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Dugmore, Harry

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HISTORY WORKSHOP

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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AUTHOR: Harry Dugmore

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Those subjected to the grand historical processes of proletarianisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation were, as many studies have now shown, able to actively shape these processes through their ingenuity and resistance. In South Africa the newly proletarianised and newly urbanised working class created a wide range of relationships and institutions to soften the harshness of - and sometimes shape the course of - the imposition of the capitalist mode of production. The task of these organisations was to provide for some degree of material security, and social support, and some organised conviviality. This could be done in a variety of ways. As proletarianisation was initially a partial process, some groups merely facilitated news from home or the return of a deceased migrant's body and possessions to the rural areas, where other social and cultural networks continued to operate. Other organisations allowed for collective savings, revolving credit and basic life insurance. Some organisations existed ostensively only for reasons of recreation or religious communion, while others combined material aid with structured recreation. All these groups - burial societies, stokvels, "Christmas clubs", and various sick funds attempted to provide alternatives to the "community" that pre-industrial communities were losing, and in the case of their many permanently urbanised members, had largely already lost.

Coloured(1) South Africans established a large number of innovative voluntary organisations in the fist half of this century. Burial societies, savings and Christmas "clubs", self-directed church welfare groups, and, in a different vein, youth gangs, were common in Coloured areas in the Cape, and in other areas where Coloureds settled in large numbers. This paper examines the phenomenon of "fraternal orders" among Coloureds in Johannesburg. These complex, hierarchical "secret" organisations, appear to have appealed mainly to the urban Coloured petty bourgeoisie and became, I argue, class organisations. These "orders" are thus examined in the context of the deteriorating position of the Coloured elite in the first half of this century, which accelerated with the advent of the apartheid government in 1948. In time the apartheid government would oversee the decline of these "ancient" orders, which was largely complete by the late 1950s.

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1. Following recent academic convention the arbitrary classification "Coloured" is taken to refer to grouping of people often described in other societies as 'mulatto', 'mixed', or 'half-caste'. From the 1890s this name was legislatively imposed on a diverse number of communities, who, for a variety of reasons, came to adopt the term, and to use it in self-description. Many of those so classified reject the term and the classification. Nonetheless the use of parentheses or the prefix "so-called", to indicated objection to the term "Coloured", is avoided in recent academic literature and in this paper.

THE "MARGINAL SITUATION" OF THE COLOURED MIDDLE CLASS

By the 1890s Coloured people in the Cape were facing a complex and contradictory set of pressures. On the one hand they were increasingly being classified as a "racial" group by the white authorities, and discriminated against in political structures, social services, religious affairs and occupational opportunities. On the other hand the imposed race definitions were seen by many Coloureds as a means of organising a disparate grouping which previously lacked a sense of 'community' and consequently any defensive political organisations.

Those who came to be defined as Coloured did differ widely in terms of occupation, cultural background and political persuasion. The initial basis of social clustering in urban areas was occupational: the skilled artisans of the urban centres, especially Cape Town, were, from the early 19th century, building a lifestyle for themselves which was quite different to that of the unskilled labouring poor or rural farm workers. This small skilled group, supplemented by a tiny professional class made up almost exclusively of teachers, had began, in the latter part of the 19th century, to articulate common concern and aspirations, and to organise themselves politically. This initial clustering and tentative group consciousness coalesced into the establishment of the first "Coloured" political organisations in the 1890s, and the African People's Organisation (APO) in 1902. In the large-scale urbanisation that followed the South African War - over 70 000 Coloureds moved into urban areas of the Cape between 1901 and 1904 - the distinction between those who were more educated and more affluent and those new-comers who were not, was more consciously proclaimed by the existing middle class.(2) Trapido writes, "skilled and semi-skilled workers in crafts and trades, small businessmen, shopkeepers, traders, commercial assistants and clerks" began to use terms like "'better class', 'respectable', and 'educated'", to assert "both their status within the Coloured population and their own self image."(3)

Despite this rapid urbanisation, the ranks of the "lower middle class", as Trapido describes this Coloured elite, was very small. Of the 280 000 people designated "mixed and other Coloured" in the 1904

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2. Three book length studies have been published recently, dealing largely with Coloured political organisations, and focusing almost exclusively on the Western Cape. See G. Lewis, Between the wire and the wall: A history of 'Coloured' politics (David Philip, Cape Town 1987); I. Goldin, Making Race: The politics and economics of Coloured identity in South Africa (Maskew Miller Longman Cape Town 1987); R.E. van der Ross The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A study of political movements among the Coloured people of South Africa 1880-1985 (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1986).

3. S. Trapido, "The Origin and development of the African Political Organisation", Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected seminar papers on the societies of Southern Africa Vol. 1 (London, University of London 1970) p. 90.

Cape census, only 11 885 were classed as occupying skilled and commercial trades.(4) Few Coloureds became independent traders, or were to be found in the legal, medical and financial services fields. The small size of elite reflected the general poverty of the Coloured community, the lack of capital for expensive professional education, and the tendency for successful Coloureds to "pass for white" and thus obtain "readmission" into the White population.(5)

By the late 19th century "passing for white" had become the major avenue of upward mobility for the Coloured middle class. This route was rapidly closed off after 1902. The hardening of white ethnic boundaries provided the spur to a more consciousness class identification between members of this small petty bourgeoisie, and to the development of Coloured political organisation. No longer able to pass into the ranks of whites, wealthier Coloureds - and wealth was the necessary but not sufficient basis for 'passing'(6) - began to formulate their own identity and social culture. Coloured "identity" was thus riven by a dichotomous ambiguity from the start. 'Becoming' Coloured offered some prospect of social advantage over, especially, Africans, then beginning to make a major impact on the Western Cape job markets, while the identity and concept of 'Coloured' was arbitrarily defined by a white state intent on assigning an ever lower social place to all those so defined. Lewis's incisive study of Coloured politics is based on accepting that "Coloured identity is a white-imposed categorisation... but is one that for a variety of reasons came to be adopted by sections of the people so described".(7)

In "adopting" this racial classification, Coloureds could not avoid being more deeply influenced by the dominant white racial ideology. This ideology, as Dubow and others have shown, was in process of wide-ranging changes by the late 19th century.(8) The development and popularisation of newly developed 'sciences' of racial types and

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4. I. Goldin, Making Race p 16, citing S. Trapido, "White Conflict and non-white participation in the politics of the Cape of Good Hope 1853-1910" (London Univ., PhD thesis, 1970) p 400. For both reasons of vague racial definitions, and the more conventional problems of large-scale enumeration, these figures need to be taken as broad indicators only.

5. As S. Trapido, "Origins and Development of the African Political Organisation", points out, many of those people who "passed for white" became "successful member of the Afrikaner middle class." Van der Ross, Lewis and Goldin, op cit make similar points about the small size of the Coloured "lower middle class" and the volatility of membership.

6. G. Watson, Passing for White (London, Tavistock, 1970) p. 120. see also I. Goldin, "Making Race" p 25, G. Lewis, "Between the wire", p 13.

7. G. Lewis Between the wire and the wall" p 4.

8. See I. Goldin, "Making Race" Chapter 1 and S. Dubow, "The idea of Race in early 20th century South Africa: some preliminary thoughts" African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989.

racial ranking rapidly entered into Coloured political discourse. One of the major priorities of early Coloured political organisations was to develop feelings of "race pride" among Coloureds.(9) By the 1920s and 1930s the language of social Darwinism, and its popularisation through 'scholarly' works and popular fiction - most directly, in the case of Coloureds, of SG Millin 1924 novel "God's Step Children", and her 1926 work "The South Africans" - had been absorbed into many aspects of the Coloured middle class's self-perception.(10)

This is borne out by the very ambiguity of the legal and social term "Coloured", which came to reflect both the disjointed and imprecise nature of the racial ideology that imposed such definitions, and the contribution of the Coloured petty bourgeoisie to defining themselves, using the same racial logic. A cursory comparison of changing legal processes and legal definition, and the stated attitudes of the Coloured elite reveals the extent to which they were 'talking the same language'. The legal concept "Coloured" was always defined by exclusion. The degree of exclusion varied in law from instance to instance and, as the century progressed, legislation reflected the hardening of ethnic boundaries as strands of racial science came to become reflected at policy level. The judgment in Ex parte Kinnear, handed down in 1909, argued: "this slight strain of Coloured blood - one sixteenth - does not justify the classification of the applicant under "Mixed or other Coloured races" - and that effect should be given to the greatly preponderating European blood."(11) But the well-known "Moller Versus the Keimos School Committee" case of 1911 argued that this "preponderating blood" was in fact of limited use: "when once it is established that one of a man's nearer ancestors, whether male or female, was black like a Negro or yellow like a bushman or hottentot or Chinaman, he is regarded as being of other than European descent." Whites had to be "pure" whites or else they

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9. S. Trapido "The origin and development of the African Political Organisation" p. 95. Z.F. Peregrino, maverick editor of The South Africa Spector, used the concept of 'race pride' repeatedly in his publication, which was instrumental in promoting early Coloured political organisation including the APO. He railed against "drunkenness, hooliganism, prostitution, gambling" and other "vices" which would bring the Coloured "race" into disrepute. Peregrino started the Coloured People's Vigilance Association in 1901.

10. Millin, S.G. God's Step Children (London Constable, 1924) and The South Africans (Richard Clay and sons, London 1926). See also V. February, Mind your colour - the "Coloured" Stereotype in South African literature, (London, Routledge, 1982).

11. This case is quoted in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Coloured population of the Union (UG54/1937) Hereafter referred to as "The report Wilcocks Commission: p. 8.

were Coloureds.(12) By the 1920s and 1930s the struggle to be defined as white had shifted to a struggle not to be defined as "natives". Hertzog's first attempt to disenfranchise African voters in 1925 was part of package of bills including the short-lived "Coloured Person's Rights Bill". This bill proposed to define all people were born subsequent to the Act, and of at least one African parent, as African. All those with only one African parent before the act would remain classified Coloured. The Act also proposed to set up, for the first time, an official process of determining who was and who was not Coloured, to be implemented through the Governor-General's office. The bill was never passed, but eleven years later Hertzog's notorious "Representation of Natives Act" of 1936, was enacted. That Act defined "Native" as "anyone with one-fourth Native decent".(13) While the 1925 proposed bill and the 1936 Act may not have directly alarmed threatened the Coloured elite, they certainly did created a precedent for further adverse redefinition, and, as such, invoked the scorn of those Coloured political organisations which were active in the 1920s and 1930s.

The lexicon of terms and ideas expressed in this legislation were reflected in the views of some of the Coloured elite on the issues of race. By the 1930s for example, the terms "Coloured", and "Cape Coloured" provoked debate when Johannesburg's Coloured organisations gave evidence before the Feetham and Wilcocks commissions. In 1933 a prominent Johannesburg Coloured leader Mr S.K. le Pere had told the Feetham Commission:

> "... Coloured people ought to be classed into four [groups]. Those that are white, who are practically lost to the Coloured people. There is another class that are just on the brink, and they are during the day treated as white, and in the evening of course they mix with their fellows, the Coloured people. And then there is the artisan class, a respectable class of Coloured men - not the loafer class - who has tried to so something for himself. He experiences the sense of shame sometimes, because he is even ostracised by his white brother or his white cousin...".(14)

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12. Ibid. See G. Lewis, "Between the Wire and the Wall," pp. 67-69 for the significance of this case. Moller, a white man married to a coloured women, was trying to keep his children at a white school. As the first case contesting the meaning the 1905 Cape School Boards Act - which for the first time legislated colour alone as a basis for social discrimination - the APO collected funds for Moller's case. Lewis stresses that equal education was a crucial issue for the Coloured elite providing, as it did, access to "skilled professional white-collar occupations" and the "civilised status which Cape liberal theory held to be the prerequisite for equal rights with whites. G. Lewis, "Ibid", p. 30.

13. Union of South Africa. Joint Session of both Houses of Parliament. Representation of Native Bills. 13 Feb to 7 April 1936. See also G. Lewis, "Between the Wire and the Wall," pp. 136-149, 178, 179.

14. Mr S.K. le Pere of the Coloured People's Welfare Association, Minutes of the evidence to the Feetham Commission of Enquiry p 108.

In 1936 the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations was formed to give evidence before the Wilcocks Commission of Enquiry into the status of Coloured people in the Union. Dr Abdurahman, a member of the Commission and the long-standing head of the African Political Organisation, summarised the Johannesburg delegations' points as follows: "what they mean by 'Coloured'", he explained to the other Commissioners, "was the result of intermarriage or illicit marriage between Natives and Coloured, some of which came in from the country; and they formed what was called the lowest stratum of the people. They were referred to as "Coloured". These people we see here today are called "Cape Coloured."(15) Members of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations concurred and supplemented Abdurahman's summary by pointing to another group, the "Cape boy" which they saw as "a class somewhere between the native and the Coloured people". The Rev. Esterhysen on behalf of Johannesburg's Coloured churches, added that "at the cemeteries there are three terms, namely the Native, the Mixed and the Cape Coloured."(16).

Similar sentiments were repeated to the Wilcocks Commission by other Coloured delegations as the commissioners toured the country. The Johannesburg delegation appears to have gone somewhat further than most other regional elites. In their written submission to the Wilcocks Commission, the Joint Temporary Committee suggested the primary division within the Coloured community in Johannesburg was that of pigmentation. Their report states: "Among the Coloured Community there are class distinctions based on the degree of pigmentation of the skin, facial features and the texture of the hair. Distinctions derived from these physical difference take precedence over those which in other communities would be based on economic and educational standards."(17) Speaking to their submission the delegation asserted that a light complexion was a definite advantage in the Coloured community. "You find among the Coloured community that the dark Coloured man prefers a lighter Coloured woman...", according to Mr Crowe, a leader of the delegation.(18)

The Wilcocks Commission concluded that the Johannesburg delegation was incorrect about the primacy of colour in determining status in the Coloured community. Material differences were held to be the major lines of fissure within the Coloured community, as with other groupings in South Africa. But the Commission did agree that it found evidence everywhere of "a further basis for class distinction (which) consists of characteristics of physical appearance, such as lightness of skin, length and straightness of hair, (in contrast with the 'pepper-corn' of the Hottentot type) which make for superi-

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15. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes" p. 2096.

16. Ibid p. 2096.

17. Written submission of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations to the Wilcocks Commission, p.3, from Wilcocks Commission "Minutes", p. 2148 24 June 1935. My emphasis.

18. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes" p. 2098.

or social standing."(19) Patterson's concluded in 1951 after studying Coloured South Africans for a long period that: "where ethnic determinants are concerned the Coloured group appear to have taken their race prejudices over from the European and even to have accentuated them."(20)

These brief examples of legislative process and Coloured elite thinking indicate the development, by the 1930s, of a profound sense of race amongst the Coloured "leadership" of Johannesburg. It is not clear to what extent these sentiments were shared by either the so-called 'ordinary' Coloureds, or by the so-called "Cape boys", or to what extent the kind of views expressed by the Joint Temporary Association in the 1930s represented a culminating point of a "common sense" which had been developing for 50 years. What does emerge is an attempt by the Coloured elite to, by the 1930s, make a case for themselves as racially different from the lower classes and the more recently proletarianised Coloured workers. Economic and educational differences were acknowledged by the Coloured leadership, but these status indicators were read off from 'biological' features, rather than reflecting, as they clearly did, a complex interplay of economic and cultural factors.

This sensitivity to race and colour and the use of the phraseology of white racial science, arguably introduced as much insecurity into the Coloured elite's collective consciousness, as whatever possible claim it gave them to superiority and respectability. As a racially structured capitalist system developed in South Africa, and as racial ideology hardened, those groups who aspired to white status most, and who emphasised their "white blood", may have been more deeply affected by the increasing contemptuous attitude of white policy makers. As Dubow and others have pointed out, there is a tendency to underplay the veracity of racial discourse before the Second World War in the wake of the "collective amnesia" induced by the horrific culmination of racial science in the genocide of that war. Quite how demeaning and pervasive this ideology actually was, and how profoundly it affected Coloured people, emerges from a number of unconnected sources from the period between the wars. This extract, for example, from the evidence to the 1933 Feetham Commission, outlines the process by which it was decided who was "officially" a Coloured. Although brutally clinical in its procedures, this official methodology reflects something of the informal process of appraisal that Coloureds appear to have put each other through in

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19. Wilcocks Commission Report, p. 16.

20. S. Patterson, Colour and Culture in South Africa: A study of the status of the Cape Coloured people within the social structure of the Union of South Africa (Routledge and Kegan Paul London 1953), p. 164.

this period.(21) Mr. Barrett, Director of Native Labour, the chief official of the Johannesburg Native Affairs Department, told the Commission that the Urban Areas Act provided for a procedure of re-classification, whereby the burden of proof was on the person who was trying to prove they were "Coloured" and not "native". When a person requested re-classification the procedure was as follows:

> "a committee is constituted, consisting of the Pass officer, the officer in charge of the Finger Impression Records department, and the first assistant to the pass officer.' The first consideration which they take into account is the appearance of the person. His hair - that of course, if it is straight and shiny or reddish in colour would rather indicate that he is not of pure native descent, where if it is very curly and of a dullish black it is a point rather in favour of his being a native; that of course is not conclusively so. The eyes are perhaps the next most important consideration in the appearance of natives; they should have rather black eyes unless they have a physical deficiency of some sort; if there is a tendency for the eyes to be blue or grey, that is a strong indication of an infusion of European blood. The complexion, obviously is a consideration, but also it is not finally so, because occasionally natives are fairly light in colour... The finger nails are one of the tests; I do not know whether it is very important, but those who have watched numbers of cases say that no native will have a visible moon at the top of his finger nail. Facial expression is an important consideration, although I have put it last; there is something different in the face in almost all cases, in the formation of the face; there is an expression which seems to make a Coloured man different from the ordinary tribal native."(22)

The Native Affairs Department was at pains to point out to the commission that these procedures were rigorous and fair. Should physical examination not suffice, there was always the opportunity to bring witnesses to support one's case on the basis of social status. Barrett continued:

> "Those are what we classify under 'appearance'. If those characteristics are not sufficient to establish that man as Coloured, he is questioned as to his descent, and the credibility of his story is tested by cross-examination... If there is any degree of European descent.... that person is bound to be classed as a Coloured person... Then another important test is the case of a man who is a 'throw-back'; he may look very black and he may have very curly hair and

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21. Although the extract is long, I have included verbatim as it represents the clearest statement I have seen of how the authorities conceptualised and implemented early racial classification. This informal procedure predates the notorious Population Registration act of 1950 which legislated similarly demeaning 'racial' 'tests'. All emphasis is taken from the original.

22. Feetham Commission "Minutes", pp. 2270-2274.

> going by his general appearance you may have very little doubt that he is a native; but he is given the opportunity... of producing other members of his family, and if they show marked characteristics of Coloured blood, and it is clear that he is a member of that same family, that is accepted as sufficient evidence. But supposing that one has gone as far as that is still in doubt, a man's standard of living and standard of civilisation may be taken into account to some extent."(23)

In the face of the "scientific" racism of such official tests (and the reflection in these procedures of the immense distance travelled from the "Cape liberal tradition" of the 19th century, which would have placed "standard of civilisation" foremost), and in face of the pervasive nature of this kind of thinking in white and Coloured society, it is not surprising that besides the decisive practical effects of been classified Coloured, the classification was also, for many, a profound experience of induced inferiority. The Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations wrote in their submission to the Wilcocks Commission: "The whole community... realises that psychologically its life, its methods of thoughts, its desires, its ambitions are European. If feels that given, sympathy, support and opportunity, it can coalesce into a group of the Nation...". But the delegates noted, this was not happening. Elsewhere they wrote: "The attitude of the Europeans, in general, creates an inferiority complex." Such "inferiority complex", they hastened to add, "is much less apparent in the Transvaal than in the Cape."(24) On a more individual level, Mr. Crowe, the leading member of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations, exclaimed while giving evidence to the Wilcocks commission on his experience of being Coloured: "It's horrible to have a dark skin!"(25)

The assumption that a sense of 'inferiority' became widespread among a particular group, and thus had large-scale social consequences, is the basis of the sociological theory of "marginal situations". This theory was applied to South African Coloureds in the 1950s and 1960s by two scholars, J.W. Man and H.F. Dickie-Clark, both of the University of Natal. According to their studies, which drew heavily on specific trends in American sociology of the 1940s and 1950s, this sense of exclusion and oppression was exacerbated for Coloureds as they took many of their "social values" and status-conferring norms from the white Afrikaans society. As late as 1946, 89.1% of Coloureds in South Africa spoke Afrikaans as their home language and almost 30% of Coloureds still attended the Dutch Reform (Mission)

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23. According to Mr. Barrett, those conducting the such tests had "no official authority" and such procedures were "purely a departmental arrangement...". Ibid pp. 2270-2274.

24. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes", p. 2145.

25. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes", p. 2101, verbal evidence of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations.

Church. (26) Beyond these statistical pointers, Marais's 1937 monograph and Patterson's 1953 study suggest very significant correlations between the attitudes of white Afrikaners and Coloureds on such issues as family structures and obligations, and prejudices about other ethnic groups in South Africa. (27) White Afrikaans culture was thus the "parent culture" or, in recognition of the influence of other social groups, at least the dominant cultural influence for the majority of Coloureds from the nineteenth century onwards. But it was this very culture which was to systematically exclude Coloured people from its functioning and especially from its status conferring or reward lexicon. Dickie-Clarke's work on Coloureds in Durban states: "the core of the marginal situation for the individual is the non-membership of his reference group". (28)

Dickie-Clarke suggested that the marginal situation may be described as a "fairly long-lasting, large-scale hierarchical situation in which two or more whole groups or even nations exist together... The barriers between the groups are sufficient to prevent the enjoyment by the subordinate group, or groups, of the privileges of the dominant, non-marginal group, but do not prevent the absorption by the former of the latter's culture." (29) The result of this was held to be, on an individual level, the possible development of "personality disorders" - including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and ambitious self-image, and, for groups, "unrewarding and unsatisfactory" membership of this marginal group. Dickie-Clarke rejected the tendency in work on marginality up to that point to create the "misleading stereotype of the racially or culturally mixed 'marginal man' as a kind of unhappy, half-pathetic half-comical caricature of the ideal to which he is presumed to aspire ... the overwhelming evidence of millions who, while in a 'marginal situation', lead normal and effective lives untouched by the fears, uncertainties and neuroses of the 'marginal man'." (30) But despite this and other qualifications, Coloureds, like their mixed raced counterparts in many other parts of the world, were held to be substantially disadvantaged by the artificial process through which their "ethnic identity" was created. Dickie-Clark's suggestion that the consequent lack of a longstanding indigenous culture and sense of community, which other oppressed groups drew on and benefited from, partly explained the relative lack of Coloureds success in political mobilisation, and their failure to prevent the large scale deterioration

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26. S. Patterson Colour and Culture in South Africa: pp. 354/355 Compilation of relevant census figures.

27. Marais, for example, argued: "the Coloured do not appear to differ from us today in anything except their poverty... A coloured community as distinct from the European does not exist in any realistic interpretation of the term." J.S. Marais, The Cape Coloured People (Longmans 1937) pp. 281/283.

28. H. Dickie-Clarke The Marginal Situation: A sociological study of a Coloured Group (Routledge and Kegan Paul New York 1966), p. 2.

29. Ibid p. 22.

30. Ibid p. 22.

of their social and political position during the 20th century.

There are major shortcomings in the marginality thesis, and in the postulate of marginal situations, which I have dealt with elsewhere.(31) But the studies done within this framework do point to the ambiguity of Coloured identity, an give an indication, and only that, of part of what the Coloured "mind-set" might have been in the process of the rapidly intensifying discrimination of the 1920s and 1930s. A central criticism of the marginality model is that this process, by which the so-called "marginal situation" came about, was, firstly, a complex historical process profoundly shaped by the needs of colonial conquests in Southern Africa, and the imperatives of the particular form of capitalism which developed here. Secondly this process was neither as uncontested nor as static a "situation" as the marginality model, or at least some of its adherents, might have suggested. Coloureds, and especially the elite, tried actively to created their own identity, and their own cultural and political institutions in the face of major social, economic and administrative impediments. But, as is pointed out above, Coloureds were struggling with a double-edged sword. To resist the attempt to define Coloureds as a group held the risk of losing the slim possibility of negotiating a better deal within an already compromised situation. This resistance and rejection was attempted by some elements of the elite and, by the 1930s by broader alliances of Coloureds. But most sectors in Coloured society, most especially the petty bourgeoisie, saw little option but to collaborate and thereby retain relative social advantage over the African population. Many tensions did arise from this ambiguity for both the individuals involved and for political organisations. The theory of marginal situations might thus be correct in pointing towards the seemingly permanent dichotomy that shaped the organisation and experience of most Coloureds in the first half of this century.

It is in this context, and the context of the sustained assault on Coloured political rights, access to education, job opportunities and social amenities, that the role of institutions which provided the Coloured middle class with avenues of social mobility on the basis of merit and achievement, may have been so important. The fraternal orders appear to have been well suited to this task. They simultaneously provided for companionship, material security in a context where poverty was often only a few month's reserve away, and opportunities to organise the recreational life of the community where few other avenues existed. Established by members and run for members, these orders grew into powerful reservoirs of self-respect and self-esteem in an otherwise increasingly disrespectful and demeaning society.

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31. H. Dugmore, "Johannesburg's Malay Location: Class culture and segregation 1918-1939", Chapter six, forthcoming.

Before these organisations are examined, a brief profile of the Coloured middle class in Johannesburg is required. As is well-known, the small Coloured minority in the Transvaal faced even more rigid discrimination from the white authorities than in the Cape, and greater pressure from a large and growing African working class. The Coloured lower middle class - artisans, skilled regularly employed workers, tradesmen, clerks, teachers and ministers - were under particularly acute pressure. Having little choice but to live in the same (illegal) space as their working class counterparts, and, very often, along side the African middle and working classes, the boundary between "aspirant" members of the Coloured petty bourgeoisie and those already discernibly in that category, was permeable and tenuous. Bonner has warned, in writing about the African petty bourgeoisie on the Rand after the First World War, that: "The delineation of an indigenous petty bourgeoisie in a colonial situation is an exceptionally difficult task. Not only is the class stunted and repressed, but a fair degree of mobility exists between it and the higher-paid working class."(32) The Coloured middle class in Johannesburg exemplified this insecurity of membership. They remained a largely incoherent grouping with limited political impact on regional or national politics in the 1920s and 1930s.(33) But a common interest in their own upward mobility, and the constant search for opportunities and ideologies which would permanently confirm their middle class status, propelled the Coloured elite in Johannesburg into various types of organisation, some of which will be examined below.

During this period Coloureds never constituted more than 5% of Johannesburg's residents. These are the population figures for Johannesburg for the first half of this century according to official census figures.

TABLE 1. POPULATION OF JOHANNESBURG BY RACE 1904 - 1946(34)

	WHITES	AFRICANS	COLOUREDS	INDIANS	TOTAL
1904	83 363	59 605	7 326	5 348	155 642
1911	119 953	101 971	9 307	5 873	237 104
1921	150 286	115 120	11 351	6 214	282 971
1936	252 579	191 338	21 103	9 888	474 908
1946	338 880	400 847	31 055	16 580	787 362

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32. P. Bonner, "The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-1920: the radicalisation of the black petty bourgeoisie on the Rand", in S. Marks, and R. Rathbone, (Eds), Industrialisation and Social change in South Africa (Longman London 1982) p. 305.

33. H. Dugmore, "Johannesburg's Malay Location: Class, Culture and Segregation 1918-1939", Chapter eight, MA thesis, Wits, forthcoming.

34. Compiled from census sources including Union Statistics for fifty years, (1960), and the census reports for the respective years. Also tables in Maud, J.P.R. City Government p. 384.

However flawed these figures may be (and the 1921 figures are a particularly unreliable)(35), it is clear that the Coloured community in Johannesburg (and the Transvaal) grew rapidly in these years. From a low base, the number of Coloureds in Johannesburg officially increased by 188% between 1904 and 1936, and by 86% between 1921 and 1936 alone. This compares to increases of 68% for the white population, 66% for the African population and 62% for Indian population during between 1921 and 1936.(36)

Some of the reasons for the move to the Transvaal and the Reef have been suggested above, and explored in detail elsewhere.(37) The most important of these reasons for this paper were those affecting the artisan-based elite: the mass immigration of skilled and semi-skilled Europeans to the Cape over the last 40 years of the nineteenth century, the change in white racial attitudes as the capitalist MOP became dominant and the consequent expulsion of Coloureds from many craft and worker unions, and the formalisation of these processes in the civilised labour policy of the state in the 1920s. Three acts were passed between 1922 and 1925 which had a profound effect on an already pressurised Coloured community: the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1924, and the Wage Act of 1925. These laws respectively limited Coloured entrance into skilled jobs, justified restrictions on Coloureds ability to join unions, and attempted to set wage rate which would prevent Coloureds from undercutting white labour.

Largely as a result of these laws, Coloured employment levels in the Western Cape, in every sector plummetted after 1925.(38) By the

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35. The Wilcocks Commission asserts "Even allowing for the loss of life during the influenza epidemic of 1918 and for the comparatively long period of time between the census of 1921 and [that of] 1936, one is lead to the conclusion that large errors in enumeration must have occurred at the 1921 census, and that it gave a figure for the Coloured population which must have been considerably below the actual one." The Wilcocks Commission, Report p. 12.

36. This compares to a 48% increase in the number of Coloureds in Cape Town in this period, and a 69% increase in the number of Coloureds in Port Elizabeth. If the figures are taken at face value, the overall increase in the Coloured urban between 1921 and 1936 was 41% - the highest of any population grouping. see The Report of the Wilcocks commission p. 12.

37. "'Diamond ladies and a dream of hell' - Fah-fee, brewing and the Coloured working class of Johannesburg 1918-1936." ASI paper forthcoming, March 12 1990. See also H. Dugmore, Chapter five, "Johannesburg's Malay Location: Class, Culture and Segregation 1918-1939" MA thesis, Wits, forthcoming.

38. The most dramatic drop was in the public sector where the number of Coloureds in government service accounted for 44% of all government employees in 1924, but only 30% by 1930. The numbers of Coloureds working in industrial establishments also dropped rapidly: in the Western Cape Coloureds comprised 50% of the private manufacturing sector workforce in 1924, but only 43% of workforce by 1932. These figures are taken from Patterson, S "Colour and Culture" p 73,

1930s de-skilling and the depression had exacerbated Coloureds' employment position even further. Goldin concludes that by end the depression, in the mid 1930s, "Coloured artisans had been shaken out of virtually all the traditional crafts and prevented by apprenticeship barriers and prejudice from entering the new electrical, machine, and metallurgical crafts."(39) Only in the bricklaying and plastering trades did Coloureds retain their overwhelming numbers.

Coloureds who made the trek up to Johannesburg were thus under considerable pressure. Most found jobs in sectors where Coloureds could make some "traditional" claim, in the sense of dominating such trades in the Cape. Of the 6 100 "gainfully employed" Coloured men enumerated in Johannesburg in 1936, most worked in either the building trades, or in transport work, clothing manufacture of various types, furniture or wood-work. Domestic service and hotel work made up the balance of the employment figures.(40) The Wilcocks Commission was told that by 1933 only 9% of Coloured workers in Johannesburg were skilled in terms of the Industrial Conciliation Act. About 15% were unskilled, and those officially defined as semi-skilled accounted for the remaining 74% of Coloured workers in Johannesburg.(41) The Coloured professional class in Johannesburg was extremely small, totalling only 133 men in 1936 - up by 100 from the 33 professionals counted in 1921. In 1936 this professional group was made up mostly by 70 teachers, with the only other significant contribution coming from 27 policemen. In 1936 there were only two male Coloured doctors in Johannesburg for a Coloured population of over 20 000. There were no Coloured dentists, electricians or plumbers in Johannesburg.(42) As in the Cape, the Coloured population in Johannesburg also showed little enthusiasm for commercial occupations, and in any case lacked the necessary capital and commercial experience. Only 256 Coloured people were classified as working in the commercial sector in 1936 (marginally up from 211 in 1921) and, of these, 102 were hawkers or street vendors, 49 were salesmen or shop

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Goldin, I, "Making Race" p43, and the comprehensive overview of Coloured employment provided by the Wilcocks Commission Report, pp. 56-70.

39. I. Goldin, "Making Race", p. 43. The Wilcocks Commission also found that the numbers of Coloureds in industry fell especially rapidly in the depression years when over 4000 Coloureds lost industrial jobs in the Western Cape.

40. According to the 1936 census report, there were 6726 economically active Coloured men in Johannesburg, ie healthy men over the age of 15. Of these 6 726, 6198 were "gainfully occupied". The rest were either retired, unemployed or permanently disabled. Report of the 1936 Census Vol 1 p 110 and Vol vii. It is difficult to calculate how many Coloured men were self-employed from these figures, or how many were wage labourers at various levels of skill.

41. Minutes of the Evidence of the Wilcocks Commission; the evidence of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations, p. 2122. It is difficult to extrapolate backwards from these figures because of the depression.

42. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes", p. 2079.

assistants, and only 23 were managers of wholesale or retail businesses. **(43)**

Coloureds thus faced major employment problems in Johannesburg by the 1920s and 1930s. For those who did have jobs wages were under constant pressure from the large numbers of African workers, and from white worker hostility, the continued refinement and application of discriminatory legislation, as well as Johannesburg's industrial under-development until the 1940s. **(44)** In the mid-1920s the Economic and Wage Commission reported that the rate of pay for Coloured unskilled workers in urban areas had ranged from three to five shillings per day. Unskilled workers in the building industry had their pay fixed at 27s 6d per 44 hour week by the national council of the building industry. The Economic and Wages Commission suggested that Coloureds, and in particular skilled labourers, were locked into a spiral of poverty all over South Africa: "...the increased cost of living due to the (First World) war was not compensated by increases in pay as the presence of the natives helped to keep down wages. The standard of living of the Coloured people then became seriously depressed, until today their condition is parlous." **(45)** By the mid 1930s the Wilcocks Commission was being told that unskilled Coloured wages in Johannesburg averaged only about one pound a week.

Coloured teachers, the most important section of the Coloured professional class, were, by comparison, earning between 130 and 145 pounds per annum, ie between two and half pounds and three pounds per week. Male teaching rates were about 15% more than women's rates. Coloured school principals could earn between 225 and 280 pounds per annum - between four and half and five and half pounds per week. As many principals of Coloured schools were white in the 1920s and 1930s, few Coloureds in the teaching profession - or any other profession - commanded these sums. **(46)**

These figures highlight the small differential between the highest wages of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and that of the lowest

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43. This tallies with figures compiled in 1933 by the Johannesburg municipality which found that 24 Coloured men had obtained trading licences in Johannesburg, but that only three were issued to hawkers and peddlers. These figures were compiled for the Feetham Commission in December 1932. See Feetham Commission Report, pp. 96 and 106.

44. see B. Freund, "The social character of secondary industry in South Africa 1915-1945 (with special reference to the Witwatersrand)", African Studies Institute seminar paper, 22 April 1985.

45. Report of the Economic and Wage Commission, (UG 14/1926) p. 351. The same commission suggested that rates of pay on farms for Coloured workers varied considerably from 7s/6d. per month in Oudtshoorn, to 3s 6d per day in other areas. This excluded "rations and some form of shelter" allegedly worth about a further one pound per month.

46. The Wilcocks Commission Report, p. 159.

paid members of elite. In this way the situation of the Coloured elite appears to be very similar to that of the African elite on the Rand after the First World War, who, as Bonner has shown, differed only marginally in their income when compared to their working class counterparts. **(47)** An African family of four needed an estimate five pounds three shillings a month - well over one pound per week - to survive, without an allowance for clothing and furniture in 1921. **(48)** By the mid 1930s the Wilcocks Commission was told for a Coloured family of four in Pretoria would need at least ten pounds a month to "live decently" - and this figure excluded clothes, medical expenses, entertainment and even soap. **(49)** Many delegates who gave evidence before the Wilcocks Commission urged the commission to improve, as a foremost priority, Coloured wages. Mr Le Pere, on behalf of the Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations argued: "It is not possible to live on one pound a week. The minimum wage for a Coloured man should be at least ten shillings a day..". **(50)**

Thus the wage range for the Coloured elite in the 1920s and 1930s was narrow and showed few signs of keeping up with inflation. There were no effective remedies that could force wages upwards: the professional classes such as teachers were too small and isolated to contemplate industrial action, and established trade unions in other sectors were largely out of bounds to Coloureds. According to leaders of Johannesburg's Coloured community, "except for the furniture workers and leather industry, iron moulders and the builders, all other unions refuse Cape Coloured membership. In the Builders' union, membership is discouraged." **(51)** It was clear that, as in the Cape, Coloureds would have to devise other ways of supplementing their income and insuring themselves against the ruinous consequences of even brief unemployment or illness.

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47. P. Bonner "The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-1920", p. 277.

48. P. Bonner "The Transvaal Native Congress 1917-1920", p. 275.

49. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes" of the evidence, p. 2793. Those who compiled this budget relate that it represented "a seldom obtained ideal."

50. Wilcocks Commission, Evidence, verbatim evidence of Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured Organisations, p. 2122.

51. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes", verbatim evidence of Joint Temporary Committee of Johannesburg Coloured organisations, p. 2152. This was not the case in the Cape where it was often in white workers' interests to included Coloureds in their unions. This changed in different sectors over time, but by the late 1920s the economist Robert Leslie could still write: "European trade union leaders in Cape Town have constantly opposed any Colour bar in local unions ... among skilled men in Cape Town it has proved possible to have Economic equality without social equality". (Leslie, R. "Coloured Labour and Trade Unionism in Cape Town", in The South African Journal of Economics vol. 3. no. 6 1930..

"TO TAKE THE STING OUT OF POVERTY AND PARE DOWN THE FANGS OF WANT": FRATERNAL LODGES AMONG THE COLOURED MIDDLE CLASS IN SOUTH AFRICA(52)

The main ways in which working class coloureds were able to supplement their incomes was through gambling, brewing, the selling of liquor and more legitimate activities such as the taking in of washing. These activities have been examined elsewhere.(53) Some of these activities provided for limited recreation, and all created some basis for a sense of community through the sharing of common activities to overcome common hardships. For the Coloured lower middle class fraternal lodges, friendly societies and the Christian church were crucial in building different types of social support and 'community' to that of the illegal and economically risky activities of brewing, laundry, and fah-fee.

Both the fraternal orders examined below - the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society and the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners - had their origins in the upheaval of industrial Britain in late 18th and early 19th centuries. EP Thompson argues that these orders provided "authentic evidence of the growth of independent working-class culture and institutions" in England from the 1750s onwards. He notes that from their inception, "few of the members of friendly societies had a higher social status than that of clerks or small tradesmen; most were artisans".(54) The number of people belonging to friendly societies in England grew rapidly, especially after the poor law Amendment act of 1834. Rex Russel, one of few scholars to examine friendly societies in England in detail, suggests, "the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was designed to be harsh. It removed the administration of the care of the poor from out of the hands of individual parishes and put it under the authority of newly created Boards of Guardians. From this period the villages and market towns.... showed new initiative and displayed fresh energy in creating Friendly societies."(55) Rather than submit to the appalling conditions of the workhouses, "Tradesmen, Craftsmen and labourers resolved to help themselves and each other in times of sickness, accident or death".(56)

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52. Part of the stated aims of Forestry, as outlined in the Formularies of the Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236.(1857).

53. "'Diamond ladies and a dream of hell' - Fah-fee, brewing and the Coloured working class of Johannesburg 1918-1936." ASI seminar paper forthcoming March 12 1990.

54. EP Thompson., The Making of the English Working Class (Penguin Books UK 1968) p. 460.

55. R.C. Russell, Friendly Societies in the Caistor, Binbrook and Brigg areas in the nineteenth century (Nettleton Branch of Worker's Educational Association 1975) p. 3.

56. Ibid. Engels' description of workhouses, and his explanation of the place of Malthus's law of population in a the broader ideological discourse of the early English bourgeoisie, continues to offer the most chilling insight into what the working class and their organisation were up against in 19th century Britain. See F. Engels, The Condition of the Working class in England (Progress Publishers

By the early 1800s societies such as the Oddfellows, Foresters, Druids, Rechabites, and Free Gardeners, as well as hundreds of others groups, had been established throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Thompson cites national (English) membership figures at an astonishing 650 000 by 1793, and 925 000 by 1815.(57) Gosden, through tracing the history of the two main English orders, the Ancient Order of Foresters and Independent Order of Oddfellows from the late 18th century, also notes spectacular growth throughout the 19th century. The membership of the Oddfellows alone climbed to 249 000 by 1848 and to 508 000 by 1876. The Foresters grew even faster, up to 65 000 by 1848 and 491 000 by 1876.(58) Gosden cites a 1872 Royal Commission into these societies which estimated total membership of all similar friendly societies in England at over four million - a four fold increase from 1815.(59)

These British societies had three central purposes: the social organisation of the working class in conditions where other forms of organisation were mostly illegal; to facilitate recreation and organised companionship, and to provide insurance against illness and death. Russel maintains that membership, "provided and cemented friendships; they helped their members to stand on their own two feet. Membership and participation in rituals and orderly conduct of business helped men grow in ability and stature... friendly societies ... became communities within a divided community."(60)

Gosden and Thompson also stress the way in which these groups became class organisations, creating a sense of commonality among disparate groupings. Thompson writes: "Friendly societies did not 'proceed from' an idea; both the ideas and institutions arose in response to common experiences. In the simple cellular structure of the friendly society, with its workaday ethos of mutual aid we can see many features which were reproduced in more sophisticated and complex forms of organisation."(61) Elsewhere Thompson concluded: "this was the sub-culture out of which the less stable trade unions grew, and in which trade union officers were trained.(62) Gosden argues that a study of friendly societies, "throws some light on how the 'industrious class' sought to let a little entertainment and colour enter their drab lives... the rituals of initiations, the good fellowship of the lodge room and the celebrations of the annual 'club day'

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Moscow 1973) especially pp 275-294.

57. E.P. Thompson "Making" p. 460.

58. P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875 (Manchester University Press 1961) pp. 30 and 38.

59. Ibid. p. 16.

60. R. Russel, "Friendly Societies" p.3.

61. E.P. Thompson ""The Making of the English Working Class" p. 462.

62. Ibid p. 461.

meant much to members. The early trade unions indulged in somewhat similar practices and met a similar need."(63).

These societies were thus part of an early and ongoing defensive response by the labouring classes of Britain in the face rapid industrialisation and proletarianisation and the concomitant ideological assaults of Malthusian anti-welfarism, and a strident Protestant work ethic.

The first traceable branch of these societies established in South Africa dates to 1869 when the Ancient Order of Foresters established a "court" in Cape Town.(64) The earliest South African reference to the Free Gardeners - which was an exclusively Scottish order - was in 1888.(65) From the start the membership of these organisations appear to have been predominately, but not exclusively, Coloured. The Oddfellows, Foresters and the Order of Free Gardeners (Africa) had both Coloured and white members but separate branches for each group. The Ancient Order of Free Gardeners (Scottish) was also mixed but members all met in one branch. It appears that while the "multiracial" nature of these orders was a significant attraction for many Coloured members, the lodges had become almost exclusively Coloured by the 1920s and 1930s. Only the IOTT had significant membership from outside the Coloured community, and that was from the African middle class. The membership and structure of other lodges is yet to be explored.(66)

How did the defensive organisations of the British labouring classes get transported to an Afrikaans speaking mixed-race group in South Africa? I have not yet found any direct evidence about the actual processes of transfer from archival sources. Informants suggest two points of transmission: British missionaries, and, more importantly, immigrant British artisans who arrived in increasing numbers from the late 1850s. Social relations between Coloureds and whites, especially in the fields in which Coloured artisans were active, were reasonably good until the late 1890s and often remained as such until well into the 20th century. Trade unions were mixed, as were many lower-middle class residential areas. It is probable that it

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63. P. Gosden, "Friendly Societies in England" p. 10.

64. The facing page of Rules of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236 (Cape Town 1939), stated that this particular lodge was established in January 1869. KAB A2011. The archives for this one society dated from 1907-1936.

65. Patterson dates the Free Gardeners to the 1870s and another lodge, the Mechanic and Fidelity Lodge - a uniquely Coloured South African lodge with no apparent European parent - is dated to late 1870s.S. Patterson, "Colour and Culture", footnotes to page 157/8 on p. 310. The Free Gardeners' "Grand Lodge Circular" of October 1909 records a presentation to "South Africa's Oldest Free Gardener', a Mr C.J. Carelse,who had joined the order in 1878. Grand Lodge Circular, Ancient order of Free Gardeners, October 1909. Papers of the St. Andrews Lodge no. 67. KAB A2230.

66. S. Patterson, "Colour and Class in South Africa", pp. 157.

was in this milieu that Coloureds were first introduced to these English and Scottish organisations. The very foreignness of the lodges were a powerful part of their appeal. Mr. Peterson recalls that in the 1930s the Johannesburg Foresters court had one white member, who had immigrated from England.(67) Peterson recalls: "It wasn't something which was borne out of the community, it was something which was traditionally English. That was the beauty of the Foresters, we had members of all denominations. We had a man, a real European, a Londoner, who came as a coachman to Johannesburg. When I became a member he was there."(68)

Mr Peterson further emphasises the importance of the British connection: "We used to pay an affiliation fee - for all our regulations. All our rules were based on the original rules formulated in England. We got newsletters, and regalia and badges, things like that. At one time we even had our letterheads printed in London. Our rule books and our books in which we entered people's contributions, all came from London."(69)

The South African Free Gardeners were the only branches of Free Gardeners outside of Scotland - at least until 1914, when available archival evidence detailing news from the South Africa branches, ends. Each "Grand Lodge Circular" had a special section for "South African News".(70) This British connection may well have been a significant added attraction of the lodges. British culture provided a possible alternative set of reference points and values for the Coloured middle class, replacing those of the Afrikaans "parent culture" which was progressively excluding Coloureds. The possible significance of this for marginality theory - solving the alleged problem of "non-membership of your reference group" by adopting another reference group rather than creating a new set of values and institutions - needs to be explored further. Tentatively it is clear that the appeal of English cultural norms was indicative of the fluidity of cultural process and the multi-dimension nature of historical experience. This might suggest that the "psychological" problems supposedly posed by forced existence within a "marginal situation" were in fact have been overstated by theorists supporting the marginality thesis.

The main appeal of friendly societies was the benefits and facilities that members were afforded. There were other significant at-

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67. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988. Mr Daniel Peterson has been my main informant about lodges in among the Coloured community in Johannesburg. Born in 1914, Mr Peterson became a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society in the mid 1930s. He was a school headmaster in the 1950s and 1960s and remained a member of the order until the dissolution of the order in the late 1950s.

68. Interview with D.Peterson, February 1988.

69. Ibid.

70. Papers of St. Andrew's Lodge no 67. Ancient Order of Free Gardeners, KAB A2230. Hereafter "St. Andrew's Lodge papers".

tractions for the Coloured middle class, and, as will be argued, non-material attractions became the main reason for continued membership for many participants. But the welfare functions are stressed by informants as the primary reason for the existence of the lodges. Daniel Peterson recalls: "we had sick-visitors, and all our members had to report if they were sick. Then sick visitors would go and visit them. We had our meetings once a fortnight, and the sick visitors had to report on who was sick and our sick people were provided with a free doctor and medicine. That is what made these lodges so attractive."(71) Elsewhere the Foresters state: "The aim of Forestry is, by means of sympathy and benevolence, to take the sting out of poverty, to pare down the fangs of want, and to lessen the amount and intensity of pain."(72)

To achieve these aims the lodges offered three main services: a 'medical aid', sick pay and a burial service.

> "A person's contribution was three shilling per fortnight. For that you were given a free doctor, and medicines. Over and above that we granted you sick pay for every day you were sick. For a member who was sick for some time, his sick pay could come to more than what his weekly wage was. More than that, each member knew that according to the length of his membership, we used a sliding scale, we provided for the burial."(73)

It appears that for the Coloured middle class, the orders supplemented or replaced burial societies which were popular with less affluent working class Coloureds. The organising secretary of the APO in the 1930s, Mr Fredericks, told the Wilcocks Commission that the difference between the two types of organisation was that, "the individual joins the Friendly society. The family joins the Burial society",(74) but Mr Peterson recalls "many members did not belong to a burial society, the order buried them."(75) The most obvious difference in terms of potential attraction, was in the costs levied. Burial societies in Cape Town in the 1930s charged 1/6 per fortnight - half the 3 shillings that the orders charged.(76) Lodge fees of between five and six shillings per month and a twelve shilling 'initiation fee', would have been out of the reach of most unskilled or semi-skilled labourers who were earning roughly a pound to a pound and half per week in the 1930s.

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71. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

72. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236 (1857); Lecture on "Sympathy" p. 59.

73. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

74. Wilcocks Commission, "Minutes", of evidence, p. 1824.

75. Interview with D. Peterson, November 1988.

76. Wilcocks Commission, "Minutes" of the Evidence. Mr. Reagon and Mr. Fredericks, the organising secretary of the APO, p. 1824.

But although lodge membership covered only the member and not his family, there were significant additional 'ad-hoc' benefits over other forms of insurance. Mr Peterson recalls:

> "If you belonged to a burial society the Foresters order paid out a certain sum of money, depending on your membership. Over and above that each member contributed 5 shillings which was called 'widow's wealth'. After a member died we paid what ever the funeral allowance was, plus that amount, the widows' wealth, in those days it was substantial. (77)

Mr Peterson also recalls that the Foresters had a contingency fund to help members over short-term cash-flow problems: "Sometimes when members got into financial difficulties we had what we called a 'distress fund'. This fund would tide member over family emergencies, or sudden loss of employment. (78)

The rule book of the Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society Court 5236, called "South African Hope", confirms Peterson's recollections of generous payouts. Operating out of Cape Town, the contribution to this branch's was 2/6 per fortnight - slightly less than that for Transvaal members - for members over the age of 35 and 1s 9d payment for members between the ages of 18 and 21. If a member died after one year of membership the payout to his family was 20 pounds. This increased to 40 pounds for those with 20 years membership, and 45 pounds for 30 years membership. (79)

The lodges national network, and possibly even international connections, was credited with giving these organisation a greater return on capital than the more localised burial societies could achieve. Mr Fredericks of the APO credited the lodges with higher payouts not only because of the higher fees charged, but because they were able to "invest their monies collectively and get reduced charges from chemists etc. The combined lot guarantee the payment at death. They function better than the unattached bodies." (80)

For the Coloured middle class the lodges thus played a significant welfare role in a context where a slide into the ranks of the 'aspirant' middle class was just a small change of life circumstance away. In the near complete absence of state welfare assistance the lodges assumed responsibility for reproducing the coloured elite. By the late early 1950s the lodges' "major function" was still "to act as benefit societies for members and their families in times of sickness and death". (81) But the attraction of the lodges was only partly to be found in the "disaster funds", and the medical and

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77. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

78. Ibid.

79. Rules of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. p 21.

80. Wilcocks Commission "Minutes" of the evidence, p 1824/6.

81. S. Patterson "Colour and Culture", p. 157.

burial schemes it offered. They were also arguably the most important organisational form of the Coloured middle class in South Africa, and, as such, appear to have played a significant part in developing whatever class consciousness this group acquired.

"NIE ELKE JAN RAAD EN SY MAAT" - THE FORESTERS AND THE FREE GARDENERS AS ORGANISATIONS OF THE COLOURED MIDDLE CLASS(82)

The lodges offered a bulwark against a disintegrating social fabric and a capacity to confer status on merit in an environment where the arbitrary attribute of pigmentation was increasingly central to status determination. In the first instance the lodges were made reasonably exclusive to people with a similar economic and social background, and membership was by invitation only. Mr Peterson remembers the elaborate entrance procedures:

> "We as foresters accepted everybody. But, as we said, 'nie elke Jan Raad en sy maat'. Before you could become a member one of our members must bring a potential new member to a meeting... then he is introduced to those present. Then we instruct our doctor... he has to go to the doctor for a medical examination. At the fortnightly meeting... if there is a new member, who the doctor has passed, we who are present at the meeting have a secret ballot, we vote for or against. We count the vote. If the ballot is in your favour - you are in."(83)

Two other informants, Mrs Fortune and Mrs Bosch, say adamantly that lodges were for "somebodies". "They were very selective. You didn't have to be rich - just decent, law abiding people."(84) According to these two informants even the public social dances organised by lodges were "by invitation only". Mr Peterson was also clear about the solidly middle class basis of the lodges. When asked if there were any lodge members who were "just ordinary workers" he replied: "We had the whole spectrum: we had teachers, we had bricklayers, we had carpenters, we had furniture-makers, we had upholsterers, we had the whole lot. We took from all congregations. These orders were really unifying bodies in a way."(85)

Sheila Patterson, writing in the early 1950s, confirms this class composition of the lodges among the Coloured community in the Cape. "The lodges are said to play a very important part in Coloured life particularly amongst the skilled artisan and commercial classes. A reliable informant estimated their total membership at about one-tenth of the coloured population - a very high figure which would mean that their influence extends far down beyond the ranks of the bourgeoisie into the ranks of the semi-skilled and even unskilled

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82. Interview with D. Peterson, November 1988. This phrase roughly translates as "Not every Tom, Dick and Harry".

83. Interview with D. Peterson, November 1988.

84. Interview with Mrs Bosch and Mrs Fortune, Bosmont, June 1989.

85. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

workers."(86) This figure does appears to be high, especially in relation to the Transvaal. Mr Peterson recalls that his order, the Foresters, had, in Johannesburg, a fairly constant membership in the 1930s of about 200 men, and that the Free Gardeners "may even have had a few more than 200." This would be broadly consistent with the relatively small Coloured middle class living (predominantly) in Western Johannesburg.(87)

There is also the possibility that these much lower figures for the 1930s - as opposed to Patterson's figures for the 1950s - might be related to the fact that both the Free Gardeners and the Foresters initially excluded women. While it is not yet known when women's branches were formed, Mr Peterson recalls that "Years after, females also decided to start one. We recommended it, all the correspondence went to London. They granted us a charter."(88) Although I have not been able to get any information about these women's chapters, Mrs Fortune recalls that both her grandmothers - and no other members of her extended family - belonged to these orders. One belonged to the Free Gardeners and one to the Foresters in the 1930s and 1940s.(89) In 1938 it appears that the Foresters made provision for the establishment of youth's and women's branches "for the purpose of securing medical attendance, sick allowance and a sum at death for youths between six and eighteen and females between ten and thirty nine years."(90)

But even from the limited information available on membership, it is reasonably clear that middle class elements made up the bulk of these societies. This proposition is strengthened by an examination of the social agenda of the lodges. First, and most striking, they emphasised a strict morality and stern discipline. The rules of the Ancient Order of Foresters, for example, suggest: "Let us invariably make the moral character of a candidate the strongest test for his admission; and we may then safely trust Forestry to progress by the force of its own might and dignity".(91) Mr Peterson recalls these values in recounting a part of the initiation ceremony:

> "The chairman reads a whole long lecture, which is marvellous, a wonderful set of rules. In it we say we allow our

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86. S. Patterson, "Colour and Culture", p. 157.

87. Interview with D.Peterson, November 1988.

88. Ibid.

89. Interview with Mrs Iris Fortune and Mrs Bosch June 1989.

90. Rules and Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. p. 26. Patterson suggests that only the International Order of True Templars - the IOTT - which allegedly had 50 000 coloured and African members in the late 1940s - was the only group to allow women at the time that she was writing. This does not appear to have been accurate, but further research is needed. See S. Patterson, "Colour and Class in South Africa, p. 158.

91. Rules and Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. Lecture on "How to extend Forestry" p. 64.

members freedom of choice but one thing which is very important, in several paragraphs it says, 'we do not tolerate people who do not observe moderation.' To be a member of such a body you have to live up to a certain standard of conduct and way of living - all that was under scrutiny."(92)

Mr Peterson contrasted this approach to other groups who had more stringent codes of conduct, especially in regards to temperance.

"There was another group, an offshoot of the Congregational church, a group who called themselves IOTT, the International Order of True Templars, they were anti-alcohol and all that. There are still a few old people clinging to that tradition. Foresters said in their lectures that you must enjoy life, but in moderation. We even allowed drinking, there was no hard and fast rule, but if any member was found to be under the influence somewhere, where it could constituted a reflection of the order, then in our meeting we dealt with such a person."(93)

The morality of the lodges was clearly part of an attempt to define members out of the contingency driven "immorality" of the poor. Alcohol was a key indicator of moral resilience and as central an issue to the Coloured elite as it was to the African elite. The inability of blacks to hold their liquor was a popular white myth and part of a widespread belief that liquor allowed the "primitive", "irrational" personae of black South Africans to emerge. Temperance, as Eales, La Hausse and others have pointed out, was thus an important issue for the emerging black middle class who were trying to distance themselves from their working class fellows. This was possibly even more important to the Coloured middle class because of the more dogmatic white association of Coloureds with drunkenness throughout this century.(94)

Alcohol abuse was in fact widespread among Coloureds, and a pressing concern for the coloured middle class. Lewis argues "For 'respectable' Coloureds, alcoholism among the Coloured underclasses formed the most visible and humiliating indicator of their community's poverty and degradation, and temperance always remained a priority

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92. Interview with D.Peterson, February 1988..

93. Ibid.

94. S. Patterson, "Colour and Culture", p. 180, cites the Institute of Race Relations, Race Relations News no. 114 of 1950, as suggesting "it was extremely difficult to find employment in Johannesburg for Coloured men. The views of the employers were that they were not desirable employees because their were always drunk, their morals were low, they were less robust than Africans, and their presence among African always led to trouble'. See P. la Hausse, Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A history of Liquor in South Africa (Ravan 1988) and K. Eales, "Race, Class and Liquor: towards an understanding of prohibition for Africans in South Africa 1902-1928", unpublished MA seminar paper, October 1988.

in Coloured political organisations later."(95) The Ancient Order of Foresters rule books state, "Self-control is one of the most amiable and most dignified of human attributes"(96) and any "any member who is in an intoxicated state shall not be allowed to enter a court. Should a member become intoxicated while in the Court he shall be fined two shillings and sixpence for the first offence, five shillings for the second offence and ten shillings for each offence thereafter".(97)

The emphasis on morality went far beyond the promotion of moderation in alcohol consumption. It was a curious feature of these orders that they imposed a web of rules, regulations and fines on members for virtually all possible misdemeanours. A lot of time was spent sitting in judgment on members in so-called "arbitration committees". Mr Peterson recalls:

> "If I knew you're were member of the Foresters, even though I'm not a Forester, and you were living an immoral life, I could write to the Foresters, and lay a complaint against you. But they would only entertain any complaint in writing. We then held a meeting and summoned you, the complainant, to attend that meeting and you confronted our member, you, as it were, laid your charge or gave your evidence. Then after that you left, we weighed up the case, and if the person was found guilty of something serious, we would suspend his membership. We had the right. It was a very good order."(98)

Thompson notes that English orders, as a response to the rapidly changing conditions of industrialising England, placed a singular emphasis on obeying a myriad of rules and regulations. Thompson suggests this had beneficial consequences, "... the discipline essential for the safe-keeping of funds, the orderly conduct of meetings and the determination of disputed cases, involved an effort of self-rule as great as the new disciplines of work. An examination of the rules of friendly societies ... gives us a list of fines and penalties more exacting than those of a Bolton cotton-master."(99) Offences included being drunk, especially on the Sabbath, calling each other names, fighting, blasphemy, failure to attend meetings, betting in the club, speaking out of turn and disclosing the secrets of the lodge. Some lodges even had fines for those member who, when they had opportunity to fine other members, did not.(100)

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95. G. Lewis, "Between the Wire and the Wall", p. 14.

96. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236.(1857) Lecture on "Concord", p. 53.

97. Ibid, p. 23.

98. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

99. E.P. Thompson "The Making of the English Working Class", p. 458.

100. Ibid p. 459.

These kinds of rules are reflected in the Ancient Order of Foresters rule book for the "South Africa Hope" issued in 1938, which was based on the Foresters general rules, and was probably similar in each branch. (101) In these rules there are over 40 different offences for which fines can be exacted. They include a clear emphasis on promoting the correct administration of the lodges - fines of two shillings and sixpence were laid down should the treasurer fail to have the books audited promptly every six months; a 21 shilling fine (for a second offence) was imposed if any member was found canvassing for election to any one of the lodge's positions. Fines were also imposed for missing meetings, failing to give receipts of monies submitted at lodge meetings, or for falling into arrears on subscriptions.

Other rules protected the sanctity of the lodge - "Beadles", the first-ranking position above that of ordinary member, were entrusted to guard the doors. Should unauthorised persons be admitted, the beadles could be fined between one and ten shillings. Giving away secret passwords or other details of lodge affairs - especially information on why some individuals were refused membership - could be met with expulsion from the orders or large fines. But the largest number of fines were imposed for more mundane activities. Failure to wear a clean suit and the lodge regalia, not using the various forms of address, or gambling, eating or sleeping during lodge meetings, or using profane language could be met with fines ranging from sixpence to 10 shillings. Finally the rules allowed for "any member infringing any rule for which there is no specific fine shall be fined at the discretion of the Court. Such a fine should not be less than one shilling nor more than 21 shillings."(102)

This emphasis on morality was in keeping with the kind of community that the coloured middle class imagined for themselves and the kind of respect that they hoped to engender from working class Coloureds - and from whites. Thompson gives an example of early friendly society for small-ware weavers in Manchester for which "'decency and regularity' are the watchwords; it is even hoped that when 'Gentlemen and magistrates' observe such order 'they will rather revere than punish such society'.(103) The context and struggles of 18th century England were very different from those of 20th century Coloured South Africans, but the emphasis on trying to prove and improve "respectability" and thereby "dignify the order" was clearly a compelling part of the lodges activities and attraction.

The internal structure of the lodges provided further sources of respect and dignity to members. Orders were hierarchical and members could move through a number of levels. Foresters could move from

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101. It is possible that all "courts" used this particular rule book, and that it bears the Cape Town courts imprint because they were the original lodge.

102. Rules of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. p.27.

103. E.P Thompson "Making", p. 457.

ordinary membership to Beadles, and then on to becoming "Woodwards" (who were in charge of visiting the sick), to Sub-chief Ranger, and then to Chief Ranger, the highest office in a particular court. If members moved to the head office or 'High Court' in England they could become officers of the High Court with various further designations. Free Gardeners' ranks ranged from ordinary "brothers", to the head of each lodge who was known as the "Right Worshipful Master". Members could proceed up the ranks of Free Gardernism in much the same way as Free Masonry - by taking a series of "degrees". Masonry has 33 degrees - the taking of which usually involve little more than learning and repeating a lengthy catechism - but Free Gardeners appear to have had a much more limited number steps to the most exalted office. **(104)**

Banton, in a summary article on the anthropological aspects of voluntary organisations, writes: "many of these associations support a much greater variety of ranks and titles than is necessary to the functioning of the organisation," **(105)** and he ascribes this to the role of these groups in creating new systems of meaning and values for those removed from traditional, usually rural, societies. Coloureds experienced both proletarianisation and their exclusion from their "parent culture". An independent system, with rank and prestige awarded on the basis of self-generated criteria, was thus established by the Coloured lower middle class. The Ancient Order of Foresters' formal lecture on their constitution states:

> "No office is too high for the poorest to aspire to; no duty too humble for the richest to stoop to. Intelligence to govern, ability to exercise authority with becoming humility, yet with the requisite firmness, and personal demeanour to ensure respect, are above all the qualifications for office required; and these are in the power of every member to acquire." **(106)**

A further avenue for generating self-esteem was, for these male lodges, a stress on the virtue of traditional male roles. In a context where the traditional nuclear family appears to have been under severe pressure in the Coloured community, an emphasis on patriarchal family values was important both as an internal boost to male status and a powerful statement against the deterioration of family life which undermined middle class aspirations to the white nuclear family norm. The Wilcocks Commission reported that "normal" family patterns were under severe stress in the coloured community. Especially among poorer Coloureds, "family life is often unstable; there is often no legal marriage and frequent desertions occur. The relations between parents and children are in many cases very loose,

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104. Rules of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236, and Formularies of the Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236, (1857) and Papers of St. Andrew's Lodge no 67. Ancient Order of Free Gardeners, KAB A2230.

105. M. Banton The anthropological aspects of Voluntary associations, in Encyclopaedia of Social science p. 361.

106. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236 (1857) p.42. Lecture on "The constitution of the order."

family discipline is weak and children show but little attachment to their home or their parents".(107)

The Ancient Order of Foresters 'Formularies' state: "the Family is the basis and epitome of civil society"(108) and urge members "in your domestic relationship we look to you, if a husband, to be affectionate and trustful; if a father, regardful of the moral and material well-being of your children and dependents; as a son, dutiful and exemplary."(109). This kind of attitude represented what the lodges would have liked to have been a point of departure between the lower middle class and the working class. Further research into the sanctions meted out for non-compliance with these patriarchal values needs to be done, but preliminary work suggests that activities like adultery or neglect of children could result in quite severe punitive action from the orders.

Finally the "mystical" aspects of the lodges should not be underemphasised. Besides claiming pedigrees which that went back to ancient times - and this appears to have been common to almost all secret societies of this type - there were many explanations for how powerful the Foresters were in other parts of the world or in other periods of history. Mr Peterson remarks that "during the Second World War the British cabinet did not make a move without consulting the Foresters."(110) Mackenzie's wide ranging study of secret societies suggests that, "it is hard to say how far the rank-and-file members take such myths seriously, and how far they are accepted as part of the collective fantasy that binds the solidarity of the group."(111). While it is not possible to advance an clear opinion on this question for the two lodges in question, it does appear from the limited evidence that they did take the "mysteries" rather seriously. For example, while the initiation ceremonies of both the Foresters and Free Gardeners do not appear to have been as elaborate as those of other groups such as the Free Masons (the foresters abolished initiation by combat in 1843!), new members were given a 'secret grip', a pass word and 'sign' of the order during the initiation ceremony. Foresters were given a homily which included repeated references to, for example, Adam and Eve, who were, according to the lecture: "in more than figurative sense the First Foresters".(112)

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107. Wilcocks Commission, Report, p. 19. The report also suggested somewhat vaguely, that by the mid 1930s "between 30 to 40% of all coloured births are illegitimate".

108. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236, Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society, Lecture on "Unity" p. 47.

109. Ibid p 23.

110. Interview with D.Peterson, November 1988.

111. N. Mackenzie (ed) Secret Societies, (Collier Books New York 1967) p. 9.

112. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society p. 21.

Mackenzie has suggested that secret societies have in common an attachment to references to cataclysmic events in history and especially biblical history, as well as the spiritual experience of "rebirth". The special importance of rebirth in the myths and religions of the world led Jung to posit its centrality in the process of "individuation", a process of assuming greater, adult, responsibility in the world. The relationship of Jungian concept of individuation to the needs of those supposedly deprived of self-esteem by an imposed "marginal situation" cannot be explored now - but it would be an intriguing and possibly fruitful area of study.

Gosden concluded that the use of "emblems, costume, regalia, ceremonies, passwords and special forms of handshakes", by all the main orders in England, served to, "encourage the enthusiasm and to strengthen the loyalty of their members - especially at a time when a considerable part of the membership was not literate. The secret orders were able to offer the mysteries of membership of a large brotherhood...". This appears to hold true in explaining part of the attraction of these organisation for South African coloureds.(113)

Through trying to keep up with all the moral demands made by lodges, members were told they would raise themselves, their society and their organisations in the eyes of the broader community. "These qualities will command the admiration of mankind, and in you, as a member of our Society, they will dignify our Order, consolidate its power, and extend its benign influence."(114) Peterson recalled, "Those who belonged to the orders were, I won't say we were aloof, we felt a little more exclusive, more dignified."(115)

THE DEMISE OF THE ORDERS

Although research into the fraternal orders during the 1940s and 1950s has only recently begun - and much of the work done previously does not yield easily to periodisation even on simple matters like membership - it is nonetheless clear that the by the late 1950s the orders had largely ceased to exist. My central informant's explanation attributes the decline of the lodges to two factors: declining economic conditions and government interference. Mr Peterson noted:

> "[The lodges] were popular until about 1959. The Gardeners were the first to go. You see the Gardeners were- I won't say too selective - but within their ranks they fostered a sort of snobbery, whereas with the Foresters that wasn't so strong. But the fact that you were a forester, you were proud to belong to that order, you were proud to say: "Look

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113. P. Gosden "Friendly Societies in England", p 136. The De Villiers Commission estimated Coloured illiteracy at over 70% - in 1946. Report of the Commission on Technical and Vocational Education, U.G. 55/1948.

114. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. (1857) Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society p. 23.

115. Interview with D. Peterson, February 1988.

I am a Forester". But now this government brought in this Act, "the Secret Societies Act." They bought in an impossible clause. All societies had to be, under this act, registered. You see they had to be appointed by the registrar, and the registrar had to be furnished with your membership, your financial standing and other things."(116)

Minister EH Louw, in presenting the bill to Parliament, stated, "there are 1 100 friendly societies in South Africa with a membership of 500 000. The members of the friendly societies are of the poorer class of people and that is why they join the friendly society". These people, the Minister reasoned, had to be protected from unscrupulous operators and the Friendly Societies Act - which called for registration, investment of 40% of cash assets in approved funds, and annual audits - was passed in 1956.(117) Mr Peterson is adamant that the Foresters and other groups were not prepared to put up with this, although no-one made representations to the Parliamentary Select Committee, and the bill was passed unanimously at all three readings. "We found that we could still have functioned, but not under their conditions, so we disbanded and well.. some of the members had already passed away."(118)

Another possible reason for the decline of the orders was the unwillingness or inability of the members to increase the fortnightly contribution of 3 shillings, or to increase by a large enough amount to cover all the services originally offered. This argument is, for the moment, speculative but Mr. Peterson recalls:

"For the years that I was a member of the order, something like 25 years, your rates of contribution did not increase. But correspondingly the other services, their rates increased, you know the doctor's fees, the cost of medicines and things. The funeral undertakers, their prices also increased. And now you find out that for a little amount of three shillings a fortnight, you get all this. Economically it wasn't viable, it couldn't cover all the benefits you got from this society."(119)

But possibly the most significant reason for the decline of the orders were the dramatic changes in Coloured politics from the late 1930s. When Coloured politics started moving towards mass mobilisation and away from elite protest, it is clear that the world view which aspired to white, petty bourgeois standards, was on the way out. The orders attracted the best of the leadership talent of the Coloured community in Johannesburg. But the lodges - or at least the Ancient Order of Foresters, appear to have avoided politics or any "wrangling" which would "mar our harmony or disrupt our proceed-

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116. Interview with D. Peterson, November 1988.

117. Debates of the House of Assembly (Hansard) 4th session of the 11th Parliament 13 Jan to 14 June 1956 vol 90,91,92 p 3667.

118. Interview with D.Peterson, November February 1988.

119. Interview with D.Peterson, November 1988.

ings". (120) While Mr Peterson agreed that the lodges "gave leadership to the (Coloured) community in Johannesburg" he is adamant that they "didn't really consider civic problems." The Foresters' rule book states that: "In your outward acts and dealings as a Forester we expect you to be sober, upright and conscientious - willing to help, ready to relieve, obedient to the laws of our country...". (121) Mr Peterson adds that, "there was nothing political about it." But, as I show elsewhere the Foresters did nominate a delegate to represent them on the Johannesburg Coloured-European Joint Council set up in 1935. Their delegate, a Mr. Fick, became the first honorary secretary of this body on which most of Johannesburg's Coloured notables served. (122)

Being dignified, "respectable" and "well-behaved" had clearly failed to prevent the growing economic deprivation of the Coloured community and the steady erosion of their political rights. The orders' welfare functions were no doubt still needed, but rankings such as "Most Worshipful Grand Master" and "Beadles", and guiding principle of "sympathy, benevolence, unity and concord" must have been seen as archaic romanticism - or worse - to the young Marxist-orientated intellectuals of the National Liberation League, the anti-CAD committees and the New Unity Movement, in the late 1930s and 1940s.

These new organisations began to radicalise the same class base as that from which lodges had traditionally drawn. For the new elite, arguably, being "Coloured", although often still rejected along with the system which defined them as such, was no longer as much a case of an oppressive "marginal situation" from which they needed individual release and opportunity for recreation, but rather part a historically specific class struggle in which race was an ideological construct of the oppressors, and as such, easily side-stepped by materialist analysis. New values, new sources of status and reward, were created by these groups, and these values down-played or even ridiculed racial preoccupation. While this may not do justice to either the complexity of the positions of the organised Coloured left, or deal with the uneven development of these positions, I am confident that further research will link the rise of more radical Coloured middle class elements - for whatever material or ideological reasons - to the decline of the "ancient orders".

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120. Formularies of the Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236.

121. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236. Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society, p. 23.

122. Joint Council collection, AD 1433 box Cj 3.1.1, handwritten list of names and organisation who had sent delegates to the first Coloured European Joint Council in Johannesburg. Besides the Coloured People's Welfare Association, the Foresters were the only group to send a delegate. The others present either put the name of their suburb or "personal" in the column for organisations. Further investigation will hopefully provide a clearer understanding of role that lodges may have played in training Coloured political leadership in Johannesburg.

But in the 1920s and 1930s the orders do appear to have played a crucial role for the fledging Coloured middle class. As this paper has argued they provided comfort and support, and, as the creed of the Foresters grandly stated, their aim was "take the sting out of poverty, to pare down the fangs of want, and to lessen the amount and intensity of pain."(123) Through doing this and through providing structured social networks, they appear to have been important to the development of the elite's consciousness of themselves, providing training, leadership, a sense of social responsibility and even some of the 'tactics' by which this class sought to raise itself. They allowed individuals to become "somebodies", and in so doing should be an important part of accounts of Coloured politics in South Africa in the early 20th century.

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123. Formularies of Court of South Africa Hope No. 5236, Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society, Lecture on "Sympathy" p. 59.