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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

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by: Belinda Bozzoli

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CLASS, COMMUNITY AND IDEOLOGY IN THE EVOLUTION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY

Belinda Bozzoli

> I had a rather strong prejudice, and I still have, against institutional labour history, history of labour seen exclusively as a history of the parties, leaders, and others of labour, because it seems to me quite inadequate - necessary, but inadequate. It tends to replace the actual history of the movement by the history of the people who said they spoke for the movement. It tends to replace the class by the organized sector of the class, and the organized sector of the class by the leaders of the organized sector of the class. Eric Hobsbawm (1).

I INTRODUCTION

The third History Workshop conference and Open Day, held at the University of the Witwatersrand in February 1984, consolidated upon and expanded, trends in research and popularisation set by previous Workshops over the past seven years. The academic conference, from which these papers are a selected sample, pursued the study of society from the point of view of those ordinary people who inhabit it; while the Open Day, to which an estimated 3000 people came, was a reflection of the enormous thirst of many South Africans for the kind of popularised history and social analysis which the Workshop encourages. A third kind of activity - besides the academic and the 'public', - was undertaken at this Workshop, namely the bringing together of a number of groups and individuals engaged in the activities of popularising history; the one-day workshop on the meaning, possibilities and direction of 'popular history' was the first opportunity such groups had had to consider their aims and techniques in a joint forum. With the exception of Luli Callinicos's reflections on our 'popularising history' session, this collection of papers reflects the academic work of the Workshop, and as such warrants a series of introductory remarks and pointers, which will be pursued below. However the growth of interest in the other activities of the Workshop makes it essential that some comments be made on the more public and popular side of its work, and on how these activities both reflect and stimulate academic research itself.

Popularisation and Consciousness

The activity of popularising history is not, as Callinicos points out and as our discussants agreed, a matter of simplification; perhaps too many middle class South African intellectuals, trained in a particular academic tradition, and anxious to communicate their modern insights into South African society to a wider audience, have felt it sufficient to put into simple words, with pictures and illustrations, the important findings of recent research. Some thought has gone into the act of presenting history in such ways, to such technical issues as the use of language, of pictures, of particular layouts, and of the length and price of histories written for lay audiences. Numerous

attractive and interesting histories have been written, while slide shows, videos and even documentary films, have also been made available to the public. A great deal more work needs to be done on the technical matters surrounding the production of items, and the Workshop hopes to encourage further mutual discussions on this matter. However other vitally important aspects of the act of popularisation also need consideration. Callinicos points to the complexities surrounding such issues as language, content, focus and audience. One aspect which has a direct bearing and relationship to, academic research, concerns the content of such popularised histories; and the existing perceptions of the audiences who read or view them.

The act of popularising history, as originally conceived within the History Workshop, could be summed up as one of 'counter-hegemony'. Dominant, hegemonic ideologies, which seek to capture the hearts and minds of ordinary South Africans, provide a distorted image of our past and present, and there exists a great need to counteract them, by providing people with access to alternative accounts. You don't have to be a Gramscian to believe that such dominant ideologies exist. Even the most casual observer of our school system, particularly in the form of Bantu Education, will agree that some extraordinarily biassed and highly controlled versions of social reality are daily being fed to countless school children, often using shamelessly didactic and rote-orientated approaches to teaching. Any interest in the history of our society which survives this kind of diseducation is likely to have a markedly distorted character. Where it is not great men moving things, it is the forces of telelogically unfolding world views, usually nationalist or ethnically-based ones. As if by association with the grandness of the forces which move history - great people or great ideologies - it is unthinkable that the act of writing, thinking about or reading history could have much relevance to ordinary people themselves. History is definitely something with a capital H, to be transmitted by individuals almost as great as those who form its subjects, and to be mutely received by ordinary citizens, as the Word. Its association with religion, through the Christian National focus of our educational

system, probably reinforces this view. The transmitters of History are assumed to have insights and abilities not available to the ordinary citizen, and of course to be free from impure motives. Such is the dominant view of history which our society encourages.

Social groups attempting to achieve hegemony may not always succeed however. In a nice irony, it is perhaps the very crassness of the attempt to manipulate history, particularly amongst blacks, that has alienated many from the 'truths' it is meant to portray. Cynicism amongst black educated people about the kind of history they have been taught is widespread; (although this does not mean that widespread apathy does not exist as well).

It is the existence of this cynicism that has bred for the Workshop its large and interested audiences, and that has lent encouragement to the numbers of intellectuals wishing to convey the findings of their research to larger groups. However the danger lies in assuming that because people are cynical, and have rejected the interpretations presented to them by the state, their minds are free, and receptive to "the truth." This is, of course, patently not the case. A whole range of ideological assumptions underlies the perception of even the simplest social interpretation. Many of these assumptions have their roots in non-state ideological forces which have acted to shape and control the thinking of black South Africans, and also of course (if we are not to view people as passive bearers or vehicles of ideology) in the conscious attempts made by people to interpret the world around them, using what ideological tools are made available to them by their social milieu. The force of Christianity is but one of many, which may include ideologies of ethnicity, of nationalism, of various forms of class or community consciousness and the like.

It is these various forms of belief which George Rudé has, in another context, called the 'inherent' ideologies of the common people. Ordinary people are not intellectual blank slates, receptive to the ideological blandishments of socialist or other intellectuals with the "correct line" or possessing forms of consciousness which are simply to be dismissed as "false".

Rather, they possess a complex and intertwined set of 'inherent' ideas. Basing his ideas on Gramsci's notion of 'commonsense' ideology, Rude writes:

> This inherent, traditional element is a sort of 'mothers' milk' ideology, based on direct experience, oral tradition or folk memory and not learned by listening to sermons or speeches or reading books. (2)

Blended with these are what Rudé calls 'derived' ideas - those 'borrowed from others, often taking the form of a more structured system of ideas, political or religious, such as the Rights of Man, Popular Sovereignty, Laissez-faire and the Sacred Right of Property' (3)

While it is true that the state in South Africa has not provided the common (black) people with a substantial number of its inherent or derived ideas, other dominant groups have indeed done so. With the arrival of literacy, of Christianity and of the market economy, the inherent ideas of earlier generations of blacks became blended with the derived ideas supplied by these incoming forces, as well as by black middle class and intellectual groupings themselves seeking to gain legitimacy amongst ordinary people. And as Rude points out, 'amongst the 'inherent' beliefs of one generation, and forming part of its basic culture, are many beliefs that were originially derived from outside by an earlier one'. (4) Black audiences today, whose attention the popularisers of history seek to gain, read or view the analytical products supplied for them from the point of view of an extremely complex set of inherent ideas, whose shape must inevitably affect the interpretation put upon the new history. Little consideration has been given to this fact, at least on the overt level. Just as the competent artist 'knows' his or her audience and is able to cater for the factors shaping its reception of a particular play, film or song, so the populariser of history has, of course, made concessions to the existing consciousness of black readers or viewers. But making such concessions on an instinctive basis is no substitute for hard analysis of the existing world views of the common people. This is one valuable contribution to the populariser's task which academic research can make, and the papers in this collection have a great deal to say about the consciousness and ideologies, derived or

inherent, [illegible] of ordinary South Africans, black, white or 'coloured'.

An ideological hiatus?

A further complication for the populariser rests in the fact that South Africa in the mid-1980s is a society in which great ideological ferment is taking place. Possibly because of its patently obvious failure to capture the hearts and minds of ordinary people, the state itself seeks new ideological forms in which to cast its attempts at hegemony.

Professor Floors van Jaarsveld, the chief National Party school-textbook historian and singlehanded architect of the many travesties of historical truth conveyed to countless white and black schoolchildren over several decades, reflected in February 1985, for example, on the need for 'rewriting' South African history, in the 'light of the new Constitution', suggesting that through this new history, it would for example be possible to persuade 'brown people' of their contribution to society (as labourers). (5) Thus perhas Professor van Jaarsveld hopes to draw them away from their interest in theories which instead portray their past as having been that of a singularly oppressed and exploited people. A similar urge to develop a new reformist and hegemonic interpretation of past and present South African society is reflected in the historical offerings produced from time to time in the film and television industry, where great strikes, social migrations, wars and individual biographies are presented to the public stripped of their contradictory and perhaps radical implications, anodysed and cleansed. Nowhere is this more evident than in one of the more expensive exercises in 'public history' yet developed, the "Gold Mine Museum", a Chamber of Mines public relations exercise in which 'quaint' white working class living conditions at the turn of the century are resurrected and unforgivably romanticised; but in which black living conditions (in dirty, overcrowded, murderous compounds) are not reproduced at all, so difficult, perhaps, is it to romanticise them. (6) Businessmen too, utter heartfelt cries of anguish at the failure of dominant ideologies to make successful inroads into popular consciousness. 'The benefits of free enterprise are not fully understood by the average worker' laments a Barclays Bank report, rendering him 'ripe for socialism'. Whites as well as blacks are being subjected to new ideological overtures by state and capital, whose previously disunited ideological onslaughts are becoming increasingly harmonised with one another.

These attempts at refurbishing ruling ideology have been developed with the aim of filling the intellectual vacuum left by the failure of old-style Afrikaner Nationalism (the'Civil religion') to sustain any kind of legitimacy in times of 'reform'. For those who supported as much as those who opposed the older strategies of apartheid, an ideological hiatus exists, and old explanatory frameworks of both left and right are having to give way in the face of new realities. This is not to imply that the strategy of 'reform' constitutes the genuine change for the better which its advocates claim for it. However recent research has made clear that in the sphere of ideology (and perhaps only in that sphere, some might suggest) restructuring has begun to take place. Old hegemonic ideas have broken down, and have not yet been replaced by new ones. (7)

But in some ways the ideological and cultural initiatives 'from above' may, like the reform strategy itself, be too little, and too late. While it would be naive to doubt the indoctrinating and manipulating capacities of South Africa's ruling classes, the logic of 'reform' requires a new set of interpretations which are capable of actually appealing to, rather than simply dictating to, brown and black, and indeed new strata of white people at large. This is a terrain which is strange to National Party and indeed (although less so) capitalist interests. It is hard for ideologues used to the language and attitude of the intellectual rapist, to transfer their hardwon skills to the tasks of seduction. Still, new ideologues will no doubt replace the old, and new media will play parts never dreamed of by old. The problem for such new ideologues is however, that the terrain of the popular imagination is, in many cases, already occupied.

The ideological ferment of these times is reflected in such phenomena as the growth of revivalist religion amongst whites, the spread of nationalism amongst blacks, the expansion of trade unionism, of reconstructed right wing parties and the like. What is notable is that many of these more or less spontaneous developments require a historical dimension. The past for many such movements must be understood in ways that not only explain the present, but also justify their plans for the future. Every movement seeks to rewrite history in its own way, emphasising its own favoured myths and teleologies.

At the same time as the ruling classes seek to control minds, movements of protest seek to capture them, to attain legitimacy for themselves. Nationalists and trade unionists, community organisations and large-scale national movements, all seek to present to popular consciousness attractive symbols and interpretations.

A movement such as the History Workshop, in seeking to uncover the history of ordinary people, of whatever race, gender, creed or origin, is thus finding eager audiences from a variety of quarters amongst those groups wishing to draw on ordinary people for their support and rationale; while those whose myths seek to exclude the experiences of ordinary people, will find its work either irrelevant or dangerous. Because it is offering new historical explanations, it is bound to attract interest from a variety of people who are groping their way through the ideological ferment of the present time. It is these kinds of factors that give the Workshop an urgency and excitement as well as providing it with large and interested audiences.

In this situation considerable tensions are bound to arise between the pursuit of truth, and the pursuit of the kind of analysis desired by the particular movements seeking to make myths. The Workshop has, in the face of this tension, always held tenaciously to the need for the activity of research to retain its own inner terms of reference, of verification and of logic. Reality - while it may be more or less understood in terms of flexible categories of analysis - does not fit into any one interpretive straitjacket, and one of the purposes of the honest researcher must be to reflect the ambiguities that it contains. Thus while the trade unionist might wish 'class' to be the fundamental category within which all explanation should fit; and the nationalist might want 'race' or 'internal' colonialism' to prevail as the major category of explanation, in truth, as most of the papers here suggest, the realities of South African history were never clearcut enough for either of these explanatory frameworks to hold true for all situations over the whole of the past. Moreover it is not always certain (although it is sometimes the case) that what is contained in an honest academic analysis contains clearcut strategic lessons for activists and our research would be diminished if it were to subordinate itself totally to this requirement.

Just as researchers need to avoid stultifying Stalinism, so the act of popularising history in this context must avoid naivete. There is the risk of underestimating the power and sophistication of the ideological messages that dominant groups are capable of disseminating, through the new media of television, radio and advertising, rather than the older ones, dominated by older forms of nationalist ideology, such as schools. 'Public history' is a means of transmitting subtle and sophisticated messages about the past and, by implication, the present, to vast audiences, under the guise of entertainment. Furthermore such messages may well blend better with the inherent ideologies of many people than the alternatives being put out by small, often amateurish, alternative groups. Notions of respectability and social mobility, for example, long a part of upright Christian popular consciousness, are easily appealed to by advertising and the middle-class tone of the mass media. Popularisers would do well to recognise that such notions are as much a part of the consciousness of workers as of middle class blacks, and that to ignore them would be to concede the ground to the purveyors of commodities and of conformity.

Class, community and ideology 'from below'

In planning the third History Workshop conference, we addressed ourselves precisely to the question of the cultural and

structural matrix in which the consciousness of ordinary South Africans is forged. Our theme, 'Class, Community and Conflict: Local Perspectives' was designed to elicit contributions which tackled, from the point of view of those people, one of the great dichotomies in South African society - that between 'class' on the one hand, and 'race', 'culture' or 'community', on the other. At a time when many are reacting against the excessive economism of earlier radical assertions of the prime importance of 'class', and are thus seeking to bring racial, cultural and other determinants back into the centre of social thought, the Workshop set out to ask how our understanding of these theoretical dichotomies could be illuminated by historical analysis of a particular sort - that which took the point of view of the ordinary individuals and groups who themselves may experience social reality in one or another set of terms.

In so doing the Workshop hoped to bring down to earth the endless abstract debates which are increasingly surrounding this subject. For neither class nor the alternatives to it, are timeless. To a historical materialist these, and all similar concepts, are to be understood as historical and social categories rather than reified universals. At some historical moments, social groups may well be driven by ideological forces, or cultural ones, which have come to gain a certain relative autonomy; and at others, the crude realities of economic necessity and process, prevail. At some points in time, certain social groups have an interest in promoting and sustaining non-class social determinants such as race; while at other moments, with other forces prevalent, such interests will decline and class may well come to the fore.

Demonstrating the historical variability and mobility of class and non-class forces is nothing new in South African studies. However what the Workshop hoped to do that was new, was to examine these variations from below. Too many examinations of the class- non-class dichotomy seem to have taken place from the standpoint of state, capital or ruling party. At first, this seems unsurprising, since it has been as dominant forces that these have been of interest. However if it is with the consciousness and propensities of the vast mass of South Africans that one is concerned, then it does seem somewhat surprising that little analysis of how class and non-class forces appear in their lives has been done. For can one derive the consciousness of a black worker from a theoretical analysis of the state? Important as an understanding of overall state form and dominant ideology must be, the short answer to this question must surely be 'no'. Here we are back to our notion of 'inherent' and 'derived' consciousness, and the sources of these many strands of ideology are not to be found only in the state, dominant class or capital. There is no substitute, then, for the 'view from below' in developing our understanding of the interaction and evolution of class and non-class factors in South African common consciousness.

These papers do no more than point the way to how such an understanding may be more fully developed. Starting from the very basic experiential category of the individual, working through the local groups and communities in which such individuals forge their world view, teasing out the layers of ideology-formation which shape that individual in the group or community of which he or she is a part, the papers here help us move a long way from approaches which regard ordinary South Africans as a black intellectual state, or those which seek to derive their consciousness from 'above'.

What emerges is that the writing of studies based on the experiences of ordinary people is a discipline as rigorous as any other. There is a misconception in other quarters, perhaps, that writing about "the state" or the society 'from above' demands a theoretical rigour to match the grandeur accorded to such entities by the powers that be; but that 'ordinary people' by virtue of their humble stature in society, require the analytical tools of empathy for suffering, and a good descriptive capacity - but little more - for understanding to be complete. This is, of course, far from being the case. If anything, what these papers reveal is how great is the theoretical challenge encompassed in seriously confronting the view from 'below' - particularly where theorists of all persuasions have tended to ignore it, and to confine their considerations to the grand

heights of social reality, where massive classes conflict, states intervene and manipulate, and ideologies are apparently reproduced and conveyed. While in theoretical conceptions which approach the things from the top down, the mass of inhabitants of society are given a place, they are often conceived of in a responsive capacity - they respond to state initiatives, capitalist transformations, and the like. Elsewhere, (in interpretations whose proponents may believe thay have taken account of the role of ordinary people, but which in fact have not,) they are perceived as having played a role through their organisations or leaders. Ordinary people, assumed to be inaccessible, and probably mystified and confused, are to be best understood through an analysis of the organised bodies which from time to time emerge from their ranks. Trade unions, voluntary associations and political parties are, in many cases, still assumed to be the means whereby class and community alike may best be understood.

It has been the strength of the History Workshop tradition to have attempted (perhaps not always successfully), a move away from this kind of institutional concern. The organisation or leader is but the tip of a sociological and historical iceberg, growing out of, but not synonymous with the group from which it has developed. In acknowledging this to be the case, the History Workshop however, has merely contributed to the opening up of a vast field of social enquiry, rather than made a conclusive statement. And this enquiry needs to be informed by theoretical assumptions about such factors as the nature of consciousness among the mass of 'ordinary people' (the iceberg), the interests giving rise to such consciousness, the reason for an organisation having emerged, the relation between leader and led, the ideological forms adopted by the organisation, its ability to 'speak' to those it attempts to lead, and its impact on outside forces. Such questions cannot be answered on empathy for suffering alone.

This collection contains a number of fascinating attempts at furthering the discipline of understanding things 'from below'. New bodies of comparative and theoretical literature, and new

kinds of source material have been drawn upon, either explicitly or implicitly, which makes it possible to ask, and begin to answer, interesting and important questions. In an introductory essay such as this it is possible merely to touch on some of the ways in which this has been done, and some of the conclusions to which it leads, in the hope that the reader will then be alerted to the rich possibilities of this field of enquiry.

II COMMUNITY: MIDDLE CLASS MYTH OR WORKING CLASS REALITY

> ... all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined (6a)

> The workers were able to keep their community alive and strong from generation to generation because they controlled a network of institutions upon which the individual workers depended. (6b)

Few words have wider currency than that of "community" in South Africa today. As in most settings, the word may refer to a social ideal - a future state in which communal solidarity and sharing are commonplace. But more usually, it is used to describe present-day groups of people, mainly black, living in South Africa. In some cases it may refer to a group previously called 'tribe' - the Bafokeng 'community', it may be said, are experiencing homeland rule. In other instances, it is used to refer to a group of people experiencing the trauma of forced removal by government decree: the 'community' of Patrick Harries' paper in this book would be one such example. Such a group may or may not coincide with what was previously called a 'tribe'. It may also be used to refer to the general membership of a black, Indian or coloured urban township. 'The community', it may be said, supported the call for a stay-away from work on a particular anniversary; or 'member of the community' attended the funeral of a prominent urban-dwelling figure. In this case, it is often used to distinguish township-dwellers in general, from their constituent parts. Thus the 'workplace' which is where factory-employees may spend their day, is distinguished from the 'community', which is where such people may live, alongside other kinds of

workers and employees, wives, husbands, families and the unemployed. 'Community' organisations, in some circles, are said to be those which are concerned about matters affecting people at home; such as housing, transport and education; while trade unions are generally concerned with matters at work. Furthermore, 'community organisations' reflect the broad class composition of townships, while 'trade unions' tend to draw members simply from the working class. There is a perceived tension between trade unions with or without a 'community dimension' - that is, unions which espouse general causes not always concerned with the workplace, and those which do not. 'Community' is also used to refer to white groups of people; in this case, its ethnic dimension is clearer than in the case of black groups. The 'Jewish Community', the 'Portuguese Community' and the like, are co-mon terms; in contrast, it is not often that reference is made, say, to the 'Zulu' community; or the 'Tswana community'.

In all of these cases, the use of the word 'community' accords with Raymond Williams' insight - that 'nowhere is community used with pejorative overtones.' (8) It is always used to refer to something percived as socially good, constructive, to be supported and sustained. Undoubtedly it has romantic connotations. It is inconceivable that anyone could be 'against' it. It is this good side to the term that renders it useful to the government as well as its opposition. The "Department of Community Development" is one case where the term has been adopted by the state; while the previously 'ethnic' or 'racial' categories of old-style apartheid have been replaced with such categories as 'the Coloured community', the 'Indian community' and the like. Such authoritative, as opposed to common-sense, uses of the term bode ill for its future - for like terms such as 'Bantu', 'African' or even, today, 'Black', state adoption means popular demise. However until now, the adoption by the state of the term has not killed it off completely in common parlance, and indeed it remains a vibrant and important part of everyday political vocabulary, seriously in need of demystification and analysis.

The good connotations of 'community' rest in its ability to conjure up images of supportiveness and co-operation; of a place of rest and rejuvenation; of cross-class co-operation. However these myriad uses of the term, the vagueness with which it is approached, and the romantic connotations which it holds, make it all the more mysterious as a concept. On the surface, the concept 'community' represented a move away from the older crudities of early revisionist history, in which massive classes, such as 'the working class', or 'the petty bourgeoisie', were assumed to be the appropriate analytical categories for use in South Africa. Such categories were soon found wanting. Perhaps more for the subordinate than the dominant classes, ordinary people live in small groupings, both in urban and rural settings. Their identifications of themselves may not be as members of the enormous national classes, but as members of some local, specific group. 'Community' is both sufficiently general, and sufficiently vague, to cover all situations in which this may be the case. It moves away both from 'race' categories, and from 'tribal' ones, as well as requiring us to re-think the meaning of the term 'class'.

However what lies beneath the surface of a term such as this? Is it merely an ideological device which suits the interests of the growing black nationalism of the 1980's, rather than a reality? What is its relationship to the classes which constitute society? Have communities really existed in South Africa, and if they have of what have they consisted and what have their influences been on the behaviour of their members? Some suggest that communities are in fact inventions of the petty bourgeoisie - that in their concern to mobilise support for nationalism, the middle classes - whether of today or yesterday, black or white, create a term sufficiently bland and broad to obscure real class cleavages. Communities in this conception, are entities with strong emotional connotations which pull ordinary people into alliances they might not otherwise, given their class interests, support. 'Community' is seen thus as existing in some kind of relationship of tension with "class", as perhaps a factor which diverts the subordinate classes from pursuing their real interests.

Lending support to this type of view is the work of Benedict Anderson - whose book "Imagined Communities" embodies in its title the sorts of themes it entails. (9) Anderson presumes

that communities or nations do not exist, as givens, but are the creations of active intellectuals and ideologists. The act of community creation, the reasons for this taking place, and the means used to do so, become the main focus for a complex analysis. Such thinking has already exerted a strong influence on South African analysis. Dan O'Meara, Isabel Hofmeyr and Hermann Giliomee for example have all used these notions to explain the phenomenon of Afrikaner nationalism - a movement whose main features are particularly close to those portrayed by Anderson.(10)

However there is another school of analysis which seeks to explore the real, rather than mythical dimensions of communities. In the work, for example, of Gareth Stedman Jones (11), John Foster (12), or John Cumbler (13) the community is not only treated as a concrete reality but also as a force which may in certain circumstances, enhance rather than contradict, the class consciousness, of its members. Such studies are not concerned with the 'ethnic' or 'national' communities of Anderson's book, but with communities composed mainly of working class people; with situations where community support for class forms of organisation is of vital importance. Some of the most effective and radical forms of class expression appear to have taken place in situations where class and community reinforce one another, while changes in the form and structure of the community (linked analytically to changes in the nature and organisation of work) have significant effects on how class consciousness is expressed. An important part of this work emphasises the part played by artisans in articulating a powerful and binding community ideology in working class areas. In the case of Lynn, Massachusetts, for example, Cumbler writes:

> The workmen who came to Lynn's shoe shops and factories, beginning with the artisans in the first half of the nineteenth century, developed a sense of community solidarity which was passed on from generation to generation ... the workers taught the new members of the workforce, ... the strength and power of unionism, class solidarity and community cohesion ... Immigrant workers and the children of immigrant workers were taught pride in their work and their community. They learned of past struggles and felt themselves part of that past. (13a)

Stedman-Jones too, emphasises the way in which artisans created and maintained an oppositional, radical working class culture in inner London until the turn of the century, when deskilling and the dispersal of the workers away from tightly knit groupings, took place. (13b) Other dimensions - such as the length of time a particular community has existed, the type of cultural institutions it creates, the ideology which prevails within it, and the familiae and social networks of interconnectedness which it may contain - are all part of the analysis.

Each of these two approaches to 'community' is useful to us but in different contexts. In the first, particularly suited to the analysis of ethnicity, we are encouraged to de-mystify and de-reify the idea of a static, functional community. Instead of being a solid, timeless given, the idea of an 'imagined community' asks us to look at its creation on the level of myth, and to see it in tandem with other forces. Self-conscious groups may act to <u>create</u> communities. The fruitfulness of such an approach is that it forces us to make analytical connections between other social groups and forces, and those of community. Classes, seen in this approach as real social actors, become the motive force behind the construction and mythmaking involved in communities. In this collection, Riva Krut's essay uses this approach to illustrate the myth-making and class interests behind the creation of a Johannesburg Jewish community, so often treated by its own historians as a timeless, pre-given entity.

The second perspective, that which focusses on the materiality of community, has another kind of advantage for us. For this approach forces us to acknowledge that whatever the forces behind their creation (and other papers in this book suggest that even in the case of ethnic communities, myth and bourgeois self-interest are not the only factors operating) communities do at

certain points in history become real entities, with important effects on class and ideological responses.

Since we are looking for ways in which to understand the "iceberg" of reality which underlies the leaders and organisers thrown up by social classes, this is one area of possibly fruitful exploration. Men and women are not shaped by their work experiences alone, but by the ways in which they survive and interact at home in the family, or during leisure hours. Economic class position may determine whether or not you are a worker or a peasant, but how you behave as a worker or a peasant is not explicable only by reference to the type of labour you undertake. In the case of the American working class, for example, a great deal of attention has been paid to the relationship between community-formation and class ideology, particularly in the light of the fact that the American working class has largely failed to make itself felt as a political force. Instead it has found itself divided by ethnic and religious, regional and skill factors; unable to transcend economic considerations; and weakened by successive massive defeats. While the reasons for this are complex, one of the avenues through which its weaknesses have been analysed has been through a consideration of the connections between class formation and community-formation. Unlike workers in Britain, for example, American workers clustered much more frequently in ethnically-identifiable areas, so that ethnic appeals to their consciousness were able at times, to override class appeals. (14)

These two approaches to the subject of community are not mutually incompatible. Selfconscious 'community-creators' may exist side by side with the growth of spontaneous, real interconnections between people, and conversely, ideologists, seeking to create myths about community, will surely have difficulty in succeeding unless the material preconditions are propitious. Both approaches give rise to many questions about our own ethnically and otherwise divided society, about whether our 'communities' are real or imagined; whether the forms of consciousness bred amongst workers and other groups have indeed been shaped by the communities in which they have lived; and what these forms of consciousness are. Such questions have important methodological implications. How are we to answer questions such as those raised by Anderson, Stedman-Jones and Davis, in a South African context, where documentation of the life of the poor is thin, and where evidence as to its real consciousness is sporadic.

III THE USES OF ORAL TESTIMONY

> So I've left my history somehow. I'm happy that I've got somebody who will introduce me. Let me make history please. Johanna Masilela. My number is 827. (15)

Several of the papers in this collection have engaged in the systematic use of techniques of oral history, the collection of songs, the method of participant observation and the like. The authors see these approaches as a means of asking, and perhaps answering, the kinds of questions likely to lead to a fuller understanding of the experience and consciousness of the ordinary working man or woman - of discovering the nature of 'inherent' beliefs and their relationship to the 'derived' ones of Rudés definition. Oral testimony has been vital to this task.

As we shall be showing later, Rudé adds to his notion of inherent ideology that of what is derived - ideas which are more clearly developed outside the arena of direct experience, but brought into it from elsewhere. And of course, the two sets of ideas interrelate in complex ways. What is important for the moment is the difficulty for South African analysts, in understanding the nature of inherent ideologies. Just as historians of pre-literate societies and cultures have had to resort to oral history to make sense of the past; so the historian and analyst of illiterate classes of people in an otherwise literate culture, must make similar attempts. (16) Whereas the historians of the early English and American working classes have been able to rely on the small but significant literature of autobiographies, novels and detailed descriptions, (17) South African students, even of contemporary South Africa, are confronted with a dearth of documentation. Small wonder, then, that several of the

authors here see the primary purpose of the use of oral testimony as being to uncover what might otherwise be hidden. Cock and Emdon write of the 'social invisibility and privatised nature' of household labour in their story of a child-minder, one of many who 'exist hidden deep in the working class community'. (22) Webster too, in his portrayal of the very different places (23) and experiences of five foundryworkers, writes of the 'hidden abode' of production. Pinnock, and Guy and Thabane, (24) reveal something of the lives of gangsters, whose activities, where they are documented at all, are the stuff of myth and distortion. Beinart (25) and Bradford (26), both uncover the roles played by women in resistance movements and events - women from whom 'relatively few direct statements are recorded in the documents; 'whose own meetings are seldom reported' and who 'tended to be represented by men' when one movement, the Amafela, met officials, (27) and whose very real part in particular acts of resistance in Bradford's case may even by blatantly denied in some cases, as when 'protests which involved women usurping male identities, male practices, and male violence, have been reinterpreted fifty years later as ones where chivalrous men donned female garb' (28) Both Harries and Peires, in their studies of dispossessed communities, resort to the recording of the words of community members in a situation where written records are absent or distorted. In the case of the Katberg, documented by Peires, one informant made this clear:

> The stories you've heard are the stories we've heard. Funny things happened in those days. But I will tell you one thing. He wasn't such a fool as to leave anything lying around on paper. (29)

The direct words of informants are not the only antidote to distortion or silence. Careful combing of social documents such as court records, magistrates reports, evidence to commissions and the like must obviously supplement such material, subject as it is to bias itself. In addition, what autobiographical accounts do exist can be extraordinarily illuminating - as Lodge demonstrates in his use of the autobiographical works of both Mokatle and Mphahlele, to enliven and counterline his

account of the evolution of Pretoria's townships, (30) while Pinnock uses a sociological/anthropological method - that of participant observation - a method whose rich rewards may be a little slow in coming for the average over-hasty South African researcher.

All of these studies make sophisticated use of these methods of gaining insight into the experiences and philosophies of the poor and show a keen awareness of the pitfalls of, for example, oral history. The tendencies towards romanticisation of the past, the papering over of cleavages and conflicts, (Pinnock) and the blurring of the borderline between myth and reality (Peires) are all commented upon by authors. As Pinnock writes, 'social origins are always heroic and problem-free in popular memory, particularly among gangs'. Harries suggests that recording the popular song is useful as an indicator of the type of consciousness prevalent in a particular community. But he also alerts us to the complexities involved in its use:

> the golden age (of the Makuleke) is always contrasted with the bleak conditions of their present existence (and) provides the community with a sustaining and guiding myth. It is as much a blue print for their children, of what a society should be, as it is a reflection of historic reality. (31)

The recording of songs is a unique avenue to an understanding of rural history, particularly in times of dispossession and removal, when other forms of historical record are destroyed. Such songs, writes Harries, are often composed by individuals or communally around a fire and 'are only retained if they express popular attitudes and opinions'. This might, of course, mean that they fail to reflect social cleavage and conflict within the community from which they arise, that they are fragmentary and parochial, and so on. But the power of the material gathered by Harries is immense, in some cases encapsulating in a single song much of the suffering caused by dispossession.

Guy and Thabane, in their enormously sensitive documenting of the life of one ex-gangster, raise some of the questions involved in capturing accurately the complexities of the individual. In choosing to interview Rantoa in Sesotho, Guy and Thabane have avoided the problems involved in the use of the English language for a non-English speaking subject (a problem which Cock and Emdon have had to confront). But there remains the subtle question of translation, a vital component of any understanding of the texture of 'inherent ideology'. What does Rantoa mean when he talks of 'my countrymen', and does this connote 'community' in our sense of the term? It is Guy and Thabane too who alert us to the intentions of the interviewee who may have his or her own project in self-presentation. Cock and Emdon remark that Johanna Masilela is a 'salt of the earth' type of figure - but is it her self-conscious intention to present herself that way? Rantoa, too, Guy and Thabane suggest, may be:

> developing the thesis ... that although he lacks formal education (in contrast, it is implied, to us) he is wise in the ways of the world (perhaps also in contrast to us). He realises this thesis in his description of the battle which is social experience, a battle which makes the correct assessment of the opposing forces imperative, requires one to develop strategies of skill and daring, and makes it essential to ensure that when one delivers the final blow that it is a telling one. (25)

Of course even if this were the case, it would not detract from the value of Rantoa's testimony, but would perhaps add to it - indeed, it may be that such design as may lie behind the subject's presentation of him or herself is the major form of self-expression to be found amongst the illiterate South African poor, a form of autobiography in fact. If so it may constitute an important literary as well as historical source.

Popular Motifs

- 'n Agent is mos 'n skelmding (25)
  I have stayed for a long time there and I know akhente is better than a workers' organisation. (26)

Some of the motifs which characterise the philosophies of the poor who are the subjects of the book are clearly expressed, in several of the papers here. Here, it should be reiterated, it is with the 'small' traditions that we are concerned, with perhaps a view to linking them up later with the 'larger' traditions of the external ideologies which are offered to such people. Examples of 'inherent' motifs include the tendency towards the individualisation of historical explanation, pointed out by Peires and evident also in the Harries paper; the sense of justice and injustice present in the case of the dispossession of the Katberg people; or the contrasting views of the role of the lawyer (as skelm in the Peires case, as the defender of the poor in the case of Rantoa). Many of these motifs come to the fore at times of resistance. A vivid example is that of the case of the women, in Bradford's paper, who donned men's clothing. This form of protest also highlights another characteristic of such popular motifs - that they may make an appearance in areas of the country which are not apparently linked in any way; women donned men's clothing in the Herschel district as well, as Beinart describes, and such behaviour is said to have been not uncommon. Similar continuities of motif may be found in the frequent use of the manyano, or womens' religious organisation as a vehicle for protest, or the common and widespread uses of such resistance forms as the stayaway; or the boycott of schools. What is interesting about such 'languages' of ideology and behaviour is that they may appear within more than one 'large' tradition, as we shall see below, but far more work needs to be done in uncovering their content and texture, before further generalisation, the construction of the patterns they take and other complexities can be discerned.

We need to be aware of the fact that such motifs, while they may all constitute small, inherent traditions, are not simply emanations 'from below'. Johanna Masilela's ideas about the appropriate methods of childrearing could probably be traced to some form of mission or liberal education networks in the townships or perhaps, as Cock and Emdon suggest, her experiences as a domestic servant. But this is not inconsistent with Rudé's use of the term 'inherent'. As he writes:

> there is no wall of Babylon dividing the two types of ideology, so that one cannot describe the second as being 'superior' or at a higher level than the first. There is, in fact, a considerable overlap between them. For instance, among the 'inherent' beliefs of one generation, and forming part of its basic culture, are many beliefs that were originally derived from outside by an earlier one. (37)

As Harries points out, therefore, the Makuleke people hold beliefs about kinship which are infused with ideas from above and outside. However we may still call such beliefs 'inherent' if they are expressed as a natural, spontaneous form of understanding, and we should not reserve the word inherent for some mythical "pure" set of ideas through which the people may express themselves. It is not the history of the motif which should decide whether or not it is inherent, but the degree to which it has become an idea nurtured on the ground, in communities, homes, and day to day living, at work, at social gatherings, rather than something self-consciously put forward by idea-mongerers of one sort or another.

Onto these inherent patterns are grafted formalised sets of ideas. Many of these 'derived' ideologies come from outside; although as Rudé points out, some of the greatest ideologues have used ideas which have been the distillation of the inherent ideas of the people to whom they seek to appeal. In this book we see religious, nationalist, populist, trade unionist, communist, Zionist, proto-feminist and socialist ideas being offered by intellectuals, and either accepted or rejected by groups of ordinary people. These derived ideas are in almost no case a 'pure' set constructed from outside resources; all have had to compromise with local conditions.

However what is important to realise is that this interlocking of ideas cannot be understood purely in its own terms. The success or failure of ideologies, the forms they take, the motifs they adopt, cannot be explained on what is called by structuralists, 'the ideological level'. All of the papers here ground their discussion of such matters in material factors as well. And the focus of the book, that of communities, provides an important (although not the only) set of material, concrete relationships through which we may understand when why and how, inherent and derived ideologies come together, which movements form and which fail. In some cases, it may be suggested, communities form solid, material entities, and this has vital ideological implications. In others they fail to form as such, and may even be destroyed.

IV UNDERPINNINGS OF COMMUNITY : DISPOSSESSION AND SOCIAL CLEAVAGE.

> I have seen it with my own eyes, people crying over this thing, even whites also ... because it is said by the Coloured, 'you have eaten your land, only for butter and jam'. I could point out various lands, and say that is the land that was lost by Botha, I could point out another, that was Daddy Windvogel's and that belonged to a Xhosa man ... I could say that those lands went for sugar and coffee and things like that. In short, these lands were lost by dark, underhand means. (38)

Varieties of Dispossession

Community-formation under capitalism is intricately tied up with the dispossession and proletarianisation which accompany industrial development. Studies of community and ideology - formation risk becoming too idealist if they ignore this important basic set of processes. New communities form once old ones are destroyed or severely damaged, and the past 100 years of Southern African history have been years of widespread dispossession and tragic impoverishment. No 19th century communities have remained untouched, whether they be white, black, coloured or a mixture of these.

It is easy, in these times when black nationalism is on the ascendancy, and white nationalism is consciously distancing itself from its working class base, to ignore the experience of dispossession undergone by rural whites, and this collection goes some way towards rectifying this modern blindness.

'The whole population is gradually becoming a mass of wanderers' commented the Star referring to white rural people (31) in 1926; while Elsabe Brink's description of the conditions which drove white garment workers to the cities, and the responsibilities and conditions they underwent there leave no doubt as to the reality of the poor white experience. (32) The significant numbers of studies of white communities in this book, including not only Afrikaners but also immigrant Jews, reflect the concern of the Workshop to develop a truly non-racial historiography, and in the tradition of W.M. MacMillan to retrieve from the controlling orbit of old-style white nationalist historiography, the past of ordinary white people. This is not only the result of a commitment to non-racial, class-based analysis; nor is it simply because white hardships deserve a sympathetic portrayal (although these are important things). It is also because looking at white and black together makes it possible to explain things which would otherwise remain mysteries; some of these are spelt out further below.

Dispossession is not a monolithic process attributable to a single event. Looking at the dispossession of white, black and 'coloured' communities together we can identify several different factors at work. The first thing that strikes the observer is how incomplete dispossession is in South Africa. While no ideal-typical pre-capitalist community existed or survives, it is important to perceive and understand the kinds of cultural, economic and other forces which bound people together before the industrial revolution. In South Africa, in many cases, these forces have never been fully destroyed or transformed, and groups of people recreate them in old and new settings from time to time. We have already discussed inherent ideologies, and what we are saying now is that these may persist over time and place. In Peires's paper, for example, it seems that old values about landholding and social justice are still referred to in modern contexts affecting the people of the Katberg; and Guy and Thabane emphasise the continuity of old Basotho traditions in the new setting of gang life. Such continuities are less obvious in the case of white communities, but this may be more because of the underdeveloped state of

white history 'from below', than because of any inherent tendency on the part of whites to abandon their past cultures and traditions on entering the cities. Continuities in the white family (Brink), rural political expectations and behaviour (Clyhick), and rural political loyalties (Witz) are in fact evident; and of course in the case of Jewish immigrants cultural and political traditions are imported in a quite remarkable manner. To Engels, such continuities would represent what he called the 'medieval ruins' that barred the way to the rapid development of class consciousness; which itself would emerge more rapidly and effectively in places where such hangovers had been swept away. (33) But as we shall be arguing below what these papers seem to suggest is that such a situation could not emerge in South Africa. All newly formed classes and groupings have been built upon old loyalties and cultural expectations. The question is how what is inherent interacts with what is derived, rather than whether the inherent persists at all.

In some cases, as is well known, the strength of the older society is such as to give it enough flexibility to cope with the demands of capitalism, without giving in to them. Harries gives us an example to add to these we already know of, of early migrancy in an African community being undertaken out of strength rather than weakness. However with the march of time, such examples stand out as inspiring exceptions rather than the norm. Just how many and varied are the means whereby such strengths are undermined with the move towards modernity, is clear from the diversity of experiences portrayed here. The poignancy of the case of the Katberg, where the combination of crooked lawyer, class law and enclosure of the common lands, have left people in nostalgic and resentful occupation of lands which once they owned, may be compared with the archetypal 'removed' community of the Makuleke, (the same community that showed early strengths) victims of policies of game preservation (a case of buck eating men), and politically motivated ethnicisation of the homelands. Missions, labour recruiters and stores are all shown to have played a softening up role in this case; while the downward spirals of economic decline, the depletions of large-scale migran labour, Bantustan taxes and the growth of malnutrition make the example of the Makuleke a sad one indeed. One of their many beautiful songs goes:

> Don't be deceived our hearts are sore because of poverty
> Don't be deceived many of us are dying
> Even if you take us back only a few will be able to return
> Because the rest will be dead
> If you fetch water you will be arrested (34)

White dispossession within South Africa appears to occur less through the state than through the inexorable transformations wrought by the development of capitalist relations. (A fact which must have considerable implications for the resultant form of consciousness). As capitalisation of agriculture proceeds, so poorer white farmers find themselves displaced, according to Brink and Clynick. Foreign-born Jewish immigrants find themselves displaced by a combination of political and economic factors in their country of origin. On top of these original processes of dispossession come the redispossessions of more modern times. White workers originally displaced by new agricultural methods and systems and perhaps by black labour sometimes find themselves displaced once more, this time by the devaluation of their skills in the cities (and, once more, their replacement by workers of another colour). Urban communities find themselves evicted from their old living areas, as in the case of the 'coloured' community in Cape Town's District 6; (35) the old townships of Pretoria, (36) the freehold township of Sophiatown and so on.

Dispossession and redispossession are experiences which, it is obvious, are branded upon the memory of most urban - and rural dwellers today. Their relative recency in Southern Africa, and the fact that they are ongoing mean that this is a major motif which has perhaps tended to prevail in peoples' minds over the evolving relationship between the dispossessed and the urban industrial and employing classes. Note the difference, in this regard, between a consciousness which emphasises the 'white man's

duplicity' or the "gullibility of the coloured" (Peires), one which harks back to a past where food was plentiful, and the people were happy (Harries), and one which calls for the people to rally against capitalism (Clynick). The ramifications for the kinds of derived consciousness likely to be constructed on such bases are endless and fascinating. Some forms of dispossession may lend themselves to a subsequent nationalism and others to a populist or socialist orientation. We know little about these kinds of connections as yet. But we do have enough information to suggest that the form taken by dispossession has more generally predisposed people to developing nostalgic, nationalist or populist forms of ideology more frequently than socialist or class-based ones.

Divisions in the Towns

Many observers of newly-formed city populations see their situation in terms such as 'maelstrom' or 'melting pot'. In the light of social confusion and massive change, the outsider may well assume that older allegiances must give way, and new ones form. This analysis is sometimes lent support by the formation of general social and political movements which appear to dissolve old boundaries between groups, and the formation of class allegiances. Such a view was often expressed by Marx and more particularly Engels, who believed that in the US, for example, the newly formed working class would be able to cut through the ideological barriers to its own self-realisation in a manner which would strike with terror the American ruling classes. Engels predicted that the process of fusing together the various elements of the 'vast moving mass' which was the American working class, would move inevitably forward:

> The converging columns cross each other here and there; confusion, angry disputes, even threats of conflict arise; But the community of ultimate purpose in the end overcomes all minor troubles; ere long the straggling and squabbling battalions will be formed in a long line of battle array, presenting to the enemy a well-ordered front, ominously silent under their glittering arms, supported by bold skirmishes in front and unshakable reserves in the rear (37)

Engels was, in this prediction of the ever-forward movement of the working class towards unity and self-consciousness, drawing political conclusions from his more basic economic analysis. Workers, all separated from access to the means of earning an independent living, all forced into dependent, often degrading and certainly impoverished, forms of labour for others, (in particular capitalists) all offered no avenues of realising their human needs through existing political structures, would inevitably attain a consciousness which led them to seek to transcend both the economic and the political system which was capitalism.

However you do not have to be a cultural anthropologist to acknowledge that in the American case no less than many others, such predictions have proved disastrously incorrect. Marxists as well as non-Marxists have had to confront the fact of the stratification of the urban working class along ethnic, religious, gender, regional, racial and other lines. Similar types of stratification are manifestly present in South Africa too - and yet these have not been fully confronted by radical analysts. While 'racial' cleavages, sanctioned in law, have been treated in a sophisticated fashion by Southern African writers, other cleavages have gone unanalysed, assumed to be of archaic or 'pre-capitalist' relevance, to be on the way out, or even to be unmentionable.

The work of urban social anthropologists, the only field in which complexities such as these have been systematically studied is ignored. Such neglect is reinforced by the tendency amongst many to treat urban movements and organisations from the top down, and to bypass the social composition of their membership, through the analysis of which important cleavages and differentiation might be revealed.

Cohorts and Cleavages

Questioning the myth of the inevitable homogenisation of the working class involves teasing out the hierarchies and patterns of solidarity that emerge in cities, and this impinges directly upon the question of how communities are formed after the initial dispossession is complete.

However important the fact of dispossession might be, we also need to look at the patterns it takes, if we are to answer questions about the nature of community in modern contexts. Societies that disgorge a proletariat do so in ways determined by their pre-existing character, as many analysts have argued already. (38) Societies that are divided by religion, gender, wealth, age or status, will 'break' along similar lines when the question of producing a migrant labour force comes to the fore, but each 'break' is shaped by struggles within that society and by ideologies available to protagonists in those struggles. The young and the male may migrate first, because this pattern suits the interests of powerful leaders. The early migration of women, by contrast, may be an expression of their resistance to the powers and ideologies that control them. Whether from motives of compliance with rural expectations or resistance against them, such patterns of migration make it inevitable that rural cleavages find a distorted, mirrored reproduction in the cities. The juxtaposition of Beinart's paper with that of Bradford demonstrates the subtle interplay of forces of this type. Rural cleavages between men and women are reflected and distorted in urban cleavages along the same lines; furthermore, rural patterns of resistance to those cleavages find inexact echoes in the small-town protests of women in Bradford's paper.

What is being suggested here, then, is that the prior processes of dispossession, rural reconstruction and community-formation underlie the creation of all strata of the urban working class, and research into urban groups may be pursued by working 'backwards' into the rural mainsprings of their march into the workforce. It is not only migrant workers today whose rural roots and origins are significant. Nearly all urban-dwellers in South Africa are such recent arrivals, that the social route they have taken into the cities must be an integral part of our understanding of how they behave there.

Two features stand out in this volume. The first is that a great cleavage in pattern and experience of dispossession and proletarianisation occurs between men and women, in nearly all the cases examined. The second is that dispossessed groups arriving in the new setting in which they seek to survive, tend to cluster in groupings which make sense in terms of the timing and manner of their leaving the societies, and that in the South African case, these groupings tend to have a strong, ethnic, racial, *non-class character to them.*

The Salience of Gender

> Although I appear silent, I am talking in my heart,
> I talk about poverty
> Aye he ha he - my heart is talking about poverty
> When I walk, when I laugh, when I am tired, I work
> for your mother
> Aye he ha he - my heart is talking about poverty. (39)

One of the things this collection demonstrates is the possibility of paying attention to factors of gender without confining them to an academic ghetto. In most of these papers, where women undergo experiences unique to them; or where relationships between women and men have a markedly structured, patriarchal character to them, these facts are duly considered. But authors such as Bradford, Beinart, Cock and Emdon and Brink, all concerned with the place of women, the household/family/ and/or patriarchy are at pains to weave their concerns in with wider ones, while other authors not centrally concerned with such issues make reference to them. Where such references avoid all hint of contrivance, and where gender-focused studies achieve an enlightened integration with broader issues, this collection has perhaps made an advance in Southern African studies.

The image with which this section opens - that of the black woman left in the countryside while her menfolk migrate, is a reflection of the prevalent understanding of the cleavage between the sexes in modern South Africa. Migrant labour and apartheid divide the sexes and families; the lament of the Makuleke woman could be echoed in a thousand remote corners of the countryside. The first fact about dispossession is that it has, for a variety of complex reasons, acted unevenly

upon the sexes, and this unevenness has been perpetuated and exaggerated by both state and sections of industry and agriculture.

Noting the unevenness in impact upon men and women, of the penetration of mercantile relations, migrant labour, and of full proletarianisation, several of these studies enquire further into the differential responses of men and women, the impact upon the family, of these processes and the ideological outgrowths which have resulted and so on. Mediating our understanding of these matters through a concept of patriarchy helps illuminate things. The woman who bears the brunt of the burden of childcare will perhaps feel an especial anguish at herself having to migrate to earn money (40) a special responsibility for finding adequate childcare substitutes. (41) But patriarchy is not simply a 'given' set of structures within which women are forced to act. In fact it may be one of the 'medieval ruins' whose undermining or at least restructuring is indeed initiated by the new industrial setting. Bradford suggests strongly that patriarchal structures are seriously challenged in certain settings, by women who find that new opportunities for independence are offered to them by the new order. Their strength, militancy and resilience are attested to by this paper, which gives us an idea of the vast underworld of female activity and resistance which awaits research. Asking questions about patriarchy, moreover, is not only the concern of those studying women - for men too, have their behaviour and consciousness shaped by its prescriptions. Guy and Thabane and Pinnock, all concerned with male, or mostly male gangs, point to the definitions of masculinity inherent in such organisations. In the case of the Russians such definitions have a profound rural dimension; but while women challenge the ideas of their place, once new worlds are opened up to them, these gangsters demonstrate a marked reassertion of their masculinity, in the city, making of it a matter of defiance and identity. (42) Perhaps some of this is as a response to female assertiveness (43) and some to the emasculating tendencies of colonial capitalism.

We shall see the effects of these differential responses around patriarchy on the process of community formation below, when we examine the leading role played by women in building communities, and also their tendency to adopt non-class idioms in which to do so.

Ethnicity, Race and Skill

New arrivals in the city come from a variety of settings whose difference from each other frequently far outweigh any others they may previously have confronted. Furthermore, because of the fact that proletarianisation varies regionally, with time, the arrival of groups from particular regions may occur in 'cohorts', differentiated temporally. The new arrival may find, thus, that the 'old hands' in the city are all of one group; that particular occupations are monopolised by members of another; that some dwelling-areas are of a third; that social life is controlled by a fourth, and gang life by a fifth; and so on. (44) In the case of Zimbabwe, it has been argued that this kind of differential proletarianisation resulted in the creation of a minutely stratified mine-working class, with identifiable positions belonging to identifiable, originially rural groups. In the case of more complex settings, the neatness of these categorisations may be less easy to discover; but there is no doubt that the work of Guy, Nicol, Webster and others, supports this general proposition. Added, therefore, to the cleavages reflected from within rural communities, are those complex divisions in the new city population between formerly rural social groupings.

A fascinating comparative example of such stratification lies in the Transvaal garment industry. Here the first cohort of workers were Jewish male tailors, who occupied skilled positions, they were succeeded by a second cohort, this time of Afrikaner women - the unskilled daughters of bywoners and the new urban working class. (45) But this famous example is only

one of many. In the Cape, garment workers were divided between white and 'coloured'; (46) in the case of gangsters on the Rand, being a Basotho and being a gangster were coincidental points of identity, which served, perhaps to distinguish the migrant worker from his more urbanised counterparts. As Guy and Thabane put it:

> The most obvious feature of the Ma-Rashea is that it was an organisation of Basotho; its members were from a small British colony and were people with a common history, background, language and traditions who had come to the Witwatersrand to labour for wages. (47)

Furthermore, Basotho migrants like those from other regions like Zululand, identified themselves according to their very village of origin, and indeed established fighting units based on village identity.

The complexities of such stratification are far greater than the simplistic categories of 'race' with which many Southern African scholars, perhaps trapped by the framework defined by the State, would tend to allow for. It is not just that white workers may be distinguished from black, and both from 'coloured' or 'Asian'. These are the distinctions enshrined in the law, but that is no reason to accept as given their sociological validity. Instead, in looking at the real, rather than normative, lines of stratification what we find is that they occur within races as much as between them; and even, as in the case of Anglo and East European Jews repectively, within ethnic categories which are subcategories of our legally-defined races. (48) They include an enormous variety of variables. In Webster's paper, in which the working class in just one foundry is examined through the brief stories of each of five workers, he comments on:

> the complex nature of the interaction between divisions within the working class, the labour process and workplace organisation. These divisions cover skill, education, region, language, political power, ethnicity, migrancy and, above all, race. (49)

To these may be added a variable absent from Webster's paper, focused as it is on a male sector of employment, that of gender. Few of these cleavages may be properly understood without reference to the path into the proletariat which a particular group has followed. When were they dispossessed, where and with what degree of trauma? How did they come to occupy a particular place in urban society; did they displace another group, if so how, and when, and with what weapons at their disposal? It is essential here to take the working class as a whole, and so refuse to fall analytically into the trap of race categorisation, thus begging far too many questions that need answering. For we need to know how it was that race did succeed in becoming a critical criterion, one which grew in importance above all others, in dividing the working class in South Africa, rather than to assume its innate salience by building it into our analysis from the very beginning. Mike Davis has made a similar point about the American working class, one which shows 'extreme fragmentation and serialisation of ... work, community and political universes', but for which

> this differentiation was not inscribed, once and for all, in some primordial matrix of historical or structural conditions. (50)

A holistic study of the evolution of the working class would perhaps go some way towards helping us understand this. The history of white workers, of their right and left wing political allegiances, of their internal divisions, their defeats and victories, is an essential key to the understanding of the evolving and also internally divided black working class; while the grossness of the dispossession and marginalisation experienced by 'coloured' workers, apparent in papers by Webster, Pinnock and Peires, is a fact whose implications can only be understood

in terms of the remainder of the working class, with whom they may be contrasted and compared. A truly holistic history of the South African dispossessed, which takes full cognisance of its multiracial, multiethnic and its gender specific experiences has yet to be written; all that this collection can do is to hint at the directions in which such a history might be taken. The salient point for understanding the form, if any, taken by the communities within which people lived, is that no homogenisation has occurred in this peripheral, unevenly developed system and that many 'medieval ruins' remain to ensure that in reconstructing their lives after dispossession most South Africans either carry with them pre-industrial ideologies, or find themselves caught up in one or another "layer" within a highly stratified system.

V PROCESSES OF COMMUNITY-FORMATION

Our town seems to be full of poor people (51α)

So far, what we have explored have been the patterns taken by the dispossession and urbanisation of groups of people, and the cleavages which would tend to result therefrom. This is not the same, however, as saying that we have explained how, when, where and why, communities are formed, whether as a reaction against dispossession, or an ex post facto compromise with it, whether in the countryside, or the city. However what is important is that we have identified the patterns taken by dispossession as having some important pre-disposing influence upon the ways in which communities are formed; what we now need to identify is how these tendencies actually work out historically.

For those who are not of the wealthier or better educated strata, the process of community-formation takes place mainly as a way of coping with the brutal fact of dispossession. The successful dispossession of a group will not mean the end of its struggles against proletarianisation. Rural and urban dwellers seek ways of making a living which avoid the dependence, poverty and degradation of wage labour in whatever ways are open to them. (An exception may be the institutionalised migrancy in the mining industry, in which wage labour was and may still be for some, perceived as a means of retaining a rural base, rather than a sign of its absence). The transfer of rural skills, the acquisition of urban skills, the gaining of access to education, and the accumulation of wealth, are all options open to some urban-dwellers, options which may make the city appear to be a place of opportunity for all. And yet, of course, just as the rural-dweller struggles against abstract and uncontrollable forces to retain his or her niche, so the urban dweller is forced to come to terms with the fact that the city is an environment in which the ebb and flow of capital accumulation and its political concomitants, are constantly felt by all. Sectors of economic activity in which rural skills are useful may decline; while mechanisation may displace urban skills as well. The concentration of capital may marginalise the small producer; while massive sectoral imbalances or national slumps may throw whole bodies of people into unemployment at particular times. Just as the formation of rural communities may be seen against the background of such abstract forces, so urban people find themselves having to construct an, often defensive, universe in which they lack control over crucial variables.

Individuals 'make out' in the cities in the face of process and structure - some, it is true, may be overwhelmed by it, but many succeed in tracing their ways through the societal rubble of social upheaval, and construct their own metaphorical dwellings where none remain.

What kinds of dwellings do they construct? And what are the variables that decide whether one or another kind will come into being? Setting themselves in the face of disintegrating tendencies of capitalism, people devlop ways of surviving which have many, sometimes ironic, consequences. We cannot assume that these ways of surviving will automatically result in the formation of communities. Indeed, far from it. It is only when circumstances are propitious that this will take place, and one

of the characteristic features of the South African case is that this is a rare occurrence. In exploring when and whether communities will be formed, let us return to our initial set of questions about these processes - i.e. the two apporaches we identified, one of which emphasised the imaginary, ideological dimension of communities, and the other the material reality. As materialists, let us explore these dimensions first.

The Materiality of Communities : Space, income and outside threats

Spatial boundaries, ecological and economic viability, internal income generating capacity, stability, social interconnectedness and the existence of external threats are all factors which appear from the work done in these papers, to make the formation of a community likely. The suburb of Vrededorp, (52) the ecological area occupied by the Makuleke, (53) the slums of small towns in the countryside (54) or the official 'townships' (55) are all spatially defined living areas in which social interactions may develop into a sense of community. Classic working class communities in other settings tend to form in inner city areas but in this recently industrialised society, with its peculiar segregationist policies, this tends to be the exception rather than the norm. Certainly inner city communities have existed - the cases of Vrededorp and other poor white communities; of the old Doornfontein and other slumyards; of District Six, or of New Brighton in Port Elizabeth, stand out as being important. But whereas in the British or American cases such community experiences may have been felt by vast numbers of people, in this setting they only embrace a tiny proportion of the dispossessed population. Inner city experiences are balanced by those on the periphery of the city; and these in turn are to be seen in the context of the surviving, partially dispossessed, rural communities. It is only by assessing these kinds of groupings together that we will be able to build up a picture of the total community experience of the South African dispossessed classes.

The very term community, unlike that of class, implies a space within which the group is formed, and reproduced. This spatial dimension is probably what lends the term 'community' its timelessness, its sense of coherence and its claim to specificity. How are we to introduce process into spaces such as those occupied by communities, and divest the term of its static qualities?

The papers here contain illustrations of the historic struggles over space which have made community-formation the complex process it is. In Harries' paper it is the act of removal which transforms the community and also generates its internal ideology of nostalgia; while in the case of both City Jews (56) and garment workers, (57) the occupation by particular kinds of people of particular areas, make classes and communities the objects of regional and local appeals by ideologists. But it is the case of black urban-dwellers that inevitably raises the question of spatial dimensions to class and community-formation most vividly. It is a truism that the policy of segregation involves the manipulation of space - although the point is not often made that removal of old working class, militant populations from the inner city to the faraway periphery is not unique to South African capitalism, but is a common feature of capitalist systems everywhere. (58) In such contexts, it has often been the breaking up of old communities that has been the theme emphasised; in South Africa, destruction of Sophiatown, Fordsburg, Vrededorp, Doornfontein and District Six amongst many others have been subjects for analysis, emphasising that community-destruction has been as important a process in South African history as community-formation. However the papers by Lodge (59) and Sapire (60) pursue the obverse of this theme - namely the reconstruction of new communities after the act of segregation has declared black 'townships' to be zoned in particular areas, and after the state has ensured that certain populations live there. Community-formation by government decree is followed by a complex set of processes of internal structuring and development, which combine to give the 'township' its own character.

Early analysts of townships emphasised their ghetto-like character. Classes, it was suggested, were 'squashed together', making 'race' their overriding distinguishing characteristic; while external pressures helped create an atmosphere of defensiveness and therefore inner unity. (61) While struggle over space may be seen as one element in the process of community-formation for groups whose choice of living area remains more or less voluntary, in the case of black townships, the involuntary nature of spatial allocation makes it an overriding feature. The spatial allocation of housing internally downplays internal cleavages (at least until recently) while distance from the city combined with racial demarcation of boundaries makes a 'community' where none existed before.

This involuntary aspect of township community-formation is combined, however, with the exigencies of the specific situation of each township in ways which make the original analyses too simplistic and general. The comparative study of different townships provides one avenue for advancing our understanding further - as the papers here suggest. Variables include the different types of capital which prevail, affecting the nature of the workforce, the cycles of boom and slump, the rate of unemployment and the openings for informal sector activities; the different types of local administration, in which particular class interests may prevail at particular periods; the historical legacy of resistance or collaboration of the people occupying the township; the size and geographical location of the township; and its internal composition.(62) Besides suggesting a vast agenda for research, such a delineation of variables, with its tremendous emphasis on external forces, begs the question of whether a 'community' may be said to be coterminous with the state-created 'township' at all. Classes may, indeed, be 'squashed together'; but not all the evidence supports the assumption that such physical squashing will lead to cultural and ideological blending. Instead, what seems increasingly to be uncovered, is the existence of profound cleavage in townships, many of which reproduce the rural cleavages outlined earlier, and others which do not. Only rarely, and in the case of townships with a relatively homogeneous population, such as that of Brakpan, do acts of resistance draw widespread support. (63)

In addition to space, there is the question of income; for communities which are not fully dispossessed, it is their own surviving means of generating some forms of internal income that provides an ongoing materiality to community. In the cases of the Katberg; of the Makuleke, and of the Lichtenburg diamond diggers, this is clearly the case, but for those consisting of mainly the urbanised dispossessed other material factors come into play.

In the case of the Brakpan location, the existence of local, relatively monolithic employment opportunities nearby the community seem to have been important in allowing it to develop a sense of cohesion. (although heterogeneity of employment opportunities will not preclude the formation of community). As important, perhaps, is the existence of social mechanisms which promote solidarity, possibly brought from earlier traditions. The operation of family ties is perhaps the foremost of these, as mentioned in different contexts by Krut, Bradford, Beinart and Brink. Most papers mentioned here emphasise the role played by women in sustaining these family ties, and Bradford gives a vivid example of the kinds of functions they may perform in sustaining a sense of solidary consciousness (64)

In addition, structures may exist, such as church groups, which perform similar functions (65) although these are perhaps more a proof of the existence of community, rather than predisposing factors. Perhaps more to the point would be the fact that many communities of those with little or no remaining ties to the land still maintain a resemblance of economic viability, through the development of a strong informal sector. (66) In many cases, again, this is under the control of women, and in some situations we find developing a household-informal sector complex which acts as a powerful binding agent to an evolving community.

The final factor which makes community-formation likely, is the existence of a hostile environment. The looming role of the South African state is the first instance that comes to mind here -

for again and again we see communities in this society, urban and rural alike, finding a hitherto undiscovered internal unity in the face of the threat of removal, or destruction. But other threats - those of anti-semitism, of racism, or of economic decline, also make communities close ranks; and the form taken by the threat often shapes the ideologies adopted in response to it.

Ideological Dimensions of Community-formation

Time and Tradition:

Community-formation takes time, and it is only if the potential community is left relatively undisturbed that it will be able to consolidate itself. One of the longest surviving inner-city working class communities in this region, that of District Six in Cape Town, which, according to Pinnock, had become the focus of urbanward migrations since the abolition of slavery and the unbinding of the Khoi in 1820's (67) may be a case in point. District Six survived until the 1960's and 1970's, when most communal family networks fell apart as people were randomly packed into tiny nuclear-family houses and apartments on the Cape Flats. (68)

Time permits traditions to evolve and become consolidated. In the case of District Six, the tradition of the Coon Carnival became, according to Pinnock,

> the annual symbolic storming of the city by the poor, an act which clearly unnerved both the city authorities and the police. Thousands of noisy street brothers were demanding freedom of the streets, lampooning 'respectable' citizens, and actually being seen. Troupe members got little out of the carnival but a one-day sense of freedom and a hangover. But for this they waited a whole year. (69)

As with the songs of the Makuleke, the evolution of established mechanisms for the passing on of such traditions can only take place by repetition, the constant usage and reworking of their form and content. (70)

Social Actors and Artisans:

As with all ideologies, or cultural forms, it is important to recognise that social actors play a role in the creation, spread and consolidation of these kinds of symbolic dimensions of communities. Ideologies do not just 'emerge' and 'spread', as perhaps the more extreme versions of discourse and other theories might lead us to believe. Although we may not always know enough to tell who it was that originally developed a particular form, that is not the same thing as saying that it developed of its own accord. Harries points to the role of women in developing the songs of the Makuleke; the District Six example has a suggestive pointer to how ideologies may be created in an urban setting.

As was pointed out above, considerable emphasis is placed in British and American studies of working class communities, on the crucial cultural and ideological role played by artisans in community-formation. While the culture of District Six may not have been trade-unionist in orientation, it is notable that skilled craftsmen, the master-tailors who originated as skilled Malay slaves, played a central role in the creation, and maintenance of the Coon Carnival. It is not, furthermore, just that such artisans were present in the community but also that they were able to offer ideological and cultural languages which were acceptable to the broader population. This ability may cross the barriers of original ethnic culture. As Cumbler shows, the artisanal traditions in Lynn crossed the lines of division between older and immigrant workers. (71) We should not assume that race or culture will per se and inevitably prevent community cohesion from developing, therefore, as many South African analysts are prone to do.

The example of the Garment Workers, analysed in three interlocking papers in this collection, illuminates this point. (72) Here ethnicity, defined in this case as 'Afrikanerdom' was rejected, by the Afrikaner woman workers in this sector, in favour of 'class'. The trade unionism which appealed to these workers was not an

inherent ideology derived from their rural experience; it was instead a tradition itself originating amongst Jewish tailors in the industry, and transmitted by the chief intellectual of the garment workers, Solly Sachs, into a form acceptable to the woman workers of the industry. The ability of the older artisanal traditions to connect up with those of the newer immigrant stratum of workers is notable. What, it must be asked, led a group of poor Afrikaner working class women, many of them young, single and desperate, to find meaning in an ideology of trade unionism forged by Jewish immigrant, sometimes communist tailors, when soon afterwards a powerful ethnic 'Afrikanerdom' was being offered to them and indeed was gaining acceptance amongst other Afrikaner workers in a variety of spheres?

We know too little about crucial matters such as the inherent ideologies of these women before the advent of trade unionism, the specific appeals and their detailed formulations, made by Sachs, and a variety of other matters, to give a clear answer to this question. But what the papers here suggest is that the success of trade unionism lay in its ability to appeal to more than simply the class position of these women. This does not mean that it was a political ideology - Witz's paper makes clear that garment workers, like many others, separated in their minds quite clearly, economic from political issues, and carried this out in their voting behaviour. But what it does mean that it contained within its basically economic appeal, a resonance with the self-perception and aspirations of the women. The women, already in many cases singled out by their families as sole or important breadwinners, often free from strict patriarchal controls, and, it would seem from Witz's work, in many cases with SAP and Labour Party allegiances, were being brought in as cheap, undercutting labour into a previously craft-dominated industry. Unlike Afrikaner workers in many other spheres they were <u>offered</u> incorporation into a union which existed already, a fact which must itself be attributed to the more internationalist socialism of Jewish tailors, as opposed to the exclusivist English-speaking craft unionism of other workers. The union promised to lend dignity, legitimacy and economic clout to their cause. Their acceptance of the offer was not surprising, and the entrenchment of

this trade unionist tradition seems to have become firm by the time the Christian National assault on trade unions elsewhere in the economy reached its zenith. The specificity of the appeal of Sach's version of Jewish socialism to these Afrikaner women is brought vividly into focus when Nicol's paper is considered - for he makes clear that the same ideology had little appeal for garment workers in the Cape. For there, the older craft unionism was not dominated by internationalist, socialist Jews, the new undercutting classes were not white Afrikaner women, and the inherent ideologies were entirely different.

<u>Middle Class Intellectuals: Wasp hegemony and Cultural Challenge</u>

> In espousing the cause of the Russo-Jewish immigrant we are espousing our own cause. If we do our best to open a path for them here, we are not merely acting charitably. We are consulting our own interest. In securing rights for alien immigrants, we shall at the same time be securing rights for ourselves; and it is doubtful if we can secure such rights in any other way. (73)

The role of an artisanal class in handing down community traditions may be compared and contrasted with that of a middle class intelligentsia. Where potential communities possess an intelligentsia with community-formation as its project, this too will consolidate tradition and promote solidarity, often in ways which contrast sharply with those which characterise artisanal traditions. In these studies we see Zionist, Nationalist, communist, socialist and trade unionist intellectuals occupying important places within communities and making attempts to bind the community with their ideologies. Who are these non-working class groups who wish to see themselves as part of communities?

Just as it would be a mistake to regard homogenisation of the working classes as inevitable, so we find the internally stratified middle classes in South Africa demonstrating strong ethnic or other cultural loyalties. Perhaps this is because the formation of the middle classes in South Africa, like that of the dispossesse

has also occurred in cohorts. Educated people and people of some means have come to urban growth points from a variety of origins and have tended to consolidate themselves around cultural and social codes while seeking to accumulate capital and status. The first and most successful of modern middle class immigrants, the post-1886 mineowners and their allies, established their economic and ideological hegemony in terms which were undeniably "Wasp" and this fact dictated the terms in which all subsequent aspirant members of the bourgeoisie sought to assert themselves. Subsequent waves of the middle class defined themselves culturally in a typically reflexive response. Jews and Afrikaners have been the strongest challenges to Wasp hegemony, and have resorted to cultural self definitions as a means of mobilisation and challenge, as well as of economic growth through "self-help".(74) Today we see Indian and African intellectuals in a range of South African settings, beginning to express the same needs.

The imperatives of these middle class groupings lead them to seek the support of groups culturally similar to themselves in their desire to challenge the existing dominant groups. Unable to dislodge the powerful and dominant group alone, such cohorts of the middle class seek to do so with the aid of their ethnic allies, to whom they may indeed offer considerable rewards for their support. The Jewish philanthropy described by Krut, in which respectability and upliftment was offered in exchange for the abandonment of socialism by the Jewish poor, bears a remarkable similarity to the efforts of Afrikaner nationalists in the same sphere.

What is it, one may ask, that makes the blandishments of these groups successful in some cases? We have already pointed to the way in which newly dispossessed people seek to make sense of the chastic reality of their new lives. But often making sense of things is hard for new arrivals in cities. Whereas 'traditional' intellectuals provided old coherences, in the new milieu, these are not always available, particularly in the absence of the kinds of artisanal traditions mentioned above. People thus find themselves vulnerable to the intellectual blandishments of the middle classes and the intelligentsia, who come armed with explanations of the world. Thus the methods of coping open to city people are often, though not always, tied up with the availability of middle-class or intellectual groups able to appeal to their experiential perceptions. Understanding 'community formation' in the city is thus a matter of understanding the middle class as much as the 'lower' classes; of perceiving the operation of ideology as much as of economics.

What the intellegentsia has to offer depends on what is available to them - whether, for example, they are themselves immigrants, with a range of imported ideas; or whether they too have experienced local conditions, have been long urbanised, have a 'feel' for the locality. The papers here which handle the subject of 'communism' in South Africa are a case in point. While in one sense, the white communists of the 1920's and 30's were the carriers of a ready-made set of ideas, on another level, they were simply immigrant Jews, for whom communism was a philosophy enabling them to make sense of things in particular ways. It is important, thus, not to reify the philosophies offered by intellectuals too readily, but to see them, like other ideologies, as borne by socially identifiable groups and individuals.

Krut and Mantzaris' papers demonstrate clearly how groups of intellectuals may, in fact, compete for the allegiances of 'ordinary' people, in the process of community-formation. In the case of immigrant Jews, socialism and Zionism acted as the two ideologies which sought a place in the hearts of Jewish workers and the poor. While socialism was the 'inherent' ideology of many immigrant groups from Eastern Europe, Zionists, who were themselves neither European nor poor, sought to forge a Jewish identity which not only substituted for socialism, in the minds of ordinary people, but also established Jewishness rather than class as the primary category of identification. While in the long term their victory was not total, socialism remained, as Mantzaris demonstrates, a minor rather than a major theme in subsequent conceptions of Jewishness. The

formation of a community in this case involved the classic interplay between a middle class and more established intelligentsia, and a lower-class series of groupings seeking coherence and survival. In such situations, Krut suggests, the middle classes are inclined to add economic incentives to their ideological overtures, and this, combined with their cultural capacity to 'speak' to the ordinary people gives them a strong capacity to forge the emergent community under their aegis.

VI THE DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY

> The GG is carrying us away
> It is not me it is my child who is crying (76)

One factor which looms large in the South African reality has only been touched upon. This is the fact that more common than the process of community-formation in this society has been that of community-destruction. While it is true, as has been suggested, that the destruction of inner-city communities is a common feature of industrial societies elsewhere, South Africa seems to be peculiarly blessed with the ability to remove, destroy and crush budding communities, whether rural or urban, to an extraordinary extent. It is class ideology, rather than non-class ideology, which suffers as a result. The emergence of a working class community seems to require time, continuity, internal community solidarity and networks - particularly in a setting where proletarianisation and dispossession are so recent, so uneven, so marked by ethnic differences, and incomplete, leaving rural ideologies and networks partially intact. Most workers in this society have been denied, through persistent and brutal destruction of their budding communities, the opportunity to develop these things. State-imposed segregationism adds to this. Some of the richest working class community traditions develop where, as in the case of Lynn, Mass, or perhaps Vrededorp and District Six, class identity becomes infused with a rich cross-cutting of a variety of pre-industrial traditions. When such developments are cut short by the imposition of physical, legal and cultural boundaries, the symbolic universes of the inhabitants of the segregated areas will become limited to the pre-determined motifs of the externally-defined grouping.

The processes of removal, dispossession and community-destruction may force the removed groups to seek meaning in their past. In the case of Makuleke, or the people of the Katberg, this past is a rural one, and their ideology becomes one of rural nostalgia - an inherent tradition ripe for co-optation by nationalist rhetoric. In the cases of the Pretoria, Sophiatown and Brakpan townships, removal and segregationism serve to cut inhabitants off from older traditions; and to seek defensive ghetto-based self-definitions. In both cases, populist, nationalist rhetoric prevails over class ideologies. In these cases, too, segregationism promotes a sharp separation between home and work, precluding the development of the kinds of work-centred inner city communities so characteristic of 19th century capitalism elsewhere.

Segregationism and other features of the racist form taken by the society also make unlikely the growth of continuities between the artisanal traditions of older strata of the working class, and the new industrial workers of a later era. In the South African case, where artisanal traditions were borne by white workers, and where the newer working classes were black, continuity was rendered impossible by residential segregation; and other legal impositions upon the blending of traditions. Where older artisans were not white but 'coloured' some continuities may have evolved; but Webster's paper dmonstrates with some poignancy that this led at times to the imposition of an arbitrary insecurity to the 'coloured' artisan, trapped between older, separate, artisanal and exclusivist traditions, and an African working class with an entirely self-contained ideology. In Morris's words:

> We have been a very docile people and have trusted the white man, but he has usurped all that belonged to the coloureds. (77)

This echoes Peires's point that 'a community borrowed their entire set of values from an ultimately inimical alien community, and were therefore left helpless in the face of betrayal by those whom they admired. (93) and Pinnock's suggestion that coloureds have rejected 'black' culture as inferior, yet have been constantly lured then rejected by the culture of their colonial masters. (78) Given that racism denied to the black working class any possibility of building upon white artisanal traditions it seems an added irony that the other potential tradition from which this may have been forged, was rendered useless by the presence of a powerful colonial ideology.

VII CONCLUSION: CLASS AND NON-CLASS IDEOLOGIES

> Has there ever been an Afrikaner or even a Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church who has come forward to try and better the conditions of the garment workers as Solly Sachs has done? (79)

When it comes to understanding communities, several important questions need to be asked: firstly, what are the factors which led to the formation of a particular community, if indeed, one was formed; and secondly, what kinds of ideological patterns tend to coalesce in particular cases; thirdly, what is the nature of the 'inherent' ideology in a particular case, and finally, how does it interlock with whatever 'derived' ideologies may be offered to community inhabitants? The discussion so far has brought us some way towards answering the first three of these questions. We have seen the ways in which dispossession occurred, the motifs to which it gave rise, and the composition and patterns of consciousness which result in particular cases. It is to the final question that we now need to turn.

It has been suggested that a major, and interesting division exists between large traditions of popular ideologies which take a broadly <u>class</u> dimension (ideologies such as trade unionism,

socialism, communism and the like), and the large traditions which focus upon <u>non-class</u> ideologies often with a clearly cultural dimension (ethnicity, nationalism, populism or race). In present-day South Africa the existence of this dichotomy is of widespread interest to people in all walks of life. Nationalists and trade unionists vie today, as they did in the times portrayed by Krut, Witz, Brink and others, for the right to claim popular traditions as their own. These papers do not address this current concern directly. But what they do, is provide necessary historical information about past competition between class and non-class traditions, their outcomes and the factors that shaped these outcomes. What these papers seem to reveal is that on every level the forces promoting the development of a non-class consciousness have been greater than those promoting class awareness. But an equally important finding, however, is that the class, non-class dichotomy is difficult to sustain through all of our case studies - perhaps it is itself something of a derived categorisation. Certainly it fails to take account of the 'inherent' tendency of popular ideologies to take on uncategorisable directions such as ethiopianist separitism, segregationism, gangsterism or proto-feminism. Failure to note this fact could lead present-day intellectuals into disastrous attempts to straitjacket popular sentiment into one or another theoretically-derived pigeonhole. In this collection a balance is attempted between analyses which focus on the class/non-class dichotomy, and those which point to other vitally important, traditions.

It is clear that in the case of Jews, for example, on the face of it, ethnicity prevailed over class; while in the case of garment workers, the reverse took place. But the latter example also requires us to ask what we mean by 'class' if it is to be so clearly distinguished from ethnicity. A serious consideration of these two cases indicates that such a distinction is far too simple. If all cultural aspects of one's consciousness are "ethnicity", then all that is left of class is an empty economic shell, which is surely not what the term intends. For Jewish socialists,

their socialism was a clearly Jewish phenomenon; while for Afrikaner garment workers, their trade unionism appealed as much to their sense of themselves as complex social beings, as to their narrow economic needs. Perhaps we need to reduce the polarities between class, and non-class, consciousness, and suggest, with Herbert Gutman, that all class consciousness is also some form of non-class consciousness. Trade unions may, because of our intellectual training, seem to us to be good examples of class consciousness. But to the migrant Zulu-speaking workers, the single Afrikaner women, the Jewish Eastern European immigrants, and the many other kinds of people who join them, they may represent something more or different. Perhaps they represent a combination of conplex social ideological and economic meanings too intricate to reduce to the simple polarities or ideal types of class ethnicity - or class - community. To one group the union may represent powerful, macho, Zuluness; to another dedicated, respectable, idealistic Afrikaner womanhood; to a third, committed, all-embracing, internationalist Yiddishness. Non-class elements can be and often are a part of class consciousness, and are often the force which gives it its appeal, its ability to move social groups. (80) What a worker means by 'class' and what pure theorists mean by it is vastly different. Permeated with old, ethnic and community ideas; blended with new ones perhaps derived from trade unionists and other intellectuals, real, on-the-ground class consciousness is never quite what Lukacs thought it should be.

It could also be argued that in embracing non-class definitions of their identity, workers are not failing to pursue their self-perceived interests as workers. Instead, they have been persuaded by ethnic or other intellectuals that these interests are best pursued through an alliance with them, rather than with other workers. Such forms of consciousness are not necessarily false. The idea of false consciousness implies that a bullying, domineering intellegentsia is capable of seducing the population into believing anything - 'duping' them. But in fact derived ideas, whether those of the middle class, of artisans, or of any other group, will only be accepted if they make sense to ordinary people, in terms of what their experiences and inherent ideas are. In the case of the gangster, Rantoa, for example, however much a trade unionist may have tried to appeal to him, little ground could have been won in the face of an inherent philosophy which stated that:

> I have stayed for a long time there and I know akhente is better than a workers' organisation. (81)

By refining our distinctions between class and non-class forms of consciousness, however, we are not suggesting that the idiom selected by a particular group for the expression of its interests, does not have profound consequences for the resulting forms of struggle and resistance. The evolution of strong class-based communities, with artisanal traditions, trade-unionist or other forms of working class self-organisation and a working class ideology takes place along entirely different lines from the evolution of basically cross-class communities, with ethnic or other non-class forms of organisation, and a nationalist or proto-nationalist kind of ideology, whatever we may say about the reasons why particular classes adhere to particular kinds of ideologies. And the political, economic and social strategies and solutions sought by each will differ greatly.

The reader will not be surprised to find us concluding, given the evidence above, that in the South African case, it has been rare for the former path to be pursued. In this collection, there are perhaps two examples of communities where class forms of expression have prevailed - that of District Six and of the garment workers. But even in these cases, the depth and commitment to working class forms of expression present in the archetypal working class communities in other countries is absent. The major forms of community-expression appear to take place through non class forms of consciousness, in South Africa. These do not always take the form of a clearcut ethnicity, as in the case of Jews. Popular community ideologies amongst the other rural and urban dwellers examined here take forms that are often complex and distinctive. We may, for example, distinguish the 'old working class ghettoes' of Cape Town from the black township whose tendency is not symbolically to 'storm' the city, as in the Coon Carnival, but to

retreat from it.

> the residents locked the iron gates of the location, and a wagon drawn against them was festooned with placards demanding the removal of the Native Affairs manager from his post. (82)

We may discover the protofeminist community-defensiveness which appears amongst the small-town community women of the Natal countryside portrayed in Bradford's paper, where, she suggests:

> women fought bitterly over the absolute financial control of male workers over their wages - without raising the issue of why these earnings were so pitifully low in the first place. Yet if their working class consciousness was undeveloped, their feminist consciousness was not. (83)

Amongst the diggers of Lichtenburg, an ideology developed which could perhaps be characterised as populist, in its disdain for capitalism, and its simultaneous racism and defence of the small man; while Beinart's paper shows the interweaving of the strands of Africanism, segregationism and female-dominated Christianity in an entirely different, black, rural context. In Pretoria, early attempts by black communists and trade unionists to develop a working class constituency succeeded only partially, and were soon overwhelmed by the rising tide of nationalist sentiment.

Each of these traditions must be seen as real, living and located in a local cultural matrix; and indeed many of them are the traditions of working class people. As Bradford points out, the use of the community symbol - the beerhall - disguised the fact that a host of local demands were at the root of the women's protests of 1929, demands relating to dispossession, hardship, poverty. It would be unforgivably judgemental to measure these forms of protest up against some ideal of 'socialism' and declare them wanting. Nevertheless, it is an objective fact that such

forms took patterns more compatible with the great traditions of nationalism than of those of socialism and this fact must be understood as being a result of historical development, rooted in material reality, rather than of ideological whim. The factors which have been suggested in this essay as possible explanations for this include the recency of dispossession, its unevenness and regional specificity, as well as its frequent connections with the state rather than capital; the existence of cohorts amongst both workers and the middle classes; the availability of 'ethnic' intellectuals, the workings of the state in segregating and displacing existing groups; the structure of communities; and the types of inherent ideologies already in existence. This is by no means an exhaustive, or theoretically perfect set of explanations. What it does is try to move considerations of the issues of popular ideology away from abstractions, teleologies and ideal-types into concrete historical reality.

Postscript

> It is useful in politics to have historical perspective if you want to know what is new in a situation. You've got to know how it's different from what's gone on before ... there is an enormous amount of pseudo-history at the superficial level of political or electoral folklore. People are simply looking for precedents. It does seem to me, ... that you've got to recognize what's new in a situation and what is, therefore, unprecedented and to what extent old ways of handling it are adequate or not. (84)

While in present-day South Africa populist, nationalist and other non-class forms of self-expression are extremely prevalent amongst blacks, the most notable development in recent years, that of the growth of trade unionism, appears to indicate that some of the patterns of the past have given way to new ones in the present.

What this essay has shown has been that in seeking explanations of this type of phenomenon, we need to know not just about the work experience of those whose consciousness appears to favour class, as opposed to those who do not; but to develop a keen eye for the overlapping areas between class and non-class ideologies; to ask about the kinds of communities in which such people live, the patterns of dispossession they underwent, the inherent ideologies they possess, the intellectuals available to them, and the kind of exploitation and oppression to which they have been subjected. The new flourishing of class consciousness in this peculiar society, far from being taken for granted, is something that requires explanation, and its intertwining with other forms of consciousness brought to the fore. Neither teleological assumptions, nor the construction of ideal types will help us to do so. Rather, our understanding of the present must be informed by a rich awareness of the past from which it springs. These essays make this possible for at least some of our history, in some South African settings.

FOOTNOTES

1) Eric Hobsbawm, 'Interview' in H Abelove et al (eds), Visions of History, (New York 1976) p 31

2) George Rudé, Ideology and Popular Protest, (London, 1980) p 28. These notions have been applied to a South African case study by William Beinart and Colin Bundy in their paper 'The Union, the Nation and the Talking Crow: The Ideology of the Independent ICU in East London', University of the Witwatersrand African Studies Institute seminar paper, 1985.

3) Rudé, op cit.

4) Ibid.

5) 'White South Africa: a Thing of the Past?', Sunday Express, February 3, 1985.

6) The journal Radical History Review has much that is illuminating to say on the issue of 'public history' in an American context: see their thematic issue 'Presenting the past: History and the Public', Radical History Review 25, 1981.

7) The inadequacy of older nationalist myths for serving the current purposes of the 'reformist' Botha Government has been analysed by D Posel, in 'Language, Legitimation and Control: the South African State after 1978', Social Dynamics 10 (1) 1984. See also H Adam, 'Legitimacy and the Institutionalisation of Ethnicity: Comparing South Africa' unpublished paper; and S Greenberg, "Legitimation and Control: Ideological Struggles within the South African State" unpublished paper.

8) Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, (London 1983), p 15

9) John T Cumbler, Working Class Community in Industrial America: Work, Leisure and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities 1880-1930, pp 36-7

10) Raymond Williams, Keywords, ( ) p.

11) Anderson, op cit. See also Tom Nairn's book The Break-up of Britain. (London 1977)

38) Peires, op cit. p.

39) Tim Clynick: 'Community Politics on the Lichtenburg Alluvial Diamond Fields 1926-29' infra p.

40) Elsabé Brink, '"Maar 'n klomp 'factory' meide": Afrikaner family and community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920's, infra pp.

41) Brink op cit. p. ; Clynick op cit. p. ; and Leslie Witz: A Case of Schizophrenia: The Rise and Fall of the Independent Labour Party,', infra p. . One of the few studies which pursue these avenues is that by Charles van Onselen, "The Main Reef Road into the Working Class: proletarianisation, unemployment and class consciousness among Johannesburg's Afrikaner poor, 1890-1914", in New Babylon, New Nineveh (London 1982)

42) F Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, (Moscow, 1 especially his "The Labour Movement in America. Preface to the American Edition".

43) Whether such conditions could in fact emerge in any country is debatable, but presumably in societies where pre-capitalist relations are not completely destroyed, continuities of tradition are more likely to be found.

44) Harries, op cit. p.

45) See, for example, Krut, op cit. and E A Mantzaris, "Radical Community: the Yiddish-speaking branch of the International Socialist League, 1918-1920', infra p.

46) See Webster, op cit. p.

47) Pinnock, op cit. p.

48) Lodge, op cit. p.

49) Engels, op cit. p. 22

50) See, for example, W Beinart and P Delius, 'The Family and Early Migrancy in Southern Africa', unpublished paper, as well as B Bozzoli, 'Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies, Journal of Southern African Studies, 9, 2, April 1983; Judy Kimble, 'Labour Migration in Basotholand c. 1870-1885', in S Marks and R Rathbone (Eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870-1930. (London 1982)

12) See, for example, Dan O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme (Johannesburg 198: Isabel Hofmeyr, "Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and 'Ethnic Identity' 1902-1924", paper presented to the 1984 History Workshop; and Hermann Giliomee, 'The Development of Afrikaans Ethnicity c 1850-1915 "paper presented to 1984 History Workshop. The influence of Anderson's work is not direct in all of these studies; the O'Meara study predates that of Anderson. The title of the book by E Hobsbawm and T Ranger (eds) The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge 1983) reveals its concern with the mythical, manufactured, dimensions of cultural phenomena as well.

13) See G Stedman-Jones, 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class', Journal of Social History 7, 4, Summer 1974.

14) See John Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution (London, 1974).

15) Cumbler op cit. A classic American study in this school is Alan Dawley: Class and Community: the Industrial Revolution in Lynn (Cambridge Mass, 1976). Cumbler uses 'community' to mean 'a set of bonds' among people who 'may or may not occupy a common territory. The 'community' also entails a feeling of commonality and cohesiveness created by that interaction. Thus, as used here, community refers not to the city of Lynn or Fall River but to the workers who felt a common identity with each other' p. 9.

16) Cumbler op cit., p 36.

17) Stedman-Jones, op cit, pp 484 ff. Stedman-Jones and Foster both build upon a whole tradition of working-class community studies in the British context, ranging from the early Coal is our Life (N. Dennis et al, Tavistock 1969) through to more recent studies. For an overview of this literature see C. Critcher, "Sociology, Cultural Studies and the Post-War Working Class" in J Clarke et al (eds) Working Class Culture (London) 1979).

18) Cumbler warns against an oversimplified assumption that this was always the case. See Cumbler, op cit, p 218; for a useful overview of the evolution of the American working class see Mike Davis, 'Why the US Working Class is Different', New Left Review 123, 1980.

19) J Cock and E Emdon,"'Let me Make History Please': The Story of Johanna Masilela, Childminder', infra p.

20) This point is made by Jeff Peires in the paper 'The Legend of Fenner-Solomon', infra p.

21) South African readers will find interesting the collections, for example, by John Burnett, (Useful Toil (London 1974) and Destiny Obscure (London 1982),) as well as, for example, R Baxandall et al (eds) America's Working Women'(New York 1976).

22) Cock and Emdon, op cit p.

23) E Webster, 'Workers Divided: Five Faces from a Hidden Abode', infra p.

24) Don Pinnock, 'Stone's Boys and the Making of a Cape Flats Mafia', infra and Jeff Guy and Motlatsi Thabane 'The Ma-Rashea: a Participant's Perspective', infra.

25) William Beinart: 'Women in Rural Politics: Herschel District in the 1920s and 1930s', infra

26) Helen Bradford, '"We are now the men": Women's Beer Protests in the Natal Countryside 1929' infra

27) Beinart op cit. p

28) Bradford op cit p.

29) Peires op cit p.

30) Tom Lodge, 'Political Organisations in Pretoria's African Townships', infra

31) Pinnock, op cit.

32) Pinnock, op cit. p.

33) Harries, op cit. p.

34) Guy and Thabane, op cit. p.

35) Peires, op cit. p.

36) Guy and Thabane, op cit. p.

37) Rudè, op cit. p. 28

51) Harries, op cit. p.

52) Harries, op cit. p.

53) Cock and Emdon, op cit. p.

54) Guy and Thabane, op cit. p. See, for further examinations of the types of phenomena involved, J. Clegg, "Ukubuyisa Isidumbu - 'Bringin back the body'" in P Bonner (ed.) Working Papers in Southern African Studies Vol. 2. (Johannesburg 1981).

55) As, for example, in the case of Sipho, cited in Webster, op cit. p.

56) See, for example, Beinart, op cit. p. and H Sapire, 'The Stay-Away of the Brakpan Location 1944', infra, pp. Harries, too, shows women as being in the forefront of developing a strong 'community' consciousness.

57) Brink, op cit.

58) For further discussion of this point see B Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies" op cit.

59) C van Onselen, Chibaro (London, 1976) Chapters 3 and 4.

60) See the papers by Nicol, Brink and Witz, infra.

61) See Nicol, op cit. p.

62) Guy and Thabane, op cit.

63) See Clegg op cit. for further discussion of this tendency.

64) As illustrated in the papers by Krut, op cit., and E A Mantzaris op cit.

65) E Webster op cit. p.

66) Mike Davis op cit. p.8

67) E Brink, op cit. p.

68) As discussed in E Brink, op cit.

69) Harries, op cit.

70) Bradford, op cit.

71) Lodge op cit.; and Sapire, op cit.; Cock and Emdon, op cit.

72) For a useful introduction to the ways in which space may be introduced into social analysis see Radical History Review 21, 1979, a thematic issue on "The Spatial Dimension of History" particularly J Amsden, "Historians and the Spatial Imagination".

73) See Mantzaris op cit., and Krut, op cit.

74) Brink, op cit.

75) As is the case, for example, in the Stedman-Jones study (op cit); and several others, such as P Willmott and M Young: Family and Kinship in a London Suburb (London 1957).

76) See for example, the studies in B Bozzoli (ed) Labour, Townships and Protest (Johannesburg 1978).

77) See, for example, the papers by both Sapire and Lodge.

78) Sapire, op cit.

79) Bradford, op cit., p. . See also Pinnock, op cit. p.

80) As in the case described by Beinart, op cit., p.

81) Sapire shows this to have been the case for Brakpan, op cit. p.

82) Pinnock, op cit. p.

83) Ibid.

84) Ibid.

85) Harries, op cit. p.

86) Cumbler, op cit. ch. 3.

87) Those by Witz, Brink and Nicol

88) Krut, op cit. p.

89) Both the papers here by Krut and Mantzaris (on Jewish self-organisation) and the work of O'Meara op cit., and Giliomee, op cit,, reflect these phenomena. See, for a useful overview, A D Smith, The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World (Cambridge, 1981).

90) The issue comes up in papers by Mantzaris, Nicol, Krut, Witz and in an entirely different, context, Lodge.

91) Harries, op cit. p.

92) Webster, op cit. p.

93) Peires, op cit. p.

94) Pinnock, op cit. p.

95) Brink op cit. p.

96) See Herbert Gutman, Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America, (Oxford 1966)

97) Guy and Thabane, quoted above.

98) Sapire, op cit. p.

99) Bradford, op cit. p.

100) Eric Hobsbawm, op cit. p. 43

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