a high pitch. An Industrial Council set up in August on Stuart's insistence to negotiate a new Agreement had deregistered in early November, unable to reach any consensus. With Stuart's promise of effective negotiation using industrial legislation crushed, the idea of "direct action", argued for by Emmerich and the AFTU leaflets, was an increasingly viable option. And it was not only the new wage agreement that was at issue. The trapping system, the appointment of a former police major as the Company's Welfare Officer, retrenchments and the speed-up had all become major points of concern for the Tramway workers.

Stuart was unable to keep the militancy of the Tramway workers in check. At a meeting in early December Stuart was forced to release the results of a ballot which had been conducted at the end of August, which effectively gave the Executive the power to call a strike. The results were that 640 voted for the Executive to take action and 20 against. The strike began immediately, the meeting finished. Teams of messengers took news of the decision to those waiting at the depots.³²

"All the shop stewards waited at their depot to get the word," says Ernest Stokell, "and then we had a team of men that was going to put the buses out of order." This the team did fairly effectively - bus tyres were slashed, sugar was poured into the petrol tanks and the essential parts of trams were removed and hidden.³³

What followed was a new kind of "bus war", the likes of which the Cape Town tramway industry had never seen. For ten days, the union members broke into garages to put the independent buses out of action, kidnapped an inspector, assaulted scabs and manned pickets (effectively roadblocks) on the Main Road between Cape Town and Wynberg. The passenger transport system simply did not operate. The police refused to provide protection for the Company which wanted to run a skeleton service, the Minister arguing that while "the (Justice) Department's policy is that

life and property will be rigidly protected at the existing bus depots...any emergency bus service by way of breaking the strike will not receive police protection."³⁴

The wage demands of the Union were for an increase from 1s 9d an hour for drivers and 1s 6d for conductors to a flat rate of 2s an hour for both. Suggestions by the Company for a Wage Board hearing came too late, and the strikers were determined to continue the strike. After about 5 days however Stuart began to reassert control over the strike committee (effectively the Executive). He wrote to the Minister of Labour, saying that the strike was an error on the union's part, due to a misunderstanding of the last Wage Board Determination which had not been published:

"It may be frankly said here and now that, had we known the contents of the Wage Board report prior to the strike taking place, no strike decision would have been taken. Unfortunately, the report was not published."

The critical clause in the Wage Board report stated:

"The disappearance of excessive competition should, in the Board's opinion, lead to employers being able to pay even higher wages than those contained in the recommendation."

These few words apparently restored the union's (or Stuart's) faith in the legislative machinery. Stuart persuaded a mass meeting in the City Hall that the Wage Board was sure to increase wages considerably.³⁵ The union was thus prepared to accept the intervention of the Wage Board, as long as there was no victimisation, all members were covered by the determination, and that wages and all working conditions would be dealt with.

The Tramway Company, clearly gaining the upper hand, added a range of strict conditions: the strikers would return to work immediately, stop orders were to be stopped, neither the union officials nor shop stewards would be recognised, that strikes be made illegal under an amended ICA, and that the union take responsibility for the stolen and damaged equipment. The balance of power at this stage, however, was much too equal for the company to succeed with such radical demands, and the strike

continued. But 3 days later, a mass meeting of workers decided to end the strike, and agreed to a Wage Board sitting in January.³⁶

The 1932 strike was a defeat for the Tramway workers. Wages of conductors were raised only minimally to 1s 8d, and those of drivers not at all. The Company withdrew its recognition of the union, refused to collect stop-orders any longer, or to have any relations with Stuart, and the Industrial Conciliation Act was amended to make strikes in the industry illegal.³⁷ While the Union was unsuccessful in its wage demands, it did manage to avert further wage cuts. This in itself was a minor victory. But it was a long while before the Union regained its many losses. After a number of months, the Company informed the Executive that it was prepared to establish a Works Committee, consisting of both workers' and employers' representatives. Stuart vehemently opposed this scheme, arguing that it was a "back-door method of representation", an attempt on the part of the Company to exclude him from the negotiating process. But other Executive members supported the system arguing that it was possible to retain the Executive as an important structure, and that the Executive itself could be represented on the Works Committee. Eventually the scheme went ahead.³⁸

The Rise of Jimmie Emmerich

Meanwhile the struggles for control by the left continued. Wolton unsuccessfully opposed Stuart in the elections for secretary in early 1933. Soon after this he was convicted for his role in the strike, after Stuart gave evidence against him, and he was sentenced to 3 months hard labour. On the completion of this sentence, he left for England to take a job as a journalist. Emmerich, on being re-elected to the Executive, continued to run into trouble as a result of his connections with the AFTU. The Executive decided that no member of the trade union could belong to 2 different transport organisations, and Emmerich, branded as an AFTU member, was given a week to decide which organisation to resign from. He refused to do this and was suspended from the Executive once more.³⁹

Emmerich's militant strategies continued. After issuing a document attacking Stuart's leadership, the Executive took steps

in a libel suit against him. In July a general meeting decided to reinstate him on condition that he did not take Executive Committee business "outside". In response Stuart resigned, successfully forcing the rank and file to reconsider this decision.

Emmerich's differences with Stuart at this stage were fundamental. Emmerich put his case to a Cape Federation meeting dealing with Stuart's resignation:

"He was in favour of militant action and was against the Industrial Legislation as it caused the workers to become apathetic. The workers should dictate the policy- not an individual such as Mr Stuart or any other person. He claimed that they were fighting on a policy which would build up the trade union movement."

Bob Stuart, on the other hand, said Emmerich, "represented a policy which was extinct, viz. industrial legislation, and he (Emmerich) disagreed with the policy of bringing in arbitration and legal men."⁴⁰

Nevertheless, around this time Emmerich's strategy changed. While Nesbitt was appointed acting secretary, Emmerich offered to resign if the membership wanted him to. At a "double" general meeting the members voted by 105 to 12 that he should do so: a graphic display either of the lack of support for Emmerich's political line or of the indispensability with which Stuart was viewed (or both).⁴¹ So Stuart returned once again and immediately went about setting up a new industrial council. Emmerich opposed this at a general meeting, arguing for "direct negotiation" instead, with the result that this "half" of the meeting voted against the industrial council. This however was overturned by the second meeting and the Council went ahead.⁴²

It was at this stage that Emmerich's "rise to power and prominence" began. With the first publication of the South African Road Transport Worker, the national journal of the Council of Transport Workers, a magazine committee was set up in Cape Town to send in contributions and to organise distribution. Emmerich was elected secretary of the committee, prompting Stuart to participate in order to keep an eye on things.

At the beginning of the following year, 1934, Emmerich was once again elected to the Executive, and proved to be a more valuable member than most by putting his energy into organising the workers in the smaller companies. By as early as March, Emmerich was in charge of the Imperial, Cardinal, Grassy Park and Constantia Bus Services, thus gaining a strong foothold amongst the independent companies. By this time, Emmerich was not alone on the Executive. Maurice Kagan, later a prominent CP member and trade unionist, began his political career in the Tramway Union.⁴³ Also an employee in the PTL, he assisted Emmerich in his organisational tasks.

The problems of the left were not restricted to the work of Stuart however. When in late 1934 the PTL was absorbed by the Tramway Company, both Emmerich and Kagan were not re-employed by the Company. An attempt to call a strike while Stuart was away in Port Elizabeth failed as the Executive managed to hold things up until he got back. Although they remained on the Executive and drew victimisation pay, the majority of the Executive seemed not too sympathetic.

Nicol writes that "Stuart and his followers...used and abused their constitutional power and real power as officials to keep control of the (any) union. If this proved inadequate, they could rely on the employers to help dispose of dissident elements."⁴⁴ Stuart certainly didn't strain himself to negotiate the reinstatement of two of his most active Executive members. At an Executive meeting, after being criticised for his failure, he said that "the unofficial action (while he was in Port Elizabeth) was tantamount to a vote of no-confidence in the deputation to management, with the result that he was not prepared to take any further action while this stigma had been placed on the deputation...(He was) of the opinion that nothing more could be done, but as there seemed to be some difference of opinion...perhaps it would be in the best interests of the organisation to have a special meeting (to decide on further action)."⁴⁵

Eight Executive members, a majority at this Special Meeting, felt that the Tramway Company was justified in these "retrenchments". Stuart did not even attend the meeting. However, their hand forced by a threatened strike ballot, Stuart and the

Chairman again met Management and this time were able to report, after "paying tribute to the manner in which Mr Fenwick (the General Manager) had received the deputation", that the victimised activists had been re-engaged.⁴⁶

But whatever the truth behind Stuart's role in this victimisation, tensions between Stuart and Emmerich remained high during this period. Emmerich, often supported by other rank and filers, was openly critical of Stuart's relationship with management especially.

The next election brought the conflict even closer to a head. Emmerich was elected Chairman of the Tramway Union and this forced him and Stuart into a close working relationship. Stuart's last year in the union was to be a turbulent one. In fact around mid-year he nearly pushed his threats of resignation too far and only by virtue of his remaining support on the Executive did he manage to hold onto his position. After alleging misconduct in the election of Emmerich and refusing to sit on the Executive with another leftist, Marcus, Stuart resigned. The Executive, still not able to manage without him, organised a ballot to see if the membership would accept his resignation. Despite Stuart's objections, who at this stage seemingly wanted to be rid of the union, the union decided by 354 votes to 289 to accept the resignation. With Stuart still objecting, the Executive ruled that because of irregularities, the ballot should be held again. Stuart then informed the Executive that he would resume his post if a midnight meeting wanted him to, but on condition that there was no ballot. The meeting of just over a hundred members decided that he should continue.⁴⁷

With havoc in the union and unconstitutional behaviour on the part of the Executive, Emmerich was, at the end of 1935, at last put up as Secretary to oppose Stuart directly. But first, it was necessary to amend the constitution to allow for a full-time secretary. Stuart, as secretary of the Cape Federation as well as other unions, was able to survive financially on only a part-time salary. With relatively bad financial conditions in the unions, this was one of the ways in which he remained in power. For anyone to oppose Stuart seriously, it was necessary to provide full-time employment in order to safeguard the contender from victimisation.

The constitution was amended and Emmerich defeated Stuart in the elections. The ability of Emmerich to carry off this victory in the face of Stuart's dominance of the Executive is not easy to explain. While Stuart was clearly not a popular figure amongst the rank and file, neither did Emmerich have very broad popular support. Clearly he had very little support on the Executive. And in 1933 he had been asked to resign by the membership by 105 votes to 12. Ernest Stokell suggests that it was Emmerich's dynamism that enabled him to win the election:

"The man who shouted ... with the tramway people in those days, and even today, I think, the man who shouts the most gets the support. And Emmerich used to go round having little meetings at the various depots and there were a lot of depots in those days, you had a small depot at Maitland, Westerford Bridge, Camps Bay, Sea Point, one in Strand Street, Ravenscraig Road..."⁴⁸

And it was these small depots that Emmerich was given the task of organising, often working with the men in recognition struggles and even strikes at times. Clearly Emmerich's new approach of performing important organisational work rather than merely being seen to be attacking Stuart's policies and pushing his own "direct action" philosophy was important in the elections.

But it was possibly by "default" more than anything else that Emmerich won the election. Although Stuart had been with the union for 18 years, discontent was never absent, the financial position of the union was- although improving- still poor, the wages of the traffic men were the lowest in the country, and Stuart was seen by the membership to be blocking any combination with the the organised workers in the rest of the country, either industrial (through the SACTW) or general (through the TLC). Another major grievance, which emerged at many a general meeting, was Stuart's relationship with management- the rank and file clearly did not trust him.⁴⁹ It is suggested then, that the rank and file of the Tramway Union did not necessarily at all agree with Emmerich's politics or even his approach to trade unionism, but rather that after so many years of Stuart's control, Emmerich

represented a break with this past, and new possibilities of improved conditions.

It was not only in the Tramway Union that Stuart's ~~ejection~~ was important. Stuart had been the dominant figure in the Cape Union movement since the formation of the Cape Federation in 1915. His defeat in the Tramway Union was the first in a series. Stuart's union empire in the Cape was at last beginning to crumble. Although a full discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper, Stuart's defeat started a reaction against him that ended in his loss of control of the Cape Federation itself in 1941.

But for the Tramway Union itself, the election of Jimmie Emmerich as its first full-time secretary ushered in a new phase in its history, one in which it soon came to be regarded as one of the most progressive trade unions in the Western Cape.

The New Politics of the Tramway Union

From the very start of Emmerich's term of office, his support base began to expand. He fast gained the respect of a greater part of the union membership. A dynamic activist, he learned the ropes fast and worked very closely with other respected union leaders, such as Allan Nesbitt, the Union Treasurer.⁵⁰

Supported by a majority on the Executive, Emmerich set out to implement many of the changes the left had been pushing for while Stuart was Secretary. The first major change concerned the issue of unity, and the Tramway Union became the first Cape union to break from the isolationist policies of Stuart. After inviting representatives of the South African Council of Transport Workers (SACTW) to speak at a General Meeting, the Executive decided unanimously to affiliate the union to this body. While Stuart had in the past, with the active support of the Executive, kept the union away because of a concern that it was a "plot" to form a national transport union, the leadership now supported the Council for the very same reason.

Both Emmerich and Nesbitt argued strongly for the need for a national organisation of transport workers. Similarly they used their positions in the Cape Federation to push for unity

between the Federation and the Trades and Labour Council. And it was largely due to their efforts that these two bodies signed unity agreements in 1938. While many of the Executive members had, under Stuart's leadership, supported his isolationist policies, they now changed their tune when Stuart's intransigent and underhand stance became clear. While Stuart's politics were relatively easy to define, this is not the case with Emmerich. On the one hand, he worked closely with key party members in the early 1930s, arguing the "party line" for "direct action". He was an active and leading member of the Cape branch of the Friends of the Soviet Union, was also active in the League Against Fascism, and displayed a keen interest in the international struggle against fascism, referring constantly to the Spanish civil war and guiding the union to active support for these struggles.⁵¹ A large proportion of the union membership regarded him as a "communist".

Ernest Stokell said: "Emmerich was a communist. He didn't say he was, but he was a Friend of Soviet Russia...Emmerich's idea was communism, and (while) Bob Stuart believed in trade unionism...Emmerich was more 'of the masses'."⁵²

However, although Emmerich was sympathetic to the party and its aims, he was never a party member, nor a communist. It is a tactic often used by reformists to label someone a communist in order to scare away potential support. Stuart did this quite considerably, especially against Emmerich, in the early 1930s.

In his writing, Emmerich certainly never pushed an open party line.⁵³ It could be argued that he was presenting himself as a particular kind of politician publicly, for obvious tactical reasons. But Ray Alexander, who had known Emmerich during the strike of 1932, and worked in the Cape labour movement since that time, said that he was one of those unionists who party members worked with, and influenced during this period, rather than actually being a member of the party.⁵⁴

Emmerich could thus be described as a socialist with syndicalist tendencies, sympathetic to the Communist Party with which he worked closely. From the time that he was elected Secretary, he became a full-time union activist and continued to take on more and more responsibilities. As well as doing a large amount of organising work in other industries when his skills

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were needed there, he also began to accept official positions. When in 1938 the Cape union felt that the Council of Transport Workers was in need of some dynamism, they argued at the conference that headquarters should be moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town, using the threat of disaffiliation. Conference agreed, and Emmerich was elected Secretary of the Council, Nesbitt the President. This meant that the Transport Journal also had to move to Cape Town, and Emmerich, once again the only experienced union member in Cape Town, was appointed editor.

The editorial politics of the journal changed considerably the moment it moved. Emmerich began to publish more articles about international struggles against fascism, used the journal as a pro-trade union unity organ, and allowed space for leading Party members, such as Bill Andrews, as well as other leftists, to put forward their conceptions of South African history and contemporary politics. As Secretary of the Council, he also began to spend more time responding to appeals for help from other centres, and played an active role in negotiating agreements in Bloemfontein and Durban.

In 1937, Emmerich was elected to the Executive of the Cape Federation, and in 1939, in his capacity as secretary of the TLC-affiliated Council of Transport Workers, he was elected to the Executive of the Trades and Labour Council. An unsuccessful attempt to win a seat in parliament in 1938, and then in 1941, his election as Secretary of the Cape Federation completed Emmerich's profile achievements.

As far as his union work itself was concerned, Emmerich proved himself to be an able negotiator on the Industrial Council, gaining the respect of the Executive and rank and file alike.⁵⁵ Using this industrial machinery, Emmerich managed to secure what was described as the best increase in the history of the union in an agreement that was to stand for 5 years. The Cape Town traffic men had always been the lowest-paid in their category in the country. This, it was argued, was due to the fact that the rest of the country had municipalised tramway systems, while in Cape Town it was privately owned. By contrast, the shedworkers in Cape Town were the best paid in the country, largely because African labour was employed elsewhere while in Cape Town it was coloured labour.⁵⁶ In addition, Emmerich's

approach was that any agreement which did not include a similar increase for the shedmen should not even be considered. While the 1937 Wage Agreement still fell short of the level of Johannesburg traffic workers, the gap was significantly reduced. As a result the whole Executive was returned in the elections in January 1938.⁵⁷

The financial position of the Union began to improve considerably after 1936. The Cape Town centre provided the basis of support for both the Council of Transport Workers and its journal. They were also able to invest £1 000 in the new Trades Hall when the Cape Federation began to build it.

Although the structures of the union remained substantially the same, Emmerich attempted to strengthen contact with the rank and file. He urged the dynamising of the shop stewards' functions, and the holding of more frequent depot meetings. In the Cape Town Notes of the Journal, he wrote:

"I wish to recommend, in the interests of the Union, that the members and shop stewards pay more attention to this important part of the Union's work. The membership as a whole should be acquainted with the individual grievances of members and must learn that collective discussion and decision is far more useful and healthy to the Union than individual effort...The leadership can only tackle these grievances efficiently and to the satisfaction of members when they are in constant touch with the rank and file, and depot meetings have in the past, and will in the future, have the effect of keeping them in touch."⁵⁸

Politically the Executive attempted to provide as progressive a leadership as possible. An attempt to send a Tramway Union delegate to the Soviet Union in 1937 for the 20th Anniversary of the Revolution was nearly carried, but dropped due to financial considerations, after a reformist backlash on the Executive.⁵⁹ In 1939, after Emmerich and Nesbitt had been supplying the Guardian to the membership out of their own pockets for 3 years, the Executive decided to buy 20 dozen a week out of the journal fund and to distribute them to depots free of charge.⁶⁰

Restraints on the Leadership

On one level it is tempting to see the period of Emmerich's leadership as one in which the rank and file of the Union managed to rid itself of reformist elements along with Stuart and assert the interests of the rank and file membership. But the issue is not as straight forward as it seems. That certain changes did occur in the union during this period, and that these changes were important ones, is undeniable. But the more important question concerns the limitations of this change.

This is most evident in the field of relations between white and coloured workers in the union. This is one of the areas in which Emmerich met most resistance in his progressive policies. The other area is that of industrial relations, where, despite Emmerich's earlier calls for direct negotiation with management rather than using the Industrial Council system, it is not possible to find instances of Emmerich opposing the use of the latter. Emmerich later wrote that "much can be said for the usefulness of the Industrial Conciliation Act and much can be said against it."⁶¹

This position is probably due to Emmerich's success as a negotiator on the Council, where he managed to win substantial increases for the membership. But despite these increases, it seems that the use of this machinery led to an inability of the left to mould the union into a democratic structure. No matter how much Emmerich reported back on Industrial Council meetings, refused to make decisions without consulting the membership, or urged more regular and frequent depot meetings, the rank and file still did not play a more active role in the affairs of the union. The very structures of the Industrial Council system were designed, as Davies suggests, to exclude the rank and file and to restrict the active participation in the negotiating process to a union bureaucracy. Emmerich, whether he liked it or not, was now the leader of that bureaucracy.

The structures of the union were an integral part of this bureaucracy. The fact that the shop stewards took second place to the generally elected officials meant, in effect, that "being in constant touch with the rank and file" took second place to the operation of the union above the heads of the rank and file.

After a year in office, Emmerich managed to increase the number of shop stewards but it seems that this was the limit of reforms in this area.⁶²

It must be noted, though, that the effects of the legislation on the white labour movement that Davies outlines are certainly not all present here. Emmerich's commitment to building what he saw as a progressive union was some kind of a buffer to this occurrence. But the question remains as to whether the continued use of the legislative structures rather than the building of new ones was a major factor in the inhibition of the growth of the union as a truly progressive one. For, try as the leadership might to encourage democratic participation in union affairs, the very structure of the union, as well as the structures in which they participated in negotiations, left little room for collective action, or participation of the rank and file, besides the occasional depot meeting or general meeting.

But blame for the inability of the left to effect significant changes in the union cannot simply be placed on structures provided by the State. For then the question must be why the union continued to use these structures. It was not illegal to by-pass the legislative system completely and to use "direct negotiation".

The conservative nature of the rank and file was certainly a major problem faced by the leadership. Their experience of trade unionism was the paternalism of Bob Stuart, who contrived to exclude them from decision-making. And their reasons for rejecting Stuart in favour of Emmerich was not so much a feeling of lack of control over their trade union as a dissatisfaction with the concrete results of Stuart's leadership. The tramway workers were a relatively privileged "aristocracy", notwithstanding their low wages compared to those in other centres. They struggled to retain their positions of privilege, sometimes in conflict with the "official" line of the union leadership.⁶³

The traffic men employed by the Tramway Company were white, and one of their sectional concerns was the possibility of undercutting by coloured labour. So while the union leadership asserted a non-racial position, there were a number of petitions

received from white traffic men concerning the attempts by the Company to employ coloured labour on certain routes. The leadership tried not to rock the boat, as it were, when it came to issues like this, as is seen from this extract from the Executive minutes:

"Bro. Greenfield reported that there was a certain amount of agitation amongst the men who were claiming that the Company was employing some non-Europeans as drivers and conductors. The Secretary pointed out that he, personally was not concerned with whether the Company employed Europeans or non-Europeans, as long as the men were of decent appearance and there was no attempt to undercut wages and reduce conditions in the industry. Bro. Nesbitt drew attention to the fact that it was the policy of the Company to employ Europeans as drivers and conductors, and agreement had been reached years ago that only men who had as European appearance would be employed. He felt that the Company should be reminded of this undertaking."⁶⁴

But the war forced the Union to confront the issue. With a shortage of white male labour, the Union had to agree to the employment of white men not prepared to fight, women or coloured labour from the sheds on the traffic staff as conductors. After months of debate, it was finally agreed to accept white women, under certain conditions, but under no circumstances would coloured labour be contemplated. As coloureds constituted about 30 % of the Union membership, this naturally gave rise to tensions.⁶⁵ One of the Executive stalwarts, Bro. King, was a coloured worker who had represented the sheds for nearly ten years, and Bro. Gideon, another coloured Executive member objected strongly to the decision not to allow coloured workers onto the buses. These objections were supported by the National Liberation League which continually pressed the union to allow coloured traffic men on coloured routes, but to no avail.⁶⁶

Women were clearly less of a threat to the long-term security of the white traffic men than coloured members of their own union. It was probably recognised that it was easier to remove them from those positions when the situation returned to normal. The actions of the white workers, as a privileged stratum in the industry and dominant (politically and numerically) within the Union, in making this choice are not surprising. But their

actions are symptomatic of a conservative group of workers, not highly skilled but highly privileged, who are more concerned to further their own interests as a privileged stratum rather than the interests of the working class as a whole. And this particular issue shows how the leadership which was strongly non-racial in its outlook, and Emmerich in particular, was unable to assert this non-racialism, and was forced to bow to the racist interests of the dominant grouping within the Union.⁶⁷

Opposition to Emmerich's Leadership

These problems facing the left leadership were compounded by internal ideological opposition to them throughout the period in which they were in control. This opposition ranged from supporters of Stuart who were left behind without a leader when Stuart was thrown out, to Afrikaner Nationalists, some of them members of the Ossewa Brandwag, who agitated continually from the late 1930s onwards.

The reformist opposition was at first the major problem. On the one hand they continually opposed the political alliances that the union was beginning to make, for example when collaborating with the League Against Fascism and War, or the Friends of the Soviet Union. In fact, it was largely due to the efforts of this group that the Tramway Union were unable to send a representative to the Soviet Union to attend the 20th anniversary celebrations. On the other hand they tried to get the rank and file to oppose Emmerich by exposing him as "wasteful". After only 6 months in office, Emmerich refused a travel allowance offered to him by the Executive on the grounds that it was supported by some members only in order to make him more expensive. But a resolution put to a general meeting by this group, arguing for a part-time Secretary in mid-1937, won only three votes out of 130.⁶⁸

In 1939, this group again went on the offensive when they accused Emmerich of attempting to steal £100, by persuading the Cape Town Union to loan the Johannesburg Union £1 000 and getting a 10% cut. Although the attack was averted, it was at this point that it was ascertained that the Executive member concerned, Bro. Boyd, as well as being responsible for other attacks on the

leadership, was in constant contact with Bob Stuart who, it was suspected, was behind the attacks.⁶⁹

The differences between Emmerich and the reformist grouping connected to Stuart had changed. The issue of the use of the Industrial Council as opposed to "direct action" was no longer in contention. There were now three major differences: first, the reformist grouping opposed the political activities of the Union, arguing that a trade union should take a "neutral" political stance; second they opposed the Union's policy of providing financial support for struggles in other industries; and thirdly, it was the reformists who were most vocal in pushing the interests of the traffic men as opposed to those of the Tramway Workers as a whole.

In 1940 Boyd mounted new attacks on Emmerich. He accused him of "messing up" the finances of the union, whereas, he argued, when Stuart was Secretary the finances were in good shape. Emmerich responded by showing how in fact the union was much better off financially than it had been before 1936. Boyd was forced to apologise, but managed to score a victory at the same time. Many of the members had become disenchanted with the Guardian as a result of its pro-Soviet position on the Finnish crisis, and Boyd managed to persuade a majority of Executive members to sever all connections with the newspaper.⁷⁰ Then Stuart was nominated for the position of Secretary in February but his nomination was rejected by the Executive.

More ominous, though less of an immediate political threat, were the attempts by the far right to create dissension in the union. Although they were never strong enough to actually take control of the union, their constant presence from the late 1930s onwards had a destabilising effect on the union. As early as mid-1937, Emmerich reported that he had been informed that Albert Hertzog was planning to move in on Cape Town with his Afrikaner Nationalist unions. The plan was to take over existing unions by disruptions, and his first target in Cape Town was to be the Tramway Union, probably because of its "radical" image. The immediate response of the leadership was to establish a "closed shop" in the industry.⁷¹

When the first Afrikaner Nationalists began to make themselves heard in the Union, the Executive was extremely

cautious. Instead of taking immediate action as threatened, there was hesitation. The Executive was concerned about two possible outcomes: first the possibility of a legal case, for they had just lost one, and second, that of a split in the Union. It was necessary to actually threaten democratically-minded workers to stop them from taking independent action. But eventually it became necessary to declare the Union's war policy. There were 14 "vocal Nazis" identified, and the policy declaration was to be a legal security in case the membership decided to take action. The resolution, carried by 800 votes to 15, supported the South African government entirely in the war effort, decided to fight Nazism here and overseas, and demanded the internment of Nazis who publicly supported the aims of Hitler.⁷²

The right-wing action was starting in earnest, however, and Emmerich received a letter threatening his life if the Union took action against members of the Ossewa Brandwag. He was immediately ordered by the Executive to buy a bullet-proof vest and a revolver. It is not clear if it was this threat that held the Executive back from taking action, or whether this inaction was the result of the fear of legal action or a split in the Union.

But only a few months later, a midnight meeting decided that Ossewa Brandwag members should resign from that organisation within 7 days or face expulsion. No one resigned however, and the Executive extended the deadline by two weeks, probably in the hope that the Nazis would leave quietly. Again nothing happened until Bezuidenhout, another Ossewa Brandwag member, was overheard to say that the Executive was "only bluffing" and that they could do nothing.

Bezuidenhout, when summoned to meet the Executive, succeeded in causing one of the most tumultuous meetings of the year, by accusing the Chairman, Viveiros, of siding with him and suggesting that there was a secret alliance between Viveiros and the Ossewa Brandwag. Eventually it was decided to suspend Bezuidenhout until the next general meeting, not for his membership of the Ossewa Brandwag, it was stressed, but for causing friction.⁷³ When eventually the general meeting was held it was decided not to uphold the suspension, and the matter was dropped.⁷⁴

This was as far as the issue of Afrikaner Nationalism in the Tramway Union ever got. It was never mentioned in Executive meetings again. Presumably the Nazis were quietened by this episode. But the Bezuidenhout issue itself forced major tensions onto the surface on the Executive. It was found that Viveiros, the Chairman, if not pro-Nazi then certainly was not anti-Nazi. Tensions erupted between Viveiros and Emmerich, with the result that Viveiros was suspended from the Executive.⁷⁵

An alliance between Viveiros and the reformist opposition to Emmerich, led by Boyd, was developing. A malicious rumour circulated around Johannesburg that Emmerich was in prison after being convicted of stealing £ 2 000 from the Tramway Union had to be squashed. And Emmerich, despite opposition from some executive members, accepted the post of Secretary of the Cape Federation after Stuart resigned. In the next election, both Viveiros and Emmerich were returned to their respective positions, but Emmerich's support had dwindled somewhat, and he polled just less than 50% of the votes cast.⁷⁶

Conclusion

The "progressive period" in the history of the Tramway Union ended all too soon. Jimmie Emmerich, a virtual "one-man show", was first thrown out for drunkenness and theft of Union funds in 1942. Although, after a short spell in the army, he was re-elected Secretary the following year, these patterns continued and he was again ejected in 1944.⁷⁷

Emmerich, because he was so impressive as an individual, was also in high demand for responsible positions. He took on most of the positions he was offered, and until the 1940s, with the exception of a few tiffs, he handled the fast increasing load admirably. But in all likelihood, the pressure just became too much for him.

Further, with his reliance on Nesbitt, the trusted Treasurer of the Union for a number of years, Emmerich found it unnecessary to face administrative and bureaucratic questions during most of his time in office. With Nesbitt's death in 1940 these issues had to be handled, and Emmerich was unable to cope with them. Clearly, besides his drinking problem, it was his handling of finances which led to most of the trouble.

One can find many reasons for Emmerich's fall, but the evidence is clear. Although the reformist element in the Union used what ammunition they could find to hasten Emmerich's end, the fact that the main problem faced by the Union was that of having a Secretary who stole from them and was unable to carry out his duties is indisputable.

The more important question, perhaps, is why the ruin of a Union Secretary led so easily to the collapse of a political grouping that was based around him. This has been partly answered above. Emmerich's inability or unwillingness to properly "develop" a tight grouping around him led to a weakness in his loose support base. In addition, his inability, even after many years in the Union, to develop a larger group of supporters around him in the Union meant that there was no support for the **policies** of his grouping, but merely support for the man who had won high wage increases for the workers. Nevertheless, the period of Emmerich's leadership of the Tramway Union was a positive one. Besides the improvements in wages and working conditions of the Tramway workers (including those of the non-traffic men), the impact that Emmerich made on the union movement in the Cape was considerable. Not least he was at the head of the opposition to Stuart in Cape Town. Although his tragic decline seems to overshadow all else, it is for the positive aspects of the Emmerich era that he should be remembered.

Endnotes

Thanks to Maureen Tayal, Martin Nicol, Ian Phimister and Richard Goode for comments on early drafts, and to Debbie Marsden for the loan of the computer. As usual, the responsibility is mine.

1. Nicol, M.- "A History of Garment and Tailoring Workers in Cape Town 1900-1939", unpublished PhD thesis, 1984.
2. For full discussion see Giffard, C.- "'Cutting the Current'- Cape Town Tramway Workers and the 1932 Strike", unpublished paper, 1984.
3. *ibid.*
4. Tramway Union Executive Committee (E.C.) Minutes 7/1/1931.
5. Fuller, K. Radical Aristocrats: London Busworkers from the 1880s to the 1980s, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1985, p. 31.
6. The Company often took this quite far: "Bro. King reported that Bro. Knapp had been employed as a learner driver and was refused on the Traffic Staff by Mr Robinson, because he had no teeth." Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 17/4/1940.
7. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 28/6/1939.
8. Fuller, *op cit.* pp. 26-27.
9. *ibid.* p. 27.
10. Sterne, H. "Memories of an Old Tramwayman: Cape Town's Transportation from the Boer War Onwards." in The South African Transport Worker, January 1940.
11. Nicol points out that in Cape Town African workers could be subject to the Act as, for a period, they did not have to carry passes Nicol. *op cit.*, p. 104.
12. Davies, R. "The Class Character of South Africa's Industrial Conciliation Legislation"; and Lever, J.- "Capital and Labour in South Africa: The Passage of the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1924"; both published in Webster, E (ed.) Essays in Southern African Labour History, Ravan, Johannesburg, 1978. This summary is taken from Nicol, *op cit.*, p. 107.
13. Lewis, J. Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, 1924-55, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984, p. 30.
14. Nicol, *op cit.* p. 107.
15. *ibid.* p. 108.
16. *ibid.* p. 101.
17. *ibid.* p. 113.
18. *ibid.* p. 113.
19. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 3/6/1936.
20. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 3/6/1936.
21. The "Seniority list" was a list of workers in order of length of service, in order to determine the next in line for promotion, or to decide who to favour in a dispute over a particular shift between two workers.
22. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 6/1/1932.
23. CFLU Minutes 18/3/1926. For a further discussion of Stuart's methods in the Tramway Union, see Giffard, *op cit.*
24. Minutes 20/5/1931
25. Interview with Ernest Stokell, Claremont, 4/5/1985. Bro. Stokell was on the Executive of the Union from 1932, when the PTL workers joined the Union, until he was made an inspector in 1934. Although he played a militant role in the 1932 strike, and argued, along with Emmerich, for "direct action", he immediately became one of the most unpopular inspectors in the Company, at least twice almost causing strikes. Stokell worked for the Company until he retired in 1967, and then still did parttime work in a salaried position until the early 1980s. He died in May 1986.
26. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 5/8/1931.
27. Interview with Ernest Stokell, *op cit.*
28. Nicol, *op cit.*, p. 245.
29. For a discussion of the African Clothing strike, see Nicol, *op cit.*
30. State vs. Alexandrovitz and Wolton, March 1933.
31. Interview with Ernest Stokell, *op cit.*
32. *ibid.* For a full discussion of the strike see Giffard, *op cit.*
33. Interview with Ernest Stokell, *op cit.*
34. Cape Times, 13/12/1932.
35. Cape Times, 15/12/1932.
36. Tramway Union Special Emergency Meeting Minutes 18/12/1932.
37. The Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924 included only public services as "essential services". The 1933 amendment extended it to include passenger transportation, sanitation or fire services run by "some other person than the local authority". See Coates, P.- Track and Trackless, Cape Town, Struik, 1976.
38. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 2/3/1933.
39. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 2/3/1933.
40. CFLU Special Executive Committee Minutes 24/7/1933.
41. Tramway Union General Meeting (G.M.) Minutes 31/7/1933.
42. Tramway Union G.M. Minutes 27/9/1933.
43. Morris Kagan was a worker in an independent company since the early 1930s. He became a member of the Communist Party and was victimised in 1935 and forced to leave the industry and the Union. As Secretary of the Hairdressers Union, he continued to work closely with Emmerich, who helped him organise. Kagan was a key C.P. trade unionist in later years.
44. Nicol, *op cit.*, p. 113.
45. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 31/10/1934.
46. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 7/11/1934.
47. Various Tramway Union Minutes, February to April, 1935.
48. Interview with Ernest Stokell, *op cit.*
49. Tramway Union A.G.M. Minutes 6/3/1935.
50. Allan Nesbitt had been on The Union Executive since the mid-1920s. He was Treasurer for over 10 years, and had been appointed Secretary for a short while when Stuart resigned in 1926. He was also Secretary of the Tramway Sick Fund in the 1930s. After Emmerich became Secretary, the two worked closely together in the Tramway Union and in the South African Council of Transport Workers, of which Nesbitt was President until his death in 1940. Nesbitt was one of the important opponents of the "Stuart Machine" within the Cape Federation, and a vociferous proponent of unity between the rival CFLU and the Trades and Labour Council.
51. This "active support" included the collection of money for the Republicans in Spain, and the holding of meetings in their support.
52. Interview with Ernest Stokell, *op cit.*
53. Most of Emmerich's writing was for the Guardian and the The South African Transport Worker. He more often than not wrote in support of the Labour Party.
54. Richard Goode's interview with Ray Alexander, Lusaka, December 1985.
55. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 29/12/1937.
56. See Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 19/5/1938.
57. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 9/2/1938.

58. The South African Transport Worker, July 1937, p. 8.
59. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 27/7/1937; 14/9/1937.
60. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 7/6/1939.
61. Emmerich, J.- "Twenty-One Years" in The South African Transport Worker, August 1939, pp. 2-3.
62. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 27/1/1937.
63. This can be seen clearly below in the discussion on coloureds, women and the war.
64. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 12/1/1938; 3/6/1936.
65. The racial and sexual breakdown of Union membership as at November 1943 was: 749 white men, 43 white women, and 402 coloured men, totalling 1,194.
66. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 1/4/1941.
67. Interestingly, the London Busworkers were forced to make the same decisions during World War I, and responded in a similar way, although clearly the racial tensions were not as great. See Fuller, op cit, pp. 40-45.
68. Tramway Union G.M. Minutes 20/5/1937.
69. Bro. Boyd was a member of the Tramway Executive on and off from the early 1930s till the mid 1940s. He was probably the most obstructionist individual in the Union during this period. His negative approach led to his suspension on one occasion and disciplining on a number of occasions.
70. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 2/2/1940.
71. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 16/6/1937.
72. Tramway Union G.M. Minutes 10/8/1940.
73. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 11/12/1940.
74. Tramway Union S.G.M. Minutes 21/1/1941.
75. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 22/1/1941.
76. Tramway Union E.C. Minutes 27/8/1941.
77. Tramway Union Minutes- E.C. 27/5/1942; E.C. 9/6/1942; E.C. 24/6/1942; E.C. 8/7/1942; E.C. 28/7/1942; E.C. 5/8/1942; E.C. 11/8/1942; E.C. 2/9/1942; S.G.M. 16/9/1942; S.G.M. 23/6/1943; E.C. 7/7/1943; E.C. 3/8/1943; G.M. 3/8/1943; E.C. 6/8/1943; E.C. 18/8/1943; E.C. 23/5/1944; E.C. 30/8/1944; E.C. 13/9/1944; E.C. 8/11/1944.