
COLOUR, CITIZENSHIP AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

An Oral History of Political Identity among
Middle-Class Coloured People with Special Reference
to the Formation of the Coloured Advisory Council
in 1943 and the Removal of the Male Franchise in 1956

Heidi Villa-Vicencio

Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts

History Department
University of Cape Town
1995

Supervisor: Associate Professor Bill Nasson

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ABSTRACT 1

INTRODUCTION 4

Interpretative Complexities 9

Methodological Problems 14

Theoretical Assumptions 19

Chapter 1

DEFINING THE ROOTS: EMERGING MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICAL IDENTITY 24

Social Location 24

Family Politics 31

Emerging New Consciousness 36

Chapter 2

SONS TURN AGAINST THEIR FATHERS: THE RADICALISATION OF COLOURED POLITICS 41

The CAC and Anti-CAD 41

The TLSA and TEPA 48

The NEUM and CPNU 50

The War Effort 55

Chapter 3

BEING OUT OF THINGS: THE LOSS OF MALE POLITICAL FRANCHISE 58

A Devalued Vote 59

The Threat of Disenfranchisement 65

Disenfranchisement 69

Chapter 4

ALIENATED BY MALE POLITICS: THE SOCIAL FORMATION OF COLOURED MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN 80

Social Location	82
Family Politics	95
Education	102

Chapter 5

LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES: CHURCHES, CHARITIES AND SPORTS CLUBS 109

Women and Coloured Middle-Class Politics	109
Civil Society	117
The War Years	120

Chapter 6

ASPIRING TO BE WHITE: THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT 129

Working Outside the Home	129
If You Played White	134

Chapter 7

THE ADVENT OF APARTHEID: DEALING WITH 'REAL POLITICS' 141

White Politics	141
The Events of 1948	147

CONCLUSION 154

Defining Values	157
In Search of Coloured Middle-Class Political Identity	161
A Postscript	171

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

173

List of Interviewees	173
Printed Primary Sources	175
Newspapers	176
Books	177
Chapters in Books	182
Journal Articles	183
Unpublished Papers and Theses	185

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible with the assistance and support of a number of people and institutions.

Special thanks must go to Bill Nasson who supervised my work enthusiastically. His useful criticism, thoughtful guidance and clear direction were always forth coming. Remarks such as, "I think you are right, because my mother is like that," kept me going in the hope that I was doing something right. I am deeply indebted to him.

I thank the Western Cape Oral History Project, in particular Lance van Sittert and Vivian Bickford-Smith, for the continual support over the past two years -- both financially and academically.

The financial assistance from both the Centre for Scientific Development and the University of Cape Town Post-graduate Research Fund is also acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

I am especially grateful to those persons who were kind enough to grant me interviews. Without their co-operation and long-suffering -- some granting several interviews, this research would never have been possible.

Finally I want to thank my family for their support and encouragement. My mother continually provided love and comfort when things were not going right. Tanya gave repeated moral

support. Mills engaged in endless discussions on 'coloured politics'. Lastly to 'Professor Dad'. His time, support and guidance were always available. He never failed to observe: "Heidi, your thesis is your number one priority!"

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
Anti-CAD	That group of people against the CAC/CAD
APO	African People's Organisation
CAC	Coloured Advisory Council
CAD	Coloured Advisory Department
CPNU	Coloured People's National Union
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
FRAC	Franchise Action Committee
GAA	Group Areas Act
NEF	New Era Fellowship
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
TEPA	Teachers' Education and Professional Association
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UP	United Party

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the political identity of middle-class coloured people in metropolitan Cape Town -- focusing particularly on the period extending from the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council in 1943 to the removal of the qualified coloured male franchise in 1956.

The findings of the thesis are based largely on thirty-one random interviews with coloured men and women over the age of sixty-three. All of the males had the vote and either the fathers or husbands of all the women had enjoyed the vote. The 'open attitude' style of interviewing was employed, enabling the interviewees to help frame the discussions.

Politics for most of my respondents was not an integral influence within their childhood. Most men, however, recalled their fathers voting and have clear memories of election days, political movements of the time and meetings that took place. All, except one, became teachers. Their post-secondary education, often at the University of Cape Town, encouraged most to grapple with the political and social processes of the day. By the 1940s the majority of the males began to challenge the prevailing political structures and beliefs of mainstream coloured society.

The childhood memories of political events of most women were comparatively less pronounced. Some recalled their fathers voting, although memories of their mothers involvement in church

and welfare activities are clearer. They also recalled political events that affected them directly. Most of the women interviewed either became teachers or they married teachers. This exposed them to what they saw as male-dominated coloured politics and they experienced a sense of political alienation from these political processes. This does not necessarily imply that they were apolitical. On the contrary, looking back, they see themselves as having given expression to political concerns in alternative ways. They also showed greater interest in 'white politics' as expressed through the United Party -- accepting that it was 'white politics' that ultimately had the power to determine their social and economic well-being. Most women showed limited concern about the removal of qualified males from the common voters' roll. They saw this as having a minimal impact on their social well-being. It was largely the Group Areas Act that socially and economically affected their lives, giving rise to a heightened level of political awareness and involvement.

The ambiguities and divisions which marked middle-class coloured political groupings could be attributed partly to the historical policies of social-engineering practised by successive governments, whose intention was to construct a coloured political identity -- separate from whites, while being grounded in civil privileges not extended to Africans. Most of my interviewees acknowledged that by the 1940s they had accepted these privileges. They were naturally reluctant to see these undermined politically. From 1948 onwards middle-class coloured

privileges began to be eroded. This signalled the emergence of a new era of coloured identity.

INTRODUCTION

Coloured political identity among the middle-class coloured people of metropolitan Cape Town is inevitably for some an ambiguous, controversial and obscure topic. People who are commonly defined as coloureds -- not least because of colonial and apartheid racial classification, have often defined *themselves* as 'coloureds'. At other times they have preferred such terms as 'so-called coloureds', 'bruin mense', 'Cape people', and 'blacks'. Some have employed an array of other labels with which to describe themselves such as 'Malay', 'khoikhoi' and 'basters'. Some pride themselves on being the sophisticated descendants of slaves, originating from Java, Bali, Timor, the Malayan Peninsula and various parts of India. Others disassociate themselves from this heritage of enslavement, tracing their origins to the original Khoikhoi and Khoisan people of the Western Cape. Many others prefer not to speak of these origins; they recall rather their European ancestors who came to South Africa from England, Scotland, Holland, Germany and elsewhere.¹

Ideological debate concerning politically-imposed social identity has a long history.² At the same time, the struggle for

1. Ancestral origins, it will be shown in the pages that follow, are frequently discussed by those interviewed for this study.

2. See: Vivian Bickford-Smith, "Slavery, Emancipation and the Question of Coloured Identity, with Particular Attention to Cape Town, 1875-1910," in The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Collected Seminar Papers, No 45, Vol 19, University of London, 1993, p. 17-23

See also: I. Goldin, Coloured Preference Policies and the Making of Coloured Political Identity in the Western Cape Region of

self-definition within the morass of apartheid racial labels has continued to be intense. "No person who we call 'coloured' could help but wrestle with the question of self-identity in a political context where you were repeatedly told you were neither African nor white," notes Pat Sonn.³

Today a great deal of the pathos associated with coloured identity in the Western Cape during the apartheid years is slowly giving way to a recognition of an identity that is different from that of Africans and whites. It is a recognition which is to some extent made possible by the national quest for a common South African identity that does not seek to deny ethnic, racial and cultural difference. It is a recognition negotiated within a context that constitutionally affirms non-discrimination and equality of citizenship. Adam Small notes, "When the term coloured was a racial category enforced on people through legislation in the most vicious manner, people would say to hell with this discriminatory name."⁴ Similarly, Reggie Clark comments, "During the apartheid years most of us called ourselves 'so-called coloureds'. We rejected the classification imposed on us by the state. In recent times, however, the term

South Africa, with Particular Reference to the Period 1948 to 1984, Phd Thesis, Oxford University, 1984

3. Interview with Pat Sonn at his Lansdowne home on 10/08/94, p. 10

I have in what follows clearly identified the original interview by indicating the date and place of the interview. Subsequent references to the original interview are indicated solely by the name of the interviewee and the page number referring to the transcript. Later conversations are clearly distinguished in appropriate language.

4. Argus, 24 November 1994

'coloured' is again gaining currency. We are not African and we are not white. We are coloured. It is correct for us now to express our individual identity."⁵ Richard van der Ross agrees: "We are neither black nor white, but we are coloured, just as blacks are blacks and whites are whites. Is there something wrong with being coloured? Why may we not just be what we are? What we are was decided before we were born, by our parents and their forebears. We are quite satisfied with their choice of partners. Please leave us alone."⁶ When asked publicly who would be part of the newly formed Coloured Forum, van der Ross has very recently responded: "It is a matter of self-identity."⁷

The sociologist Wilmot James has taken issue with some of the assertions of van der Ross, stressing the complex economic and political difficulties involved in affirming a coloured identity as opposed to an African identity.⁸ He reminds us that social identity is intertwined with the struggle for resources, employment and material well-being. The affirmation of a separate coloured identity also requires, he suggests, a political structure strong enough to promote it. He asks whether any existing political party can afford to promote such sectional coloured interests at the cost of African and white voters. Hettie September pertinently notes, "The truth of the

5. Conversation with Reggie Clark subsequent to the transcribed interview of 3/08/94

6. Argus, 17 May 1995

7. Cape Times, 4 August 1995

8. W. James, "A Coloured People's Congress?", in Cape Times, 4 August 1995

matter is that coloureds are a minority group. This will always cost them politically. It will probably also mean that they will, like minorities elsewhere in the world, always fight for a separate identity."⁹

The complexities surrounding such identification continue. A report in December 1994 on a television programme makes the point:

A man said he was not a 'so-called coloured', he was a coloured. Another member of the panel, seemed to prefer the more benign 'brown person', while the PAC's Patricia de Lille shrilled that she objected in the strongest terms to being called coloured. 'I was born in Africa, so I am an African,' she said.¹⁰

This thesis is not, however, based on the politically correct neologism, or the most appropriate conceptual designation for the community under historical consideration. It is an oral history based on interviews conducted with a cluster of people who have, generally speaking, accepted the appellation of 'coloured'. Naturally, this acceptance has at times been painfully conceded. As Tom Hanmer notes: "I prefer to simply speak of people. I see myself first and foremost as a South African. There were times when the very notion of 'coloured' was regarded as inappropriate and offensive. But yes, as a result of a certain amount of social engineering and cultural formation I must accept that I am a coloured person."¹¹ "We did not like the

9. Conversation with Hettie September subsequent to the transcribed interview of 2/04/95

10. Comment on a television debate on *Top Level: Argus*, 5 December 1994

term coloured and we rejected it. We were, however, constantly reminded by the state that we were viewed as coloured. We were forced to attend coloured schools, coloured churches and live in coloured areas. As a result most of our friends were coloured. It was hard to ignore such classification. Eventually many began to perceive themselves as coloured,"¹² observes Joyce Benn. John Rust, on the other hand, states, "Yes, I am coloured. I am not white. I am not black. I have always seen myself as coloured. What's the problem?"¹³ Ray Carlier echoes this, "I am not white and I am not African. What am I then? I am coloured. To be a coloured is to be neither black nor white."¹⁴

'Coloured' is employed in what follows in accordance with people so defined by the Population Registration Act of 1950. "The law defined all those people", notes Rhoda Kadalie "who were neither African nor white as coloured. To be coloured is to be anybody who is a mixture of those two. People eventually began to perceive of themselves as coloured as they were not only politically defined as such, but were also segregated in accordance to space. They had to live in coloured areas, attend coloured schools, universities, churches, cinemas and so on."¹⁵

11. Conversation with Tom Hanmer subsequent to the transcribed interview of 20/06/94

12. Interview with Joyce Benn at her Bo-Kaap home on 16/04/95, p. 5

13. Conversation with John Rust subsequent to the transcribed interview of 25/07/94

14. Interview with Ray Carlier at her Lansdowne home, 19/01/95, p. 3

15. Conversation with Rhoda Kadalie, a member of the recently appointed Human Rights' Commission

All debate, not least on political and social identity is, of course, contextual. It takes place in relation to social and other forces that prevail in a given place at a given time. This study is undertaken in relation to the period extending from the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) in 1943 to the removal of the coloured male franchise in 1956. I begin by focussing on the political identity of middle-class coloured males, as they alone in the coloured community potentially met the legal franchise requirements, which stated: "A coloured man must be over twenty-one, must occupy property worth more than seventy-five pounds or earn more than fifty pounds a year, and must be able to write his name, address and occupation without assistance."¹⁶ Coloured women were not allowed to vote, despite the fact that the vote was extended to their white counterparts in 1930. It is argued, however, in what follows, that coloured women contributed significantly to the formation of coloured middle-class political identity. To verify this argument the study also includes the attitudes of women during the period under consideration.

Interpretative Complexities

Coloured identity, like that of any cultural or ethnic group, has many contours. These include race, gender, class and social choice. Social identity is at the same time never static or inherently given. It is a social construct that emerges in dialogue and social encounter with the identity, stories and

16. Argus, 2 September 1948

memories of others. Louise du Toit, in seeking to unravel the notion of identity, writes: "What we call our `selves' and our `world' are effects or products of the particular, historical [cultural] communities in which we find ourselves already immersed." She argues that according to this theory "identity itself, previously regarded as the innermost essence of any particular person or thing, is seen as itself nothing more or less than a [social] construct ... It is not bestowed from above, but rather generated from the sides."¹⁷ One needs, therefore, to take cognisance of the "impact of society's external or `objective' forces on individuals and groups, and the subjective way in which people perceive, interpret, assimilate and respond to the world around them."¹⁸

The process of completely unravelling the impact of different influences on the formation of middle-class coloured political identity (like that of any social group) is necessarily complex. Indeed the very notion of `community' is problematic. Some would ask whether it is an appropriate word to use in describing the complexity of coloured people. The nineteenth century German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies stresses the importance of distinguishing between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). For him, the former refers to an inner consciousness,

17. L. du Toit, A Narrative-Communicative Approach to Identity and Ethnicity. A paper delivered at the Global Change and Social Transformation Conference, Centre for Social Development, November 1993. The words "cultural" and "social" have been substituted for "linguistic" in du Toit's text. The words are not synonymous, but do not violate her essential argument.

18. H. Dugmore `Becoming Coloured': Class and Culture in Johannesburg's Malay Location, 1918-1939, PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1993, p. 8

a sense of belonging and identity, as opposed to society, which he defines as a looser alliance of people.¹⁹ Belinda Bozzoli argues: "'Community', unlike 'class', implies a space within which the group is formed and reproduced. This spatial dimension is what lends the term 'community' its sense of coherence and its claim to specificity."²⁰ I employ the working notion of community in a broad and inclusive sense, as that social space within which people co-exist in mutual recognition.

The influence of 'significant others', which include parents, teachers and professional people in the coloured community, is clearly discernible in the interviews undertaken for this research. Some of the interviewees clearly reject leadership figures, while others in this social group show a keen awareness of leadership opinion in the coloured community. Those especially who are self-conscious of their identity specifically as *coloureds*, rather than as being part of the broader black community, or of South Africa as a whole, repeatedly refer to coloured intellectuals such as Abdullah Abdurahman, Alex La Guma, Cissie Gool and George Golding as formative community influences.

Equally difficult to discern is the influence of the state on middle-class coloured political identity. Those persons interviewed either reject the importance of state-imposed

19. See: G. Baum, Religion and Alienation, New York, 1975

20. See: B. Bozzoli, "Class, Community and Ideology in the Evolution of South African Society," in Bozzoli (ed), Class, Community and Conflict, Johannesburg, 1987, p. 27

coloured politics, or they go to considerable length to explain their past willingness to co-operate with state institutions -- as a matter of strategy. The fact that this research was undertaken after the demise of tri-cameral politics has presumably also had an impact on the rejection of a state-imposed coloured identity. It is simply no longer expedient, nor is it fashionable, to speak about coloured identity in relation to apartheid policy. Yet what is equally clear is the extent to which apartheid ideologists sought to exploit the potential influence of teachers, community leaders and other professional influences in the coloured community. By providing coloured professionals with few alternatives to working in coloured schools and coloured administration, even the most strident coloured critics of apartheid found themselves potentially co-opted into the very system they hated most. "What did one do?" asked Hanmer. "We were trapped. We did what we could to provide a critical perspective within coloured education -- and there are many critics of apartheid who did a magnificent job from this platform. Take Trafalgar High, for example, it produced possibly more activists than any other school -- black, white or coloured, in the peninsula. Yet it was part of the segregationist education. We did not get away from it and the government exploited it. We knew we could go only so far?"²¹ One of the first steps in the developments surrounding the removal of coloured males from the common voters' roll was an attempt to gain control of coloured schools, colleges of education and other community structures. Richard Carlese comments: "We need

21. Hanmer in conversation subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 20/06/94

to be honest. If a person was going to get to the top of his profession, that person had to watch his words in opposing the state."²²

Against this socio-political background, the struggle for middle-class coloured political identity revolved significantly around the question of the coloured male franchise. This was clearly the case during the period under investigation. It has also emerged as a recurring theme in subsequent political and social discourse in the coloured community. The removal of suitably qualified coloured males from the common voters' roll did not, however, have as drastic an impact on coloured middle-class women. It is shown in what follows that the different political identities of middle-class coloured women were often worked out not only in relation to alternative social and political activities, but also in relation to an abiding interest in mainstream 'white' politics -- primarily the politics of the United Party.

The significance, inter alia, of the years 1943-1956 can be attributed to the fact that it was during this time that coloured politics was characterised by heightened ferment and emerging political contradictions. This was typified by conflicting ideological struggles among the various political forces within the middle-class sectors of the coloured community. The period was also characterised by confrontation between the more radical range of coloured political formations

22. Interview with Richard Carlese at his Crawford home, 6/07/94, p. 3

on the one hand and the state on the other. This was especially the case after 1948 when the National Party insistently sought to promote the notion of 'coloured identity'.²³ While this looser identity existed long before the National Party came to power, it was through the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and related parliamentary bills that the National Party isolated most coloureds into a separate category of existence. "After 1948 we became water-tight coloureds. Any possibility of mixing with Africans and whites became increasingly more difficult," comments Doris Demorny.²⁴

Methodological Problems

In an attempt to establish a broad understanding of the politics of this period, and to allow for the expression of diverse personal perspectives, a sample of fifteen middle-class men and sixteen middle-class women were interviewed. In each case, these were wide-ranging, extensive interviews lasting for several hours. In many cases, shorter subsequent discussions were held -- largely as a clarifying exercise. This enabled me to verify many of the more important observations gleaned from the initial interviews. Given the middle-class focus of the thesis in relation to the constitutional crisis of 1956, I deliberately interviewed a sample of men who had the vote and women whose husbands and/or fathers had the franchise. This sample of persons interviewed was selected on a random basis --

23. I. Goldin, Making Race: The Political and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa, Cape Town, 1987, p. 73

24. Interview with Doris Demorny at her Athlone home, 31/01/95, p. 4

through advertisements in local newspapers, community recommendations and through personal contacts.

The interviews took a semi-structured form and were tape-recorded. Owing to factors such as death, old age and social dislocation, gathering of a *truly* representative sample of middle-class coloured people between 1943 and 1956 proved impossible. Consequently, the respondents probably do not fully encompass the occupational strata of the coloured middle-class population during the period in question. They, however, embody many of its essential characteristics of educated social respectability.

It is also important to note that the interviews were carried out after the April 1994 elections, which may well have influenced the responses and probably the recollections of those interviewed. Memories of the past were often intertwined with present political experiences. Hence, Henry Burggraaf's memories of voting in the forties:

I remember voting back then. There was not the same excitement as there was in these last elections. Then we just went straight to the Town Hall and voted. There was no wait. This time [in April 1994] I had to stand in the rain for five hours before I could vote. I was so exhausted by the time I got home. Also another funny thing is that the Unity Movement were calling for us not to vote in the April elections [1994].²⁵ They did the same back then [prior to 1956]. I don't know what is wrong with these people.²⁶

25. The New Unity Movement regarded both the process and the outcome of the negotiation process, leading to the April 1994 elections, as illegitimate. This they saw as favouring the ruling class to the disadvantage of the oppressed. For this reason they called for non-participation in the elections.

In conducting this research I could not but become aware of issues surrounding the role of the historian in oral history. "The collector [the historian] has an active role to play in the creation of the primary source material," observes Stephen Caunce.²⁷ In this way, suggests Trevor Lummis, the historian actively engages with the primary source of information -- making it "the product of two people (the informant and the researcher) ..."²⁸ It is in this context that I note my role as the researcher and outline the approach adopted in conducting the interviews. Firstly, the fact that I, a young white woman student, interviewed older coloured men and women undoubtedly influenced the dynamics of the interviews. This was clearly portrayed in the manner in which some of those interviewed explained certain historical events. Many respondents stated that I was either "too young to remember and therefore could not fully understand what was being said"²⁹ or that I "came from a different background and community."³⁰ It is clear, however, that my white skin, my speaking English and the fact that I was pursuing an academic exercise, actually assisted my communication with those interviewed.³¹ In brief, I shared a

26. Interview with Henry Burggraaf at his Silvertown home, 10/08/94, p. 7

27. S. Caunce, Oral History and the Local Historian, New York, 1994, p. 19

28. T. Lummis, Listening to History, London, 1987, p. 13

29. Interview with Bettie Theys at her Hazendal home, 9/03/94, p. 4

30. Interview with Barney De Vries at his Lansdowne home, 25/07/94, p. 5

body of cultural values and class knowledge with them. This put me in an interviewing context wholly different from that informing Belinda Bozzoli's recent study of African rural women in Phokeng.³²

Having considered the disadvantages and the benefits of the differences between myself and my informants, two further factors need to be recognised. The respondents were sometimes defensive and often sought to protect themselves from unfair judgement by ensuring that I understood the context in which their comments were being made. The benefit was that I was exposed to a great deal of historical and anecdotal material on coloured politics and identity. Secondly, the fact that most interviewees had a deep understanding of politics in the Western Cape made it easy for them to discern my political background. This had its advantages and disadvantages. While it gave me easy access to potential interviewees, a few clearly stressed that they were aware that I differed from them politically. This is clearly highlighted by Sonn.

I know you will not agree with or understand why I voted for the Tri-Cameral parliament because I know your father was involved in the UDF and now in the ANC. I assume you must have the same political views.³³

I do not feel that these initial reservations seriously hindered my study. I employed interviewing techniques that enabled me to

31. It is shown in the pages that follow that these are all categories aspired after by the majority of my informants.

32. See: B. Bozzoli, Women of Phokeng, Johannesburg, 1991

33. Sonn, p. 3

lessen the problems involved. Here, I consciously moved away from Paul Thompson's 'life history' approach, whereby one enters the interview with a list of questions assembled in chronological order.³⁴ This method both presupposes what is important to the informant and places the researcher rather than the interviewee in a position of control. I sought rather to allow my interviewees to structure and direct the interview. I made use of the 'open attitude' style of interviewing, which is used in psychological qualitative research. I entered the interview with essentially one open-ended question: "How did you feel when you were removed from the voters' roll?" Alternatively, with women I asked, "How did you feel when your father or/and husband was removed from the voters' roll?" Additional information was gathered by asking for clarity on certain issues. I needed, for example, to gain clarity on the attitudes of some men regarding political groupings, the English language and the post-war Royal visit. I, in turn, posed a number of 'second-round' questions to women on the disenfranchisement of males and contraception. This often helped remove apprehensions about being judged and misunderstood. At the same time, it allowed the interviewee to reflect on what had been said and to reorganise his or her thoughts before continuing with the narrative. The interviewees were throughout encouraged to control the direction of the interview by discussing what was important to them, by relating often 'unrelated' stories and by interpreting their own

34. P. Thompson, The Voice of the Past, Oxford, 1988

experiences. In most cases I was able to confirm (often later) with those interviewed that I had understood them correctly.

It is impossible to engage in research without having one's own theoretical assumptions influencing one's dialogue with one's informants. This results in a history which Lummis has called "the product of two people."³⁵ I tried to be aware of my theoretical assumptions. In this way I sought, to the extent that this is possible, to play down and bracket out my own interpretations, without suggesting that I was not part of the dialogue. No one can fully escape her or his own narrative. I consciously note my assumptions, not least in order to invite my readers to take these into account in assessing my work -- recognising that the reader becomes yet a further participant in producing the product. In terms of post-modernism, I recognise that the text takes on a life of its own. This means that while Lummis speaks of oral testimony being the product of two people, there is in fact a third category of people involved -- the readers.

Theoretical Assumptions

I return to the question of theoretical assumptions. In the interest of clarifying my implicit interpretative categories (thus helping my readers to enter the dialogue) I acknowledge several pedagogical influences and theoretical assumptions that are part of my writing. Firstly, to have read history in South

35. Lummis, Listening to History, p. 13

Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s was to have encountered Marx and Marxism. Broad historical-materialist thought has been part of my educational journey. I have at the same time always resisted a narrow reductionist or deterministic approach to history, which suggests that all history can be reduced to the (determining) impact of the material base. I too recognise the need to critique Marxist reductionism in much the same way that I recognise the need to critique all theory. The urge to explore "social `history from below', exploring the uses of experiential and oral history, folklore and popular culture"³⁶ has also long been part of my methodological journey. This is an influence that does not contradict a broad historical-materialist approach. I am most conscious that ideas do not fall from the sky.³⁷

I have theoretically come to recognise against the more mechanistic historical-materialists, that `race' cannot be reduced to class. At the same time, throughout this thesis `class' is viewed as a dominant factor, without equating it equally with race, ethnicity, gender and other influences. My interviewees were significantly shaped by a class identity, while colour was a significant aspect to their political identity. I have tried to allow for the salience of both class and race in my reflections.

36. L. Callinicos, "Popularising History in a Changing South Africa," in South African Historical Journal, No. 25, 1991, p. 30

37. G. Casalis, Correct Ideas don't Fall from the Skies, New York, 1984

Feminist theory has also taught me the extent to which mainstream (male) scholarship had failed to provide a complete and inclusive account of history. As a woman I can do no other than seek to correct this. I have sought to use the assumptions of feminist theory to uncover the full story of middle-class coloured political identity in the period under consideration, without deliberately writing a feminist history.

A conscientious attempt is made in the chapters that follow to take the impact of language on history into account. De Kock, for example, draws attention to the way "language relates to reality."³⁸ Language is not simply a group of words, it reveals meaning and value. It needs therefore to be used thoughtfully. Ideas such as 'class' and 'gender' become social realities through language. That is, language organises people and society, ascribing them with a social role.³⁹ The words we use in history, influences the 'findings' of an historical project. While using what may be defined as 'weighted labels' in my writings I have tried not to allow my use of language to manipulate the oral evidence of my respondents.

An attempt is made to tell the story of the period under consideration for what it is. In this way I hope to avoid the pitfalls enumerated in Adrian Adam's "Open Letter to a Young Researcher." He warns against imposing "on it [history] either

38. L. De Kock, "People, Power and Culture and the Ethics of Historical Representation," in South African Historical Journal, No. 27, Nov. 1992, p. 245

39. See: J. Scott, "On Language and Working Class History," in Gender and the Politics of History, New York, 1988

a tidier, more glamorous past, or a more dynamic and technological future". He deplores "their [historians] unreadiness to see it [history] as it exists, in all its pragmatic and messy individuality."⁴⁰ While attempting to integrate the oral sources I have consulted, there are unavoidably many loose ends left dangling.

Furthermore, in an attempt to counter any temptation to afford the period under analysis, a more 'sensational' history than it deserves, I take cognisance of Colin Bundy's concern about oral history. While he recognises the importance of oral sources, he argues that the "tendency to 'overprivilege' oral testimony, to assume that because it is first-hand and direct, it is also [necessarily] authentic and unsullied"⁴¹ is an incorrect perception. In other words one must be as critical of oral sources as one is of any other source. "A close encounter may make the voices louder; it does not make the meanings clearer."⁴²

In brief, my concern is to write a 'sensitive' and 'aware' history of the political identity of middle-class coloureds in metropolitan Cape Town during the period 1943-1956. While noting the concerns and cautions as outlined above, I offer a history of 'ordinary people and everyday life', from the perspective of

40. T. Ranger, "White Presence and Power in Africa," in Journal of African History, No. 20, 1970, p. 468

41. C. Bundy, "Report on: People, Power and Culture. The History of Christianity in South Africa, 1792-1992," in KRONOS, No. 19, 1992, p. 209

42. Ibid., p. 209

their lived experiences. In so doing I do not pretend to "produce a scholarship prone to the illusion that it is an historian-free history -- that it is history which speaks for itself."⁴³

43. Ibid., p. 209

Chapter 1

DEFINING THE ROOTS:

EMERGING MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICAL IDENTITY

In this chapter, I attempt to record the social formation of middle-class coloured political identity among males by discussing their social location, family identity and educational influences. In so doing, I highlight the various political forces that shaped the outlook of those interviewed. The emergence of different political identities is discussed in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three it is shown that no single coherent political identity emerged among middle-class coloured males, which prevented united action against the implementation of apartheid legislation.

The complexities of the period under consideration are explored through fifteen random interviews with men. All of the men came from families in which they and their fathers had the vote.

Social Location

The respondents, all resident in the Western Cape, lived during the period under consideration in Beaufort West, Wynberg, Salt River, Woodstock, Claremont, District Six, Plumstead, Diep River, Parow, Rugby, Malmesbury, Mowbray and Rondebosch. The oldest person (John Rust) was born in 1908. The youngest (Henry Burggraaf) was born in 1932. Most remember their earlier days with fondness. A certain sense of romanticism and a measure of

sentimentality is apparent in the recollections. Professor Richard van der Ross reminisces:

I was born in Plumstead in 1921, Cape Town. There was a little house. Its structures were made of wood and iron. Very modest. I don't like the word primitive, but certainly very modest in comparison with what people have today ... We did not have the modern conveniences that we all demand today, there was no running water, no tap. I never knew a tap until I got to about ten years old. Electricity was unheard of, a thing like a bathroom or toilet did not exist. We had a well in the back yard and a pump from which you pumped the water and that is how it went. We all took turns. Yes, we all took turns at pumping the water, bringing in a bucket of water and that bucket would stand in the kitchen. If you wanted water you dipped it out with a mug. You know it was all very much like you still see it in the old movies.¹

The memories of childhood days is often linked to a belief that there was no segregation at the time. "Oh, that time [1930s] when we lived in Parow. It was still very sandy with all those gravel roads. We were living with whites and coloureds. There was no hassles," remembers Reggie Clark.² This is a recurring theme in the interviews. Norman Daniels similarly alludes to the peaceful co-existence of the races. "In District Six we all grew up together [1930s]. There was no attempt to evoke colour. We all shared. We went to the same bioscope, the same dances, the same football clubs. We were all the same."³

Whether there was segregation or not, is not as important as to why those interviewed perceived it to be the way in which they

1. Van der Ross, p. 1

2. Interview with Reggie Clark at his Belsag home, 3/08/94, p. 4

3. Interview with Norman Daniels at the Ou Kerk Building in Observatory, 30/08/92, p. 4

did. Perhaps it can be argued that before 1948, due to little enforced petty segregation, those members of the upper classes had greater freedom of class mobility. This meant that they could live in better areas (often with white families living in the same street), pay a little extra to attend better schools and belong to socially elite sports clubs. However, after 1948 when segregation became law, the state classified everyone according to race, blurring the class factor more bluntly into the race one. In so doing, these people were confronted for the first time with new discriminatory practices.

The economic backgrounds of those interviewed, range from relatively poor to being essentially comfortable, with an emphasis on social mobility. Pitchard observes: "To begin with we were a really poor family. The situation that we were in was that we had a room in a house and there were seven in our family. This was in Wynberg. It makes one laugh to think that ... we stayed in just about every street in Wynberg, beginning with Martin Road, then Maakkilp Road, followed by Ottery Road, Clarence Road and Sussex Road. Each house got better. Eventually we were able to move into a still bigger house, because my sister started teaching."⁴ Hanmer similarly refers to this kind of 'upward' mobility. "I can recall in Salt River when the roads had not yet been built, when farmers from the Cape Flats sold vegetables on their carts. They also sold wood because people still had coal and wood stoves. Then we moved to Woodstock. That

4. Interview with Don Pitchard at his Kensington home, 5/07/94, p. 1-2

was a bit of social climbing, out of Salt River into Woodstock."⁵

Pitchard's reference to his sister becoming a teacher is an important point. Even though his sister's employment probably brought very little extra income into the family, it symbolised responsibility and status stability. In so doing, it would have been easier for her to sign leases and to gain access to loans and credit.

In relation to their parents' employment, most interviewees define their mothers as 'house-wives', alluding to the traditional notion of middle-class women becoming housekeepers. This interesting identification is in line with the "Victorian ideal of women as the 'moral housekeepers' of society."⁶ Ideologies of 'female domesticity' entrenched the 'traditional' role of women, socialising the community into accepting that the women's 'natural' place was in the home. Fathers were, on the other hand, invariably identified in terms of their market skills. They are described as craftsmen, teachers and principals. Hanmer recalls:

My dad probably attended school up to standard three or four. He then went to work. He worked in the post office, as a telegram boy. That was because of the death of his parents. So he learnt to work quite early, but he was quite an amazing person. He had little formal education, but had an enormous interest in reading. He ultimately became a cabinet-maker, learning his trade in Worcester as a carpenter in the building trade. Later he went into furniture making

5. Interview with Tom Hanmer at his Crawford home, 20/06/94, p. 4-5

6. I. Berger, Threads of Solidarity, London, 1992, p. 21

and by the time he came to Cape Town he was probably regarded as a skilled cabinet maker.⁷

Van der Ross, on the other hand, comes from a more educated background. "My parents were both teachers, so in the social structure of that time we were not the poorest. We had a little bit of income. My father, who is still alive, will tell you that he probably earned something like four pounds a month and my mother probably two or three pounds. We lived on that."⁸ Van der Ross continues: "My father then became a school principal at Battswood. To be principal of Battswood was one of the most prestigious positions in the coloured community."⁹ Barney De Vries, in turn, notes that his father, "was quite an important person. He was South Africa's first non-white boxing promoter."¹⁰

It is important to note that all of those interviewed were raised in English-speaking homes, identifying their social location in society. "Outside the home," says van der Ross, "with my friends I spoke Afrikaans. That is where I learnt Afrikaans as a young child. Then I went to Battswood at the age of nine and from there onwards my friends were English, because now I no longer lived in the Flats with the lower classes. Now I was up the line in Wynberg. That was very important. In the coloured community English was the prestigious language, the language you used if you wanted to get on in the world, if you

7. Hanmer, p. 1

8. Van der Ross, p. 1

9. Ibid., p. 7

10. De Vries, p. 7

wanted to show that you were a cut above the rest ... Educated people spoke English."¹¹ Hanmer also refers to this. "My father started off as Afrikaans-speaking from the country, but afterwards became English-speaking in the city. Well, there was a certain amount of social improvement involved in coming to town. It was more English-orientated in the workplace and business situation. The church to which my parents belonged in the city, the Methodist Church, was also mainly English. Again, this had a certain social-standing attached to it. So I grew up in an English home, speaking English. This helped me in later life. It was definitely the social escalator up."¹² Those interviewed made it clear: Upper class coloured people spoke English. The lower classes spoke Afrikaans. Kay McCormick in her article "The Vernacular of District Six", outlines why there is this conscious association with English:

English is associated with a middle-class, prosperous life style, with generations of city living, with well-known and prestigious educational institutions. The association is grounded in the history of native-speakers of English being, as a group, in a dominant position economically and, until four or five decades ago, politically as well. ... The second factor is that in the 1950's and 60's, a good command of English was regarded as a necessity for people wishing to escape their classification as coloured, and hoping to pass for white.¹³

In other words, language came to constitute an important class divide within the coloured community. This fissure also had an

11. Van der Ross, p. 6

12. Hanmer, p. 3

13. K. McCormick, "The Vernacular of District Six," in S. Jeppie and C. Soudien (eds), The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present, Cape Town, 1990, p. 95

impact on residential areas, which were to a large extent divided along linguistic class lines. Van der Ross stresses this point. "People from the Wynberg area, from up the line as far as Claremont, Rondebosch and Newlands were the upper class people. They were all English-speaking people. They considered themselves a cut above those coloured people down the line who spoke Afrikaans."¹⁴

Social activities of the family, for most, developed around the church and various forms of entertainment -- with the tennis club often being remembered as a prominent arena for social interaction. "We went there to play tennis, meet friends for drinks, to discuss topical issues and to have wonderful parties. Sport was in some ways a substitute for politics. Here we solved the problems of the world -- perhaps because we never had any real political influence. At least we were able to get some local issues effectively addressed via our clubs" recalls John Rust.¹⁵ Richard Carlese, in turn, remembers that, "we played cricket in the road or on the field. My late father was a cricketer. He taught us the correct strokes and that sort of thing. I also played table tennis. These were the games of the better-class coloureds."¹⁶ Hanmer has similar memories. "Many of our friends were people from the church and the tennis club. My mom, dad and I played tennis. I also sometimes played cricket. My dad used to play bridge too. He belonged to a lodge

14. Van der Ross, p. 6

15. Interview with John Rust at the Calvinist Protestant Church in Athlone, 25/07/94, p. 4

16. Carlese, p. 4

which went out of existence a long while ago. Then there were also people that we knew in the neighbourhood."¹⁷ Hanmer's reference to his father belonging to a lodge is an interesting point. Harry Dugmore, in his study on coloured class and culture in Johannesburg, noted that lodges were important among the coloured elite in Johannesburg during the 1920s and 1930s. He argues that through these institutions the coloured elite were able to gain a 'sense of themselves as a group', as it was through these lodges that "the coloured elite were able to pool its group capital, stave off domestic disasters and, in small but important ways, develop strategies for the material and ideological reproduction of their class."¹⁸ It may be possible that such lodges had similar importance among some middle-class coloureds in the Western Cape. However, since the majority of my respondents did not have lodge connections, this question is not a focus of this research.

Sport functioned as a form of class leisure. Tennis, cricket, bridge and table-tennis were the games of middle-class people. Soccer and rugby, on the other hand, were largely played by lower-class people.

Family Politics

Institutional politics was, for most, not an integral part of the earlier memories of those interviewed -- although the fathers of all those I interviewed had the vote. "I remember my

17. Hanmer, p. 4

18. Dugmore, 'Becoming Coloured', p. 227

father going to vote, but he never spoke politics in the home," recalls Charles Fortuin.¹⁹ Few recall having political discussions with their parents or of being very interested in the politics of the day. "Ah I don't think that my father had much political acumen or anything of that nature,"²⁰ recalls Steven Lochner.

Van der Ross, Sonn and to a lesser extent Hanmer, on the other hand, remember clearly that politics was a central part of their particular upbringing. Sonn recalls that his father was actively involved in politics. "We lived in a small Karoo town and in twenty-five [1925] I can remember my father took my brother and me with him to political meetings. ... Then most of my people, so-called coloureds, voted Nationalist Party. This was in the rural communities, but soon things would change and my people started voting United Party."²¹ While van der Ross remembers sitting in and listening to his father and friends talking politics, "I listened and I heard the way in which they spoke. ... My father and his colleagues used to speak with great respect ... indeed one could say they spoke with awe of the Doctor. 'Die doktor, Die doktor!' 'What did the Doctor say?' or 'We can't do this because the Doctor wont approve.' The Doctor was Dr Abdurahman -- the only coloured leader who got that title."²² Hanmer also recalls political discussions. "I recall

19. Interview with Charles Fortuin at his Belhar home, 3/08/94, p. 5

20. Interview with Steven Lochner at his Belhar home, 20/07/94, p. 15

21. Sonn, p. 1

discussions about political matters. Discussions when people got together at tennis clubs. I heard them speaking about political concerns. There were discussions about the APO [African People's Organisation], which had been founded at the turn of the century, and Dr Abdurahman and other important personages who had become important during the early developments around coloured politics. The tennis club was in a sense our parliament."²³ The APO, founded in 1902 under the leadership of Abdullah Abdurahman, was the dominant political force within the coloured community in the 1920s and 1930s. Its main focus was "to extend coloured education and wealth in order that the 'civilised coloured' population would increase its numerical significance and that the coloured share of the franchise would accordingly be increased."²⁴ This focus on the franchise meant that the interests of the APO remained largely limited to the upper sector of coloured society. As such the "APO failed to challenge the legitimacy of the franchise qualifications or to devote attention to the Coloured working class, who were not eligible for the franchise."²⁵

All those interviewed recall their fathers having had the vote. In some cases, their fathers went out to canvass for political parties. Election days are vividly recalled. "My dad went to vote. I can't recall how often he voted, but he certainly did vote. Voting was a serious business. You didn't go along just in

22. Van der Ross, p. 7

23. Hanmer, p. 7

24. Goldin, Making Race, p. 33

25. Ibid, p. 33

casual clothes. You didn't dress up formally for it, but you definitely went as if you were about some serious business. You know, he certainly didn't go in his overalls,"²⁶ remembers Hanmer. Burggraaf also remembers his father voting. "He used to go and vote, but he used to do it on his way to work. Politics was not really discussed in our family. I wouldn't say we were really politically orientated, but my dad certainly voted. It was important."²⁷

The events of election day were also recalled. "What always used to fascinate us, as children," recalls Lochner, "were these cars coming to collect the people to go and vote. It was always a question of cars moving up and down the road."²⁸ Mike Isaacs remembers that, "election day was quite a big thing. All the bars were closed, we never had TV, we had a radio and the results would come in over the radio. There would be a big cheer in the house if it were an UP win, and a big groan if it was a NP win."²⁹

Most interviewees suggest their fathers voted because they believed that it was their civic duty to do so. "My father thought of himself as a citizen in the country and that he had a say in the country by voting,"³⁰ notes Carlese. A similar sentiment is expressed by Hanmer. "I think that my dad felt that

26. Hanmer, p. 7

27. Burggraaf, p. 5

28. Lochner, p. 8

29. Interview with Mike Isaacs at his Lansdowne home, 17/08/94, p. 14

30. Carlese, p. 7

because he was qualified to vote, he should exercise his vote. I can't recall, however, that it was done with any very strong political awareness. There was a great deal of political passivity."³¹ Lochner comments further: "I suppose he appreciated the fact that he could vote, but it wasn't as important an event as a church festival or something of that nature, which involved the whole community. It was something that had a little bit of significance. Because my father could vote, he did vote."³² Lochner suggests that his father's sense of identity and social belonging emerged from within gatherings that united the coloured community, such as church bazaars and sporting events. Politics divided the coloured community. It separated people, due to the conflicts and divisions emerging from differing ideological stances. It is, however, difficult to penetrate the actual level of political interest in voting that existed in the 1930s and 1940s. Recollections of that period are clearly influenced by recent developments in coloured politics. This is well demonstrated by Lochner as he recalls his voting experiences. "Voting was an event which I could never quite integrate into my total existence. Voting happened over there. Bazaars and other such events happened in the midst of our community. Ultimately I told the politicians to go to hell. I know my father felt like that too. He just never got the chance to express it in the same way that I was able to."³³ Many of the interviewees ultimately came to believe it was wrong to

31. Hanmer, p. 8

32. Lochner, p. 12

33. Ibid., p. 13

vote and certainly Tri-Cameral politics convinced most of those interviewed that they should not exercise their segregated vote. This could have been read-back into their earlier recollections. It is at the same time clear that the commitment to vote among eligible coloured voters in the 1943-1956 period was not vigorously promoted by all those who had the vote. There was a sense in which some at least saw themselves being without any real political influence. Hence Rust's feeling that sport was perhaps more important than politics.

At the same time, for those who voted, it is clearly stated by those with whom I spoke that their fathers voted for the United Party. "My dad would have been United Party. I think most coloureds -- I would say 95% of the coloureds, excluding a little group of the intelligentsia, would have voted United Party,"³⁴ comments James Afrika. Hanmer too reflects on this: "My father would definitely have been supporting the one party which was representing ... English-speaking interests, business interests and which made certain promises to the coloured voters. That was the United Party."³⁵

Emerging New Consciousness

Despite the fact that the fathers of most respondents were not highly politically motivated (with the possible exceptions of Sonn, van der Ross and Hanmer) it would be inaccurate to conclude that their occasional participation in the politics of

34. Interview with James Afrika at his Kensington home, 1/08/94, p. 4

35. Hanmer, p. 8

the day, confined as it was to casting the vote every five years, did not in some way contribute towards shaping the political consciousness and identity of their children. My respondents' political awareness was, however, also shaped by events outside of the home. The younger respondents recall that their schooling had a direct impact on their political development. Charles Fortuin comments:

I was at Trafalgar High School and at that time Trafalgar was very active [1939-1944]. Kies³⁶ and others were there. They spoke to us when we were in standard nine and ten. I would not say we were politically active, but we were more politically aware. In those years we had a very good principal. He had very good control over the pupils and everyone was a bit frightened of him. He had a big mop of hair and I think this made us even more frightened of him. Then he became a member of the CAC or CAD³⁷, the one came first and then the other. I think it was the CAC, but that does not matter. Anybody that was part of government circles was called a quisling. So we called him a quisling and he lost the support of the school. He eventually had no support at all. It was teachers like Kies, the Anti-CAD teachers, who were most influential in this process. They introduced new political ideas into the school. It must have been them who influenced us. I do not know in what other way political resistance could have entered the school.³⁸

Besides schooling, various other political activities in the community influenced those interviewed. Hanmer notes:

I can recall a meeting addressed by Harry Lawrence³⁹ at the Salt River Market during lunch times when the

36. Benny Kies was a leading figure in the Teachers' League of South Africa (TLISA) and in the Anti-CAD movement.

37. Coloured Advisory Council, founded in 1943

38. Fortuin, p. 3

39. Harry Lawrence was Member of Parliament for Salt River. He was appointed the Minister of Interior by General Smuts in 1939,

Salt River workers came across from the engineering works. They came in their working togs to hear Harry Lawrence at the market. I can recall that he used to stand on the water troughs used by the horses, just to gain a little more height. There were no microphones or anything sophisticated like that. So he would have to shout to get himself heard against the traffic on one side and the police on the other side.⁴⁰

Political formation has many ingredients. Certainly the political identity and consciousness of my informants were shaped in diverse ways. This is amply demonstrated by their involvement in subsequent events. All of them, with the exception of De Vries who became a sports journalist, entered the teaching profession at post-secondary level and started intellectually to grapple with the political and social processes of the day. In this new environment they were introduced to new ideas and challenges. "New ideas engendered a kind of awareness that was different from that which prevailed in my home as a child. ... People like Kies and others of his ilk, opened our minds to what was happening,"⁴¹ Clark recalls. Hanmer too illustrates this point. "I certainly came into contact with a lot of people, young people and somewhat older people who at the time would have been regarded as pretty radical. I used to attend lectures by various small left-wing groups. Some of my friends, close friends, belonged to the same sort of organisations. We attended lectures given by such groups as the New Era Fellowship [NEF]. And then there were groups that sometimes had meetings at the library in District Six, where discussions took place. There were visitors who expressed

prior to which he was Minister of Commerce and Industries in the Hertzog Government.

40. Hanmer, p. 6

41. Clark, p. 16

radical political views. To attend these lectures was very important in my political formation."⁴² Van der Ross comments further. "I went up to UCT in 1938. Coming from a background where everything was on the conservative side I listened and I would go to the talks which were held on Sunday evenings in Canterbury Street. There was a club there called the NEF -- New Era Fellowship."⁴³ The NEF certainly had a very important influence on these young people. In the 1970s it was described in the Teachers' League of South Africa's (TLSA) publication, *The Educational Journal*:

A body that made a major contribution to the growth and the development of this mainly young vanguard was the New Era Fellowship founded in Cape Town in 1937. The NEF was founded as a discussion club committed 'to the spread of enlightenment' on matters of educational, cultural, social and political interest. This open forum was the form finally agreed to after an initial suggestion that the Non-European students at the University of Cape Town should form their own Non-European organisation had been effectively criticised and rejected as a voluntary acceptance of segregation ... Initially very many political currents flowed through it, contributing a wide diversity of political outlooks, attitudes and approaches to be propagated, debated, examined, criticised and evaluated.⁴⁴

It was at this time [1940s] that those interviewed began to challenge and redefine political arguments which had until then been presented to them as more or less unassailable truths. Through these groupings and other political influences such as

42. Hanmer, p. 8

43. Van der Ross, p. 9

44. *The Educational Journal*, Vol XLIX, No 7, April-May 1978, as found in V.A. February (ed), From the Arsenal: Articles from the Teachers' League of South Africa (1913-1980), Leiden, 1981, p. 55-56

protests surrounding the Stuttaford Bill of 1938, which was designed to enforce residential segregation on coloureds, many began to question the politics of their fathers and their generation. Isaacs sums this up:

My father's generation and those before him all thought that the white man was their keeper. They were all APO members at that time. It was only the younger generation, that came after them, who said 'no man you're being led by the nose, you're going to remain like that, you're going to remain the football of these people, these politicians, if you do not put your foot down and do something that is more worth while'.⁴⁵

In so doing, this younger generation probed their own political identity as coloured people by challenging the dominant political structures and perceptions of the coloured community. Van der Ross observes: "Now for the first time you had a group of young intellectuals in the 1940s, coloured people going to UCT ... young university people that called themselves the intelligentsia. This began a new era in coloured politics."⁴⁶ To this generation I now turn.

45. Isaacs, p. 10

46. Van der Ross, p. 8

Chapter 2

SONS TURN AGAINST THEIR FATHERS:

THE RADICALISATION OF COLOURED POLITICS

In January 1943 the Minister of the Interior, Harry Lawrence, announced that he intended establishing the Coloured Advisory Council (CAC). His reasoning is well articulated by J. Du Toit in a National Assembly Debate:

While there was a difference in colour between a European and a non-European, there could be no differentiation when it came to economic questions -- the right to fairplay, decent living and a chance in life ... The concern of the Government was to bridge the gap which existed between itself and the coloured people. There was a special Government Department to deal with matters affecting the Natives, and a Commission for Asiatic Affairs. There was, however, no such provision for the coloured people. He [Lawrence] therefore intended shortly to create a special section within his Department to deal exclusively with matters affecting the coloured people. In addition, a standing Commission -- to be known as the Cape Coloured Permanent Commission -- would be appointed to form a link between the Government and the coloured community.¹

The CAC and Anti-CAD²

It was this announcement that triggered acrimonious debate, politicised existing tensions and threatened further divisions within middle-class coloured politics. "It provided a focus for resistance in an issue which specifically affected coloureds, as certain members of the coloured community insisted that this was the first step towards their political segregation

1. Hansard Reports, 1943, Vol 45, Col 1779

2. Many of my informants refer to the CAC as CAD, due to their perception that the body was similar to a Department of Coloured Affairs.

which would culminate in their disenfranchisement."³ They believed that the CAC was the equivalent to a Coloured Affairs Department (CAD), which was in turn similar to the Department of Native Affairs. However, in attempting to explain the intended policy the United Party insisted, "that the sole object of this [policy] was to improve the lot of the coloured community."⁴

Explaining divisions within the coloured community which were precipitated by the imposition of the CAC, van der Ross points out that it "caused the biggest split ever in the coloured community,"⁵ with some people becoming part of this new body and others actively organising against it. It was a breach that ruptured friends and families alike. Van der Ross tells his story:

Because of my father, who became a member of the CAC, those against it dismissed me, because I unlike my brother refused to stand on a platform and publicly attack my father. That hurt me very much, as one can disagree in the privacy of your home with one's father, but it is disrespectful to do what my brother did and I refused to do that. This kind of stuff was not only happening in our family, but was causing rifts and divisions in many families and indeed the entire community. It was son against father and friend against friend. It caused very deep scars that are still with us today.⁶

The only thing that these divided groups had in common was that both were dominated by teachers. "Teachers always took the lead. They had the education, they had sufficient spare time. They had

3. Goldin, Making Race, p. 73

4. Hansard Reports, 1943, Vol 45, Col 1780

5. Van der Ross, p. 11

6. Ibid., p. 10

time to read and they were respected because they were articulate."⁷ However, van der Ross's account underscores the fact that these political struggles were a preserve of the middle-class strata of the coloured community, divorced from the majority of the people. Afrika highlights this factor by arguing that "the weakness of the intelligentsia or coloured intelligentsia was that they spoke in very high language, in a type of English which made sense to the educated but not to the grassroots. The grassroot people were more concerned about keeping body and soul together, making a living. And the majority of them spoke Afrikaans."⁸ He and other respondents trace the present divisions in coloured politics to the class divisions that underlay the emergence of the coloured intelligentsia. Afrika points to the "definite class division" still within the coloured community today. "The upper class, better educated, largely English-speaking coloured simply cannot bring himself to vote for the NP. We still see them as the boere."⁹ It is this factor which raises the theme concerning the actual influence that urban middle-class ideas had on the broader population -- an issue raised earlier. The growing gap between the English-speaking intelligentsia and the masses, later to be further exploited by the State and those within coloured politics who chose to work with the State, would continually be exploited.

7. Ibid., p. 9

8. Afrika, p. 1

9. Conversation with James Afrika subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 1/08/94

Those who participated in the CAC, such as Sonn who was one of the first appointees to this committee, today concede that "the council was just a dummy council. ... It was a council that the United Party just used for their own ends."¹⁰ As one still living his history, Sonn at the same time justifies his participation by stating that "I was a member of the CAC, in the hope that I would do something for my people not for myself."¹¹ Another supporter of these developments was Carlese, who explains that "when one has been in a situation like we had been in over the years, you become scared and you followed a line which you hoped would bring you where you want to be. So I did support the CAC and the people of the CAC. I had a lot of respect for them, I looked upon them as leaders."¹² However, most of my informants were against the CAC, which they claimed represented the position of the majority of middle-class coloured men. This position is eloquently summed up by Lochner, who maintains that "the CAD was formed because the government wanted to make sure that it continued white power. They had to get rid of the coloured people, but at the same time they had to still be seen to at least be giving us something, so as to keep resistance down. CAC was also a smokescreen to confuse international people."¹³ In other words, the government hoped that the CAC would have a veneer of consultative powers. This caused deep resentment and hostility towards those who were

10. Sonn, p. 9

11. Ibid., p. 9

12. Carlese, p. 13

13. Lochner, p. 17-18

serving on the council. Apart from the fact that they were regarded by many as stooges who were "being used by the government of the day to entrench the coloured people's separateness,"¹⁴ they were also perceived by others as "feathering their own nests."¹⁵ "They weren't part of us at all. It was a salary, it was a job for them -- that's all that it was,"¹⁶ insists Pitchard.

Increasing disaffection with the CAC precipitated the formation in May 1943 of a counter body, the Anti-CAD group. In the words of Clark, "we formed the Anti-CAD, which gave expression to the feelings of the body of people against the council."¹⁷ Hanmer illustrates the intended nature of this organisation. "The Anti-CAD was patently against the Coloured Affairs Department which came into existence. So right from the beginning it called itself Anti-CAD, but it was never an organisation confined to coloured persons. It had contacts with Indian political organisations and it had contact with African political organisations. The All African Convention was also part of this movement. We rejected all forms of racism."¹⁸ The Anti-CAD movement certainly sought a broad base, which cut across a wide spectrum of ideological persuasions. Whether or not its support ran far beyond the confines of the coloured community (and

14. Interview with Dan Neethling at his Wynberg home, 21/06/94, p. 29

15. Ibid., p. 3

16. Pitchard, p. 29

17. Clark, p. 3

18. Hanmer, p. 12

perhaps even beyond middle-class coloured males) is a debatable point. Carlese suggests that "the Anti-CAD people took themselves more seriously than what others took them. They had limited support -- largely among certain coloureds."¹⁹

From the outset, the Anti-CAD group "made it its job to politicise the community."²⁰ It also "taught the kind of lessons that are today widely accepted, which is the need to form organisations. To fight for one's cause through organisations and not as individuals."²¹ It was within this context that the Anti-CAD group declared its qualified opposition to the forthcoming elections. It was decided that "in any constituency where an anti-segregationist stands it is the duty and interest of all coloured voters to vote solidly for him, therefore in cases like Salt River or Woodstock where UP, Nationalist and Communist Party candidates stand, it is the duty of all coloured voters to vote solidly for the anti-segregationist (Communist Party) candidate."²² These attempts to derail the CAC were not entirely successful. According to Gavin Lewis, despite the fact that "the campaign against the CAC was at its peak at this time [1943 election], the failure of coloured voters to heed the Anti-CAD leaders' call showed that they could not mobilise coloured discontent with the CAC in support of radical white candidates." In other words, "the boycott call had little impact

19. Carlese, p. 14

20. Afrika, p. 7-8

21. Neethling, p. 30

22. S. Makone, "Majority Rule: Some Notes," in February, From the Arsenal, p. 69

intentions, but were by no means prepared to countenance a Nationalist victory or support wider radical action."²³ This is an important insight. It alludes to at least some coloured voters realising the crucial significance of their vote. In so doing, they engaged tactical voting. Such voting indicated a certain defensive conservatism among coloured voters. They were not prepared, in the words of Lewis, to "support wider radical action."²⁴

Another pillar of the Anti-CAD campaign was to isolate those serving on the CAC. In so doing Anti-CAD activists promoted a "policy of social alienation ... of those that did not agree with them."²⁵ Dan Neethling, a founding member of Anti-CAD, explains: "We called for a boycott. If those who disagreed with you were your friends they weren't your friends anymore because they were working against your interests. ... We refused to support CAD members. They did not speak for us."²⁶ Carlese, a supporter of CAC, recalls one of his personal experiences.

I was walking on the Cape Town end of Stanhope Road in the direction of Wynberg. I saw one of the big birds, an Anti-CAD bird, coming along in the opposite direction. I think I spotted him at the same time he spotted me. When he spotted me he crossed the road. He didn't want to pass me on the same side of the street. You know that was so childish and immature. That was the kind of attitude that these people had then.²⁷

23. G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, Cape Town, 1980, p. 217

24. Ibid., p. 217

25. Interview with Reg September at his Crawford home, 29/08/94, p. 2

26. Neethling, p. 33

Sonn also remembers these Anti-CAD practices. "They were anti us, anti anybody who broke their Anti-CAD rules, who had dealings with the government. They became bitter, they were vicious. There was a time when they spat when they passed you. No, they were really vicious, but I never really felt that it affected me very much. I was into survival."²⁸ It is because of such rigid attitudes that some people refused to support the Anti-CAD programmes. Van der Ross states that "I was a very young man of '22 at this time. I did feel that those who were opposing the CAC were politically correct. I could not identify with their cause because of the manner in which they were carrying out their campaigns."²⁹ The politics of collaboration and non-collaboration not only caused much friction within this strata of coloured politics. It would go on to dominate coloured politics in the Western Cape and coloured political identity for many years to come.

The TLSA and TEPA³⁰

At the height of these divisions and attrition within middle-class coloured politics, another political formation emerged. This development deepened the divisions which characterised middle-class coloured political thought and identity. Van der Ross notes:

27. Carlese, p. 13

28. Sonn, p. 10-11

29. Van der Ross, p. 12

30. Teachers' League of South Africa and Teachers' Educational and Professional Association

middle-class coloured political thought and identity. Van der Ross notes:

All of this had far reaching consequences. These radical Turks involved in the Anti-CAD and elsewhere also wanted to gain control of both the APO and the Teachers League of South Africa. In the APO they replaced Dr F.H. Gow [who had replaced Abdurahman's successor S. Reagon in 1942] with Dr T.H. Dietrich an Anti-CAD man in April 1944. However, there was more of a battle in the earlier take over of the Teachers League. The leaders of the League were all old men. Many of them were members of the CAC. There was my father, Golding, Heneke and so on. Teachers were seen as the natural leaders in the community, so in the minds of these young men, these people had to go.³¹

At the TLISA annual conference held in Kimberley in June 1943, this conflict came to a head as "the teachers who were Anti-CAD moved to get rid of the old leadership. We were taking a new road away from the CAD controlled organisation."³² Van der Ross remembers this conference clearly. "There was a hell of a bust up. In my mind it was indescribable. These young men refused to allow the older guard to speak. You could not hear anything. As one got up to speak the others screamed and yelled and howled ... This all left me feeling very worried. I liked what these boys were saying, but I could not accept their behaviour. From then on there was a massive split within the teaching profession and coloured society."³³ Despite these conflicts "to the dismay of most members present, supporters of the CAC captured the executive on the strength of proxy votes."³⁴ Nevertheless, the

31. Van der Ross, p. 12

32. Neethling, p. 35

33. Van der Ross, p. 12

Association (TEPA). "The TEPA was more moderate, seeing to the professional side of education and less to the political side. That was the difference between the TLISA and the TEPA."³⁵ This caused further confusion within the community. Pitchard notes: "In the coloured community, if there is a teacher or principal of a school, he is practically in charge of that community. If you had a problem with a child you turned to this person for help. 'Wat se die juffrou? As daar 'n prinsipaal is wat daar bly, gaan na hom toe.' These people were like the justice of peace."³⁶ Many people, especially teachers, were now forced to decide between two professional organisations. Some felt that "these people [the TLISA] brought too much politics into the teaching profession, with this being detrimental to the education of the children."³⁷ Others felt that the TLISA was correct in what they were doing, as "they made teachers conscious of their own disabilities, the political disabilities of the coloured people."³⁸

The NEUM and CPNU³⁹

These divisions were further exacerbated with the establishment of two further organisations: The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), an off-shoot of the Anti-CAD group, and the Coloured People's National Union (CPNU), which owed its emergence to the

35. Rust, p. 12

36. Pitchard, p. 24

37. Carlese, p. 12

38. Lochner, p. 24

39. Non-European Unity Movement and Coloured People's National Union

take over of the APO by the Anti-CAD. Realising the need to broaden its political base, the NEUM pledged to "forge a black united front against segregation" through a policy of non-collaboration.⁴⁰ However, the "great bulk of coloureds," according to the Simons, "were indifferent or hostile to the idea of unity with Africans."⁴¹ The CPNU, on the other hand, "felt that a principled opposition to segregation was less important than the attainment of urgently needed socio-economic reforms for coloureds," which could be brought about by working with the Smut's government."⁴² They hoped to create a separate coloured identity, independent of that of Africans and more closely aligned to that of whites. "You must understand," Sonn told me, "these people [CPNU] refused to have anything to do with Africans. We were hell-bent, I must confess, to create a separate coloured identity -- separate from whites and separate from Africans. But in the end we were more like whites than Africans."⁴³ Sonn continues by arguing that "there was no culture or ethnic identity that separated coloureds from whites. There was only colour and this we rejected as sufficient basis for providing a distinct difference."⁴⁴ The Simons verify that the CPNU was determined not to become identified with Africans. This, they explain, was why the NEUM, which promoted black unity

40. Lewis, Between the Wire, p. 220

41. J. and R. Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950, London, 1969, p. 544

42. Ibid., p. 208

43. Conversation with Sonn subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 10/08/94

44. Ibid.

(with Africans) never enjoyed mass-based coloured support.⁴⁵ Nasson concurs: "The NEUM's identity, reflecting its social location as an overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois formation distanced from the pressing realities of wages and production, was both overwhelmingly middle-class and intensely intellectual."⁴⁶ These tensions, in turn, resulted in a lasting division within coloured middle-class politics. However, both of these organisations were once again dominated by teachers, thus separating both in many ways from the daily needs of the 'ordinary' people within the community. This factor is clearly highlighted by the Simons: "The teachers who controlled the NEUM [and CPNU] had to cope with grave personal problems. Employed in government and mission schools under a strict disciplinary code, they risked their careers if they joined in direct, physical and potentially unlawful forms of protest. Even the most courageous might hesitate to jeopardize a hard won status and means of livelihood in a society that offered few openings of equal worth to an educated coloured or African."⁴⁷ Hanmer agrees. "Teachers," he notes, "were particularly vulnerable because the authorities had regulations which prevented teachers from

45. Simons, Class and Colour, p. 544

46. B. Nasson, "The Unity Movement Tradition: Its Legacy in Historical Consciousness," in J. Brown et al, History from South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices, Philadelphia, 1991, p. 149. Nasson also identifies the NEUM link with the "dominant liberal intellectual culture of the racially 'open' English-language University of Cape Town ..."

For more on the NEUM see: F. Khan, The Origins of the Non-European Unity Movement, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1976; and R. Gentle, The Non-European Unity Movement in Perspective, B.Soc.Sc(Hons), Sociology Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978

47. Simons, Class and Colour, p. 545

participating actively in politics. It was difficult to address meetings, there were regulations which defined what things you could not do. These included support for a particular political party. You couldn't oppose the government. As teachers all of us were harassed in our jobs."⁴⁸ In summary, teachers were all civil servants who ultimately relied on the State for their subsistence. It was probably this that motivated and directed the responses of this group of people -- whether as members of NEUM or CPNU. "You don't bite the hand that feeds you," observes Sonn.⁴⁹

Political cleavages were not, of course, limited to coloured politics. The confrontation between the NEUM and the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) during this period illustrates the point. The NEUM refused to take part in the CPSA and ANC's anti-pass campaign in 1944 "on the grounds, presumably, of the 'sectarian' nature of the campaign."⁵⁰ Reg September argues: "If they had associated with us [ANC and CPSA], and by 'us' I mean the mass of our people ... they would have been seen as supporting mass politics. This was something that teachers could not afford to do. ... They would have lost their jobs, they would have lost their motor cars and possibly their homes as well."⁵¹ At the same time it is interesting to note that while the NEUM, like the ANC, contended to be non-racial, (with the NEUM, however,

48. Hanmer, p. 13

49. Sonn, p. 5

50. Lewis, Between the Wire, p. 226

51. September, p. 3

viewing the ANC as multi-racial rather than non-racial) "in practice both the NEUM and the ANC failed to escape the racial divisions deeply ingrained in South African society; both organisations energetically agitated over issues which coincided with racial divisions ... By 1948 the polarisation of resistance around the opposed leaderships of the NEUM and the ANC (Western Cape) had led liberation movements in the Western Cape to mirror the racial divisions which were promoted by the state."⁵²

Similarly, there were further tensions within the 'upper echelons' of the coloured community in their approach to World War II and their support for the United Party, which resulted in further fragmentation and disparities within the community. As Sonn shows, some sectors actively recruited coloureds to the military forces. "I recruited my people to go to war through the United Party."⁵³ Other sectors, however, such as the Anti-CAD movement refused to support the war effort as "we were told to fight the fascists, but there was very little difference between what we were fighting abroad and what we found at home. Smuts was practising segregation at home."⁵⁴ The issue of the war produced still further divisions within the coloured community when the CPSA changed its stance on the war, as a result of the Soviet Union entering the War in 1941. "Once the Soviets entered the war, those of us working in the CPSA realised that we had to support the war effort. We abandoned our anti-war attitudes and

52. Goldin, Making Race, p. 59

53. Sonn, p. 7

54. Neethling, p. 30

put our full weight behind the allied forces. We called on all to support the war against fascism," comments September.⁵⁵

The War Effort

Many coloured people were isolated from such discussions. Their concern was survival. They needed jobs and therefore saw the recruitment to the military forces as an opportunity to be seized. "Most coloured people who went to war did so for very practical reasons. They were unemployed or inadequately employed. The intellectual discussions made little impact on them," observes van der Ross.⁵⁶ Rust explains: "The United Party did the coloured people okay. When the war broke out, there was general worklessness, people didn't have work. I had no work, so here was a beautiful way of getting the coloured people work. I joined the army, I became a truck driver at first, at least I was earning something."⁵⁷ Burggraaf, in turn, recalls being in the Princess Alice Home with a foot ailment during this period. "We had to do knitting for therapy. Men did this. We used to do enormous amounts of knitting for the soldiers, because there was the Women's Auxiliary Force, and they used to bring us the wool and we used to knit for the soldiers at war. It's surprising -- I used to be able to knit a man's pullover within a day."⁵⁸

55. Conversation with Reg September subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 29/08/94

56. Van der Ross, p. 13

57. Rust, p. 12

58. Burggraaf, p. 6-7

The result of divisions in the face of war, was the formation of further strands of political thinking and identity which had major consequences on the broader political development of the coloured community. One result was that there was no coherent monolithic identity capable of resisting the attempts by the state, especially after 1948, to construct its own perceptions of a coloured identity. This imposed identity further divided the coloured community and created a greater wedge between it and Africans. The foci around which state-supported middle-class coloured identity was emerging was social and political privilege. The emergence of coloured middle-class leadership was around legitimate and significant political engagement. Whether the actual vote constituted this engagement was not necessarily an obvious point of argument prior to the threat of it being removed.

In wartime, middle-class coloureds were also beginning, in a more energised way, to compare themselves with whites. "The close link which we forged with English-speaking whites during the war convinced us that this is where we belonged -- together with whites. Why should the colour of our skin separate us?" asked Carlese.⁵⁹ None of my respondents spoke of coloured ethnicity, race or culture as a decisive factor in coloured political formation. In so doing they rejected colour as a valid point of distinction between themselves and whites. What separated them from Africans was essentially class. Sonn makes the point: "Talk of coloured culture and ethnicity as a

59. Carlese, p. 6

political category is nonsense. Coloureds are scared of Africans because they fear they will lose the little privilege they have. Coloured culture is actually rather like that of whites. This is who we identify with. We have more in common with them than with lower class coloureds and more specifically Africans."⁶⁰

60. Conversation with Pat Sonn subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 10/08/94

Chapter 3

BEING OUT OF THINGS:

THE LOSS OF MALE POLITICAL FRANCHISE

The inconsistencies and contradictions among middle-class coloured males in the early 1940s became more pronounced in the period leading to the removal of coloured males from the common voters' roll in 1956. Divisions among middle-class coloured males were expressed in the various responses to proclamations of segregation before and after the election of 1948. The essential difference between the NP and the UP at the time, suggests Burggraaf, was "that the National Party told us straight to our face what they were going to do with us, whereas the United Party were underhanded about it."¹ Such perceptions are understood when one looks at the number of 'segregationist' acts passed by the United Party during the period under consideration, such as Act 18 of 1930 which extended the vote only to white women, the 1938 Stuttaford Bill which intended to enforce residential segregation on coloureds, the 1943 Pegging Act which halted all white-Indian property transactions in Durban for three years and the Transvaal land legislation which extended restrictions on property ownership for a similar period².

Carlese, in turn, notes that "many of us had culturally and in terms of social identity become part of the broader white

1. Burggraaf, p. 7

2. Davenport, South Africa, p. 351

community. Now they were throwing us out."³ It was during this period that the significance of the vote came to the fore in middle-class coloured politics. Hanmer comments: "Immediately after the war, in the late 1940s the whole question of the vote was a crucial issue. It was a period of very great ferment, political ferment."⁴ The vote as with so much else in this sector of coloured politics became a divisive issue, especially after the 1948 election.

A Devalued Vote

Between 1939 and 1948 the United Party government passed a number of laws which reduced the number of coloured voters. In 1945 it insisted on compulsory registration for whites (coloured men had the option). In 1946 it introduced a new voters' roll which automatically registered the names of white voters. Coloured voters, however, were forced to re-register and in 1947 the Electoral Laws Amendment Act was passed, which stipulated that a "coloured man who applies for registration as a voter is to appear personally before a police-sergeant, magistrate or electoral officer and demonstrate that he has the required qualifications for the franchise."⁵ All of this "drastically tightened registration procedures."⁶ This resulted in the number of registered coloured voters declining from 54

3. Conversation with Richard Carlese subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 6/07/94

4. Hanmer, p. 10

5. Argus, 2 September 1948

6. Lewis, Between the Wire, p. 211

134 (compared with 493 910 white voters in the Cape) in 1945-6 to 39 110 in 1947.⁷ Daniels tells his story:

When I first went onto the voters' roll, I had to go and apply. I had to go to the police station and explain to them that I wanted to be on the voters' roll and then I was asked by the policeman: "But why do you want to be on the voters' roll? There is no need for you to be on the voters' roll." I remember it like yesterday. I said I wanted to and duly applied. This, of course, was not the practice for the whites. They were on the roll automatically. It took an effort on my part. Many people did not make the effort and they did not get onto the roll. That is where real discrimination began.⁸

Pitchard and Lochner tell similar stories. "I went to register at the police station," recalls Pitchard. "That wasn't nice. For a coloured person to enter a police station was an ordeal"⁹ Lochner comments further: "I and others never bothered even to get registered as voters. The very experience of registering was too unpleasant."¹⁰ This experience seemed to symbolise all that the middle-class coloured males feared most, which was to encounter "that place where skollies inevitably ended up."¹¹ It was also frequently an expression of class resentment. "A coloured like me cringed away from having to encounter an under class Afrikaner policeman, who could not speak English and could not write a coherent statement."¹²

7. L.M. Thompson, The Cape Coloured Franchise, Johannesburg, 1949, p. 55

8. Daniels, p. 4

9. Pitchard, p 21

10. Lochner, p. 29

11. Sonn, p. 10

It was in relation to this kind of abuse and alienation that many believed that their vote had no meaning. It gave them no dignity. "It was a vote that had slowly been devalued over the years," suggests Rust. Helen Suzman comments: "These rights had already been devalued in 1930 by the extension of the franchise to white women, but not to coloured women, and a year later by the removal of the property and literacy qualifications for white men, but their retention for coloured men."¹³ "Anyway," comments Isaacs, "us coloureds could only vote for whites. Whites had to represent us in parliament. We could not vote for coloureds."¹⁴ This alludes to the compromise undertaken during the debate, prior to the passing of the South African Act of 1909, which agreed that certain coloureds and Africans be allowed to remain on the voters' roll in the Cape, as long as they did not stand for parliament. Those who qualified could exercise the vote only by voting for white candidates.

The NEUM and the Anti-CAD movement called on coloureds not to use their vote in the upcoming election. "We told the people that the vote was a dummy vote and that it didn't represent anything serious, so they should not vote,"¹⁵ Hanmer recalls. Clark's recollection is similar. "There was no constructive offering. I knew that and I felt that I could never support

12. Carlese, p. 8

13. H. Suzman, In No Uncertain Terms, Johannesburg, 1993, p. 31

14. Isaacs, p. 10

15. Hanmer, p. 8

anyone who was allegedly representing me in parliament."¹⁶ However, many people felt uneasy about not voting, especially once the National Party released its election manifesto, which made it quite clear that it intended to remove the coloured voters from the common voters' roll:

The coloured people will be represented in the Senate by a white representative who will be nominated by the Government on the basis of his knowledge of coloured affairs. The present unsound system, which allows coloured people in the Cape Province to be registered as voters together with the whites, and to vote together with the whites for the same candidate, will be abolished, and the coloured people will be represented in the House of Assembly by three white members. A State Department of Coloured Affairs will be brought into being.¹⁷

This declaration persuaded many coloureds that they should vote. Afrika makes the point: "I knew D.F. Malan's manifesto. It was an apartheid manifesto and the United Party was against it. That is why I and others voted for the United Party ... I voted United Party to strengthen the United Party vote against the Nats."¹⁸ Others "just continued to do (their) civic duty, feeling that they had the vote and had to use it."¹⁹ "You found," comments Burggraaf, "that there were differences between the English-speaking United Party person and the Afrikaans one. The Afrikaans United Party persons you couldn't trust. They were just the same as the Nats, but I felt the English-speaking ones

16. Clark, p. 6

17. O. Du Plessis, Separate Representation of Voters, published by the Information Committee of the Nationalist Party, 1947

18. Afrika, p. 10

19. Carlese, p. 13

were genuinely with us."²⁰ All of this declares De Vries, "resulted in there being division in the Anti-CAD movement. It was a division between those that voted and those, like the New Unity Movement people, who refused to vote."²¹

The National Party won the election by five seats. Few anticipated the outcome. "Everyone was surprised. We did not think that they would win. In fact we were devastated. They must have organised things very well,"²² observes Clark. Carlese agrees. "You see the Nationalists, while the war was on, were very busy preparing for the elections. They were anti the war, they didn't want it. So they were visiting and campaigning. They went into the nooks and crannies of our country."²³ Others blamed the victory of the National Party on the boycott of the elections by coloureds. "If the Unity Movement people had not advocated a boycott of the elections the Nats may not have won ... The Nats came in with such a narrow victory that there is a school of thought that believes if the coloureds had voted in a greater number the Nats would have been defeated."²⁴ Contrary to popular folklore, Lewis, however, argues that the effect of the boycott is difficult to determine:

Overall it does not seem that the boycott had much effect on election results. Out of sixteen of the Cape constituencies where coloured voters formed more than

20. Burggraaf, p 7-8

21. De Vries, p. 16

22. Clark, p. 7

23. Carlese, p. 8

24. Afrika, p. 1

10 per cent of the electorate, the UP retained power in ten, won one back from the Nationalists, and lost five to the Nationalists. The voting statistics show no appreciable decline compared to the 1943 elections, and in the Cape Peninsula, where most coloured voters lived the UP, in contrast to much of the rest of the country, remained secure.²⁵

Sonn agrees. "They blamed us. They said that we boycotted the election, but it wasn't really that. The honest thing was that the English-speaking white people were disgruntled after the war with the United Party and they went to vote, many of them, for Malan."²⁶ Both the comments by Lewis and Sonn, might however, be open to dispute when one assesses the overall picture of the election. The National Party came to power with only five seats. Five seats were at the same time lost to the National Party in the Cape. These gains were very important to the overall victory of the National Party. Carlese argues that coloureds in the Western Cape could have contributed to the over-all success of the National Party. "The NP went to the coloured people ... I remember one area which was predominantly coloured, returning a Nationalist member to parliament. I am referring to Namaqualand."²⁷ A strong coloured campaign against the National Party may have produced a different result. The different perceptions of the causes of the election outcome in the coloured community could, however, be seen to have had an impact on later political developments in the coloured community. In brief, the divisions that pertained to the coloured community in 1948 have continued to undermine political unity amongst

25. Lewis, Between the Wire, p. 258

26. Sonn, p. 2

27. Carlese, p. 9

coloured people. This has given maximum space to the apartheid government to manipulate coloured politics.

The politics around the election issue deepened the divisions among the political power-brokers within the coloured middle-class. This, in turn, sent confusing signals to the broader coloured community. It had a demoralising effect on the coloured masses, which seemingly contributed to an emerging crisis in coloured political identity. It was a crisis soon exploited by the State. There was no effective and united coloured response to the National Party's resolve to remove coloured men from the common voters' roll.

The Threat of Disenfranchisement

Following the victory of the National Party, a string of oppressive laws were passed, which fundamentally changed the lives of the people affected by them. The foundation of these laws lay in the 1950 Population Registration Act, which classified people into racial groups. Daniels comments:

To define a coloured person you just cannot, because we are the fairest of the fair and the darkest of the dark. You cannot define us. When the government decided to have ID documents you could, if you were fair enough, with a bit of bribery perhaps, become so-called white. It was very important at that time to become white. It was important because your job often depended on it. If you had a job, which was a worth while job, and you had the wrong ID document you could be disqualified. Similarly with schools, similarly with housing.²⁸

28. Daniels, p. 6

Similarly, Burggraaf explains how the Population Act affected his family.

My father was white and my mother was coloured, although I would say she was more white than coloured because her father was a Hollander. But because of her classification, when he applied for his pension ... he was reclassified coloured due to my mother. He never really spoke about it, but I think he must have been hurt.²⁹

Apartheid laws forced people to identify themselves according to the racial classification given to them by the state. The National Party was hoping to construct a separate coloured identity from the seeds already planted by the United Party. It hoped to do this through laws which would enforce tighter segregation. This resulted in further conflict and an imposed identity crisis within sections of the coloured community. Many families became divided with some members being classified as coloured and others being classified white. "Yes, my family was never the same," comments Fortuin, "my sister decided to become white and went to live in a nice house and did not speak to her coloured family anymore. We were now below her. Her white image would have been spoilt if she associated with us. I will never forgive her and other people like her for that."³⁰

The construction of a separate coloured identity was further entrenched by the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950,

29. Burggraaf, p. 11

30. Conversation with Charles Fortuin subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 3/08/94

which imposed compulsory residential segregation. Clark tells his story:

We stayed in Parow. Parow was proclaimed white in the 1950s. Our deadline was 1963. Ratepayers met and said that there are so many coloureds living here, that we could have the Act revoked. The white mayor said that he would have liked to co-operate, but most of the coloureds in the area had already sold without telling anybody else. He showed us which coloured owners were left as owners in the area. The rest were renting. There were about fifty of us left, who had not sold. So we had no option. I stayed for a while and eventually there were only four families left and we were continually harassed. We were forced to sell up at a fraction of what the property was worth. If only the people had stood together.³¹

Clark's story is representative of most coloureds who owned property. As there were no simultaneous mass evictions, there was no coherent or united protest by those who were forced to move. People grudgingly took what was offered for their property and left. Individual protest over individual removal came to naught. There was no broad support. "We simply left," comments Fortuin, "and went to live in the Flats, far away from everything. I hate the bloody Flats, I always have."³² Class divisions were entrenched. The wealthier coloureds moved to areas closer to the southern suburbs. The poorer ones resided in the Cape Flats. Most of those who owned property prior to 1950, managed to buy houses in socially 'better' areas, with easier access to the City. De Vries comments: "We were a bit lucky. We bought in Crawford, which is still close to everything. We

31. Clark, p. 4

32. Conversation with Charles Fortuin subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 3/08/94

didn't end up living in Mannenberg, for example, where the poor were dumped."³³

The absence of united protest by the coloured community highlights the absence of a monolithic coloured identity or political consciousness. Eventually, this lack of political unity can also be attributed to the slow pace in which the Group Areas Act was implemented. Dr T.E. Donges, the Minister of the Interior, noted that apart from the dedication to the idea of separate group areas for the different groups, "the changeover is calculated to take place gradually with the least disruptive effect."³⁴ The state hoped to 'avoid serious disruption' by means of the permit system. As Uma Shashikant Mesthrie, in her study on the Group Areas Act, explains: "On the 30 March 1951, in terms of a proclamation issued under the GAA, the Cape Province became subject to control over the acquisition of property. The idea was to freeze the *status quo* until group areas were declared. All properties henceforth transferred from one race group to another could only be sanctioned by permit. Control over changes in occupancy came as of 26 October 1951 which meant that a new tenant had to be the same group as the previous tenant unless a permit was acquired."³⁵ Daniels recalls:

33. Conversation with Barney De Vries subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 25/07/94

34. Hansard Reports, 1950, Vol 73, Col 2452

35. U.S. Mesthrie, "'No Place in the World To Go To' -- Control by Permit: The First Phase of the Group Areas Act in Cape Town in the 1950s," in E. van Heyningen (ed), Studies in the History of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1994

They said they were making it easier for us by gradually introducing the Act. They started this whole permit system. However, it made the matter worse ... My family knew ... that we were eventually going to be forced to leave the District. So we decided that it was best just to sell up and leave. In this way we would at least be able to buy a place in better area. Others, however, chose to remain. It took something like seven years after the Act was passed before the first group areas were declared. The government were clever. In the District they evicted people street by street. So when one group was leaving others seemed to feel that it would not happen to them. I mean the first people were out in the sixties, but they only finished the process in the eighties. There is no way that one can keep protest alive for twenty years. People went crying, not fighting.³⁶

Disenfranchisement

In 1951, the National Party set out to implement its commitment to remove coloured men from the common voters' roll. The government, however, needed a two-thirds majority to do this because of the entrenched clause in the 1909 constitution. Dugard's observation is clear: "The NP Government was in no mood for legal niceties. It lacked the necessary political support for the unicameral procedure. ... In 1951 it introduced the Separate Representation of Voters Act, which despite vigorous protests by the United Party opposition, was piloted through both Houses of Parliament, sitting separately, and signed by the Governor-General."³⁷

36. Daniels, p. 11

37. J. Dugard, Human Rights and the South African Legal Order, Princeton, 1978, p. 30

Also see J.D. Van Der Vyver, "Depriving Westminster of its Moral Constraints: A Survey of Constitutional Development in South Africa," in Harvard Civil Rights -- Civil Liberties Law Review, 20:2, Summer 1985, p. 291

Coloured leaders, including van der Ross, Golding and others,³⁸ backed by the official opposition in Parliament responded by taking the government to court. The legislation was unanimously rejected by the Appellate Division. The court held that Parliament was obliged to comply with the unicameral procedure laid down in the Constitution when dealing with entrenched clauses. The Government responded by enacting the High Court of Parliament Act (in the normal bicameral way), insisting that decisions of the Appellate Division concerning Parliament were to be reviewed by Parliament itself, forming itself into a High Court of Parliament. Dr T.E. Dönges, the Minister of the Interior who presented the High Court of Parliament Act in Parliament observed that the choice was between "judicial supremacy as you have in the United States" and "parliamentary supremacy as you have in the United Kingdom."³⁹ The Appellate Division refused to be intimidated, ruling that the High Court of Parliament was essentially Parliament (in disguise), and insisting that the entrenched clauses required judicial protection.

The government, still unable to obtain a two-thirds majority at a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament, was not ready to concede defeat. It increased the size of the Senate, by changing the method of electing senators. It also increased the size of the Appellate Division from five to eleven judges. The outcome

38. The Coloured Man Speaks: The Entrenched Clauses, issued by the Civil Rights League, 1950

39. J. Dugard, *supra* note 10, at 33

was a sympathetic Appellate Division and the necessary two-thirds National Party majority in a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. The South Africa Act of 1956 was passed with the necessary unicameral majority and the Separate Representation of Voters Act was revalidated. Coloureds were removed from the common voters' roll.⁴⁰ The Act also removed the clause concerning voters in the Cape Province from the scope of the entrenchment procedure of the 1910 Constitution. In order to remove all confusion, it further stated:

No court of law shall be competent to enquire into or to pronounce upon the validity of any law passed by Parliament other than a law which alters or repeals or purports to alter or repeal the provisions of sections 137 and 152 of the South African Act, 1909.⁴¹

The Act was challenged before the newly constituted Appellate Division, but predictably upheld by a ten-to-one majority. British parliamentary supremacy had been abused in isolation from the history out of which it was born, and needless to say, without regard for universal suffrage as the only possible justification for legitimate parliamentary supremacy.

The Argus reported: "The change in the political status of the coloured people is not the only principle which this legislation will raise. Also at stake will be the moral and legal sanctity

40. Initially, direct representation was replaced with limited separate representation in Parliament, but this too was abolished in 1968. An attempt was then made to channel coloured politics into the Coloured Representatives Council, a body which collapsed in 1980.

41. Dugard, *supra* note 10, at 31

of the entrenched clauses in the Act of Union."⁴² It was on this issue, namely the disregard for the constitution, that one saw a number of protests by the Torch Commando⁴³ and the formation of organisations such as the Women's Defence of the Constitution League (Black Sash). For many "it was not so much a racial consideration as one of constitutionality,"⁴⁴

For many in the coloured electorate, however, the loss of the qualified male franchise was not only a matter of political manipulation. It was also one of deep emotion. "We knew that if we lost our vote, we would be made a stranger in our own country."⁴⁵ However, these events came to many as no surprise argues Clark. "We saw the pattern. In 1936 they removed the Africans from the voters' roll. We saw our turn coming. They wanted to make the electorate white and that was that. Even in 1910 there was no sincerity in establishing a proper basis for the Constitution. All along the line the whites have been cutting down the vote of the so-called non-whites."⁴⁶ Most of those interviewed believe that the motivating factor for the National Party in removing the qualified male coloured voter was that "whites were scared of us. We had the vote and we were

42. Argus, 19 December 1950

43. The Torch Commando, consisting of ex-servicemen, was founded in April 1951 to protest against the removal of qualified coloured males from the common voters' roll.

44. K. Spink, Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa, London, 1991, p. 24

45. Carlese, p. 13

46. Clark, p. 1

making a difference."⁴⁷ "The coloured voters, although a minority on the voters' roll," writes Suzman, "were beginning to play a significant and decisive role in certain constituencies."⁴⁸ These fears are made clear by Malan, in a speech to the National Assembly. He stated:

We have seen recently, that special attempts have been made by means of special evening classes for coloureds who are unable to either read or to write, to teach them just sufficient to be able to comply with this qualification and so enable them to be placed on the voters' roll. But that is not all. With the spread of civilisation amongst the coloureds and the removal of illiteracy amongst them, that qualification is becoming worth less and less ... therefore the coloureds on the same voters' list as the Europeans will gradually have the decisive strength in various constituencies⁴⁹

In response to these attempts by the government to remove the coloured male vote, a number of organisations were formed. On the one hand, there was the Franchise Action Committee (FRAC) which aligned itself with the ANC's Defiance Campaign of 1952. On the other hand, there was the Coloured Convention which hoped to fight the issue on a constitutional basis. The NEUM, in turn, refused to take part in any of these efforts because they "only focussed on the coloured franchise."⁵⁰ Once again the issue was approached in a divided manner. Nevertheless, a number of protests did follow. Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, recalls this period. "The coloured people rallied against the

47. De Vries, p. 8

48. Suzman, In No Uncertain Terms, p. 31

49. Hansard Report, 1949, Vol 67, Cols 2818 - 2819

50. Neethling, p. 30

Separate Representation of Voters Act, organising a tremendous demonstration in Cape Town in March 1951 and a strike in April that kept shops closed and schoolchildren at home."⁵¹ September also recollects that "the FRAC [Franchise Action Committee], among other things, mounted a day or was it a three day strike? I can't remember how many days the strike was, but it had widespread support."⁵² Burggraaf, in turn, reminisces about a liberal protest meeting that he attended:

I remember when they were fighting this removal of the coloureds from the voters' roll. They had a very big meeting in the City Hall in town and all the dignitaries were there. There were also church dignitaries. I remember my own Archbishop was on the stage and quite a few others. Jan Hofmeyr had to give one of the main speeches and I remember he was a bit late because he had been in parliament. There was another speaker busy when he came in. He had just broken away from parliament to come to the City Hall to speak to us. This fellow stopped and announced that Hofmeyr had just arrived and that he would now deliver his speech. He had to leave immediately afterwards to get back to parliament. That was one of the biggest meetings that I had been to in my life. The hall was packed and I remember a thunderous applause when Hofmeyr had finished. He was a brilliant speaker.⁵³

Isaacs recollects that he and his friends did something quite different. "We were wanting to do something. But what?" He explains:

We formed a dramatic society in Cape Town. We were putting on plays that we created and produced. These plays were about the political situation -- about the

51. N. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, Randburg, 1994, p. 115

52. September, p. 7

53. Burggraaf, p. 8

vote going. Then they came along and told us that the only hall we could use was the Woodstock Town Hall. Later we were told we could not have that hall anymore. We were told to go and put on these plays in the Cape Flats. We resented this fact and closed down the show. Secretly we still put on small shows. We told the people what the whites were doing and that our vote was going.⁵⁴

Afrika concedes, "The situation was useless. Nothing happened in response to our protests. It didn't matter what we did, the removal of the coloureds from the voters' roll was inevitable."⁵⁵

At about the same time, van der Ross, who was part of the Coloured Convention delegation to Pretoria, presented the government with a memorandum on 13 November 1950. It declared that the Convention would "resolve to continue, with resoluteness and determination the fight to retain the political rights of the coloured people."⁵⁶ Van der Ross recalls this episode:

Our feelings were running very high. We could not agree to it [the removal of coloureds from the common roll]. As a matter of fact this man Golding, at the insistence of the United Party, got a group to gather in Cape Town one night and we called ourselves the Coloured Convention. We decided to protest and I was given the job of writing the memorandum. We went to Pretoria to see Malan, but Malan was in hospital when we got there. I think conveniently so, and we were met by other members of the cabinet. There the memorandum was read out and we made our protest. I remember very well up there in the Union Buildings, how Mr Havenga said to us: "Gentlemen I ask you to please leave this

54. Isaacs, p. 10

55. Afrika, p. 8-9

56. The Coloured Man Speaks: The Entrenched Clauses, issued by the Civil Rights League, 1950, p. 4

matter with me, I am your friend, you know me. I am your friend, I would do nothing to harm the coloured people." He said that the matter was being dealt with at the very highest level as the matter had been given to the Speaker to decide on how the voting shall take place. He stressed that he was a very fair man. We said we did not think that this matter should be with the Speaker. We told him that we would, if necessary, go to court. He was horrified. "Do you mean to say you are going to take the government of this country to court? Unheard of! Unheard of!" We said "yes". Well the interview ended and the rest is all history now. They continued on their way and we went to court two or three times and in the end we lost. In 1956 the South African Act (Amendment) Bill was passed and our vote removed.⁵⁷

The reaction of the affected people was varied. There was a general feeling of helplessness and frustration. Lochner comments: "I felt that I was no longer part and parcel of the country. What the hell could I do?"⁵⁸ Rust comments further. "I felt like a second, no a third class, citizen. This realisation was widespread, making an impact on people's attitudes and general outlook."⁵⁹ "I decided," states Burggraaf, "that there was no use playing with politics any longer and decided to rather concentrate on educational and church issues."⁶⁰ Another direct consequence of this was that many coloured people, who could afford to do so, left the country. "That is when the 'great trek' of our people began. Many of them felt that they had nothing to live for in South Africa,"⁶¹ suggests Rust. Afrika sheds light on this too. "Many of them left. I was one of

57. Van der Ross, p. 14

58. Lochner, p. 24

59. Rust, p. 5

60. Burggraaf, p. 13

61. Rust, p. 9

the few that stayed behind. Many of our students left the country. There was a feeling of helplessness. What could one do? There seemed to be nothing that one could do to stop the Nats."⁶² Fortuin, who emigrated, tells his story:

I decided to leave. There was no future for my family and I, so we decided to leave. It was felt that there would be better job opportunities for me elsewhere and a better life generally for our children. So we looked around. Many people were leaving. It was said that the best place to go would be Great Britain or elsewhere in Europe. So we went to London. Many South Africans of colour went there.⁶³

The different responses by those affected added further tensions and divisions within the coloured community, more specifically among the middle-class. Sonn comments: "You see things were happening in such a way that we were actually leaderless. Every little group had its own views. Our people were as divided as the parties."⁶⁴ These deepened divisions are commented on by Hanmer:

The people who had participated in government structures were perfectly happy to be on a separate roll. They continued to participate. Much later they would be prepared to serve in a separate parliament. When removed from the common voters' roll and put onto a separate roll, these people made it work.⁶⁵

62. Afrika, p. 3

63. Conversation with Charles Fortuin subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 3/08/94. He later returned to South Africa.

64. Sonn, p. 12

65. Hanmer, p. 15

Sonn, on the other hand, saw things differently. "After the people were removed, they were very frustrated. Some of them went out fighting for their vote. But what could they do? The coloured voters had been taken off the roll and that was final. Others felt that they were treated like non-South Africans. What could they do? Some left the country. Some of us, on the other hand, made the best of a bad situation. We participated in the imposed new structures. But no, we never supported the government."⁶⁶ The stage was set for a new phase of coloured political conflict.

Clearly, the victory of the National Party in 1948, and the subsequent removal of qualified coloured males from the common voters' roll in 1956 had a profound effect on middle-class coloured political identity. The subsequent longer-term changes are beyond the focus of this thesis. The complexity of these events and the pathos with which they were experienced are, however, a pertinent reminder that the pre-1948 period can only be remembered through the filter of those events. Richard van der Ross notes: "The impact of apartheid on the coloured community has been such that one's very memory is distorted by it. We cannot readily recall events prior to 1948 without remembering them through the agony of what the National Party imposed on us in the post 1948 years."⁶⁷ These salutary words must presumably inject a measure of caution into all that has been said in these pages. The record of middle-class coloured

66. Sonn, p 2-3

67. Conversation with Richard van der Ross subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 24/06/94

memory -- however 'distorted', is at the same time part of the political culture that shapes the present and anticipates the future. It is a memory (like any memory) that should not, however, be left without challenge and examination, making it part of the process of continuing renewal.

That task is an exercise beyond this study. What has been recorded is, however, only half of the quest for an understanding of middle-class coloured political identity. We turn now to the contribution of always voteless women.

Chapter 4

ALIENATED BY MALE POLITICS:

THE SOCIAL FORMATION OF COLOURED MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN

Many historians in South Africa still frequently overlook the role of women, operating "on the false assumption that the experience of males is representative of all."¹ Iris Berger notes that "historians [often] generalise from male experience and portray it as the universal norm."² In effect, the voices of women are silenced, their opinions marginalised and their existence scarcely acknowledged. Given this gap in a great deal of South African historical writing, it is important to give particular attention to the aspirations, ideals and opinions of middle-class coloured women during the period under investigation. This provides a basis from which to interrogate the patriarchal assumptions that prevail in history written from the perspective of males alone. What is true for men is not necessarily true for women. In the words of Else Luskey, "[coloured] women felt alienated by male [coloured] politics."³ My purpose is to elucidate the historic complexities of political identity among middle-class coloureds -- of both sexes.

1. J. Fout, "Women's Role in the German Working Class Family," in Fout (ed), German Women in the 19th Century: A Social History, New York, 1984, p. 295

2. Berger, Threads of Solidarity, p. 9.

Also see Cheryl Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa, Cape Town, 1991

3. Interview with Else Luskey at her Diep River home, 23/06/94, p. 6

In this chapter I identify the formation of middle-class coloured political identity among women by discussing their social location in life, giving special attention to class or economic location, family identity and educational influences⁴. In so doing, I suggest that the generally held view that middle-class women are historically apolitical is essentially incorrect. It is rather a case of 'normative' politics having been dominated by males to the extent that women have sought to give expression to their social and political concerns through alternative social institutions and organisations. These include sports clubs, religious institutions and a range of different charities. This specific institutional involvement of women is more specifically addressed in Chapter Five. It is finally shown that while coloured middle-class women were not directly involved in coloured party politics, they showed a significant interest in 'white' politics as expressed essentially through the United Party.

In order to understand this broader political picture, I conducted sixteen random interviews with women. All of the interviewees came from families within which either their father or husband had the franchise. The exercise was intended to identify the views of women with similar social and economic backgrounds to those of the males interviewed.

4. These are categories that emerged from the interviews conducted. In discussions with my respondents which followed the initial interviews there emerged a strong consensus that these three categories constituted the essential influences that impinged on identity formation.

Social Location

The interviewees, all resident in the Western Cape, resided during the period under question in Goodwood, Diep River, Newlands, Genadendal, Wynberg, District Six, Athlone, Bo-Kaap, Claremont, Woodstock, Zonnebloem, Kensington and Long Street in Cape Town. The oldest person (Marlene De Vries) was born in 1907 and the youngest (Pam Bydell) in 1931. Most of these women, as was the case with the men interviewed, have fond memories of their childhood which is sentimentally remembered as a period of time devoid of neighbourhood segregation. Irene van der Ross recalls:

When I was a child in the late '20s there was no segregation or racism in the road where we lived, Second Avenue [Kenilworth]. We lived there and next to us lived a Scotchman and he was married to a coloured woman. But we considered them both white. Next to them lived a Muslim family. Now we'd go to school together, we'd play together and we'd fight together.⁵

Doris Demorny has similar memories:

Yes, there were three white families living in our road. The family next door were Spaniards and we had a Dutch family and an English family opposite us. We got on very well together. We walked into one another's houses freely. There was no sense of apartheid whatsoever [in the 1930s].⁶

Despite these memories of 'living together happily', a few respondents alluded to the fact that there was some segregation and that there were inequalities within their areas. Bettie Theys and Eileen Meyer-Fels vividly recollect that there was

5. Interview with Irene van der Ross at her Wynberg home, 7/06/94, p. 12

6. Demorny, p. 5

separation between the coloured and white families. Meyer-Fels states:

In our road we also had poor white families living next to us coloureds. They always thought they were better than us. We did not mix at all ... except to borrow. They would come to us and ask if they could borrow some sugar. We never borrowed from them.⁷

Similarly, Theys notes that "there where whites in Wynberg, but the coloureds used to work for these whites. We did not really mix that well."⁸ Hettie September, in turn, notes:

Woodstock was very mixed, but there were no Africans. There were different classes of coloureds living there. This was the case in all areas. Whites, however, mostly lived in Observatory. We used to say, 'they live further up'. Economics caused this, they could afford to live in better areas, it was not because of group areas though.⁹

Only September sees the need to emphasise that this 'mixing' of people did not include Africans and that a class structure existed among coloureds within the areas in which they were living. The more general perception of there being no separation between the races indicates, in fact, that a sense of common habitation existed between 'respectable' whites and 'respectable' coloureds. Most of the women interviewed defined their relationship with whites differently from their relationship with Africans. They spoke frequently of their

7. Interview with Eileen Meyer-Fels at her Lansdowne home, 19/01/95, p. 14

8. Theys, p. 4

9. Interview with Hettie September at her Crawford home, 8/02/95, p. 2

'white origin' or 'white-roots'. No one interviewed acknowledged an African heritage. Demorny recalls:

My mother was from Cape Town. Her forefathers were Hollanders and my father was from Fish Hoek. His people were also from overseas. We have a lot of white blood in us.¹⁰

Similarly, Meyer-Fels notes that her father was "an off-spring of an Englishman,"¹¹ while Theys recalls that "my grandfather was an English soldier"¹² and Carlier stresses that "my daddy's father was a Hollander."¹³ Any 'African roots' (whether Khoikhoi, Xhosa or other) that may have existed were forgotten. As Theys emphasises "we coloureds are definitely not African."¹⁴ The sense of un-Africanness can be understood, suggests September, "in that there were not many Africans living in the Cape [in the 1930s and 1940s]. When did we see Africans?"¹⁵ September's perception is given weight by the comparatively low African population presence in urban areas in the Western Cape in these decades. While whites counted for 183,046 of the population, Africans only represented 16, 450 of the population, whereas coloureds were put at 169,392.¹⁶ Peter Abrahams in his novel The Path of Thunder (first published in 1948), through his

10. Demorny, p 1

11. Meyer-Fels, p. 1

12. Theys, p. 2

13. Carlier, p. 1

14. Theys, p. 3

15. September, p. 3

16. Union of South Africa, Population Census, 1936

character Mako, also tries to explain the reasons why coloureds identified with whites. He explains:

They [coloureds] have no real roots of their own. Not the past, nor the tradition of the white or of the black. That is why they try to grade upwards. The whites are in power, they control everything. There is a disadvantage, the colour bar, in grading towards the Africans so they grade toward the white. A half-caste writer called them 'marginal men'; he was right. An English poet said: 'Only ghosts can live between two fires'; he was right. They are between two fires. They are trying to get out of it. For me, there is the problem of the coloured people. ... They accept the inferior position and try to escape it by trying to become white themselves. You see, it is a slavery of the mind and that is even worse than the slavery of the body.¹⁷

Abrahams's post-war notion of 'marginal men' with 'no real roots' remains a contentious matter. Some of those interviewed cling to roots of their own making. As Joyce Benn suggests:

One's ancestral roots are roots that one's family chooses to remember and most middle-class coloureds in the forties and fifties gained a certain security by recalling their European roots. All this talk of being Griquas, Khoikhoi and the rest came with the next generation. Most of us never really thought of those links.¹⁸

Many coloured people felt located between a proximity to whites and the sense of an increasing African presence in the metropolitan Cape Town area through the war years. Most chose for reasons of social and economic status to side with whites. This sense of identity which came to link coloureds and whites is important in dealing with the question of political identity

17. P. Abrahams, The Path of Thunder, New York, 1948 , p. 86-91

18. Conversation with Joyce Benn subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 2/04/95

within the middle-class coloured community -- especially among middle-class coloured women. This is a theme raised frequently in the interviews and it is a subject highlighted far more regularly by women than men. Here, an atypical September is more willing to speak of African family links than others. "Yes I suppose many coloureds have some kind of African blood in their veins, but most have chosen not to remember where and when their African ancestors fitted in. I suppose it's like that with most people. Poor and socially outcaste family members are forgotten. But today some of our young people like to tell you they are Khoi-Khoi or this or that. It's not like that with the older generation."¹⁹

The women interviewed came from similar economic backgrounds to that of the males interviewed. Their parents ranged from being relatively poor to relatively affluent. This diversity is clearly expressed in the observations made by Meyer-Fels and Carlier. Meyer-Fels remembers the difficult periods:

Goodness knows how we lived, thinking back we must have been very poor. But poverty, as they say, is relative. We didn't consider ourselves very poor, but it was in the depression years [1929-1932] and there were times when we did not have anything at all to eat.²⁰

Carlier, on the other hand, recalls being comfortably off:

We lived in a big house up there in Newlands. It was an old house, very comfortable. I remember its high stoep. It had big grounds. My father planted

19. Conversation with Hettie September subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 8/02/95

20. Meyer-Fels, p. 1

everything in that place. He planted every type of fruit: avocados, grapes, figs, peaches, apricots and everything. So I was brought up with all those things and more. I suppose I was very spoilt. I was given everything I wanted.²¹

There is also a strong emphasis on social mobility. Van der Ross notes:

When we came to Wynberg, we had electricity and lights. In the bathroom we had a geyser which used wood and then my father decided to have a gas cylinder put in the bathroom. My mother then got an electric stove and a washing machine. We were able to get all these things now that some of the children were working.²²

September, too, refers to conditions improving for her family.

We moved from Goodwood into Woodstock. In Woodstock we had a bigger house. We all had our own room. I think it was because of economic reasons. My two brothers were now working. The eldest was a teacher and the other was a court messenger. They would bring their wages home to my mother and then she would hand out pocket money to them.²³

As in the case of the male respondents, economic betterment is related to children advancing into better paid areas of employment. This meant increased family income and prestige. These 'new' professions, not least teaching, provided stability and a regular income.

In relation to their parents' employment, most interviewees, as was the case with male interviewees, defined their mothers as

21. Carlier, p. 2

22. Van der Ross, p. 5

23. September, p. 1

'house-wives'. Most women, however, provided more depth to this broad concept. "My mother worked until she got married and then she become a housewife with fourteen children," states Pam Bydell.²⁴ De Vries has similar memories:

My mommy used to work until she got married. I was the youngest of nine children. My mother couldn't work after that, because who would then look after the children?"²⁵

Theys comments:

My mom was too involved with all us children -- seven girls. I remember the neighbour once saying to my mommy 'I hope that in heaven the Lord provides a 'was bakkie,' [washing tub] because she was always washing."²⁶

Others add a new dimension to the notion of being a house-wife. Annette Lewin notes: "My mommy was our eight children's mother and our father's helpmate and everything that a mother should be."²⁷ Being 'everything that a mother should be' often included increasing the family income by providing services from home. Van der Ross points out:

I would just call her [my mother] a housewife. I only knew her as such, but she was very artistic. She was a dressmaker. She was so good that some people would even ask her to make dresses or curtains for them and they would pay her. She contributed to the family income in a quiet, often unrecognised, way.²⁸

24. Interview with Pam Bydell at her Lansdowne home, 13/03/95, p. 1

25. Interview with Marlene De Vries at her Grassy Park home, 2/02/95, p. 1 (She is not related to Barney De Vries)

26. Theys, p. 3

27. Interview with Annette Lewin at her Retreat home, 13/03/95, p. 1

De Vries, in turn, notes that "my mother was a good baker and some people used to buy bread or cakes from her."²⁹

At first, such comments seem to confirm the established perception of viewing middle-class women as 'moral housekeepers' of society. Many of these women were, however, forced to stop working outside of the home, so that they could care for their large families. This, in turn, leads to speculation around issues of contraception.³⁰ Did these women have adequate knowledge of birth control? Did they have access to the means of birth control? Here, testimony is most reticent. Demorny states the common view: "My mommy never spoke about these things [contraception]. It was simply not decent to do so. The result was that most women did not use it. They simply had more children than they could afford."³¹ There is evidence that many of these women continued to work from home. Many of the families under consideration relied on the extra income brought into the family by these women. It is too simplistic to regard them simply as 'housewives'. From this, one realises some of the complexities surrounding ideologies of 'female domesticity' and 'traditional roles'. For the 'housewife' women interviewed were often significant contributors to the family income. They were

28. Van der Ross, p. 1

29. De Vries, p. 4

30. This matter is further dealt with in Chapter Six

31. Conversation with Doris Demorny subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 31/01/95

invariably forced by economic need into working inside the home as dressmakers, bakers and caterers.

The economic activities of the interviewee's fathers were, as in the case of male interviewees, more readily identified. Fathers were classified in accordance with their market skills. They were craftsmen, bakers, businessmen, ministers of religion, teachers and lawyers. Carlier remembers:

The principal of my father's school wanted him to be a teacher, but he was not interested. He left school and became a carpenter, but then came the depression and there was no work. My grandfather, the Hollander, gave my father a cart and a horse so that he could make a living. He began to sell vegetables and fruit. He eventually built up a very good business and bought his own shop. All the big families in Rondebosch and Upper Claremont used to be his customers.³²

Lewin, in turn, recalls "my father was a Dutch Reformed Minister, one of the first black Dutch Reformed Ministers. We came from Wellington and he got his first congregation in Wynberg."³³

Most of the women interviewed, like the men, grew up in English-speaking homes, again indicating their social location in society. Those who were raised speaking Afrikaans all stress the status connected with speaking English. These women chose to raise their children in an English-speaking environment. This point is clearly expressed by both Demorny and Lewin. Demorny recalls:

32. Carlier, p. 2

33. Lewin, p. 1

We spoke both English and Afrikaans as children. All of us were bilingual. My mother was well educated and she taught us English. She came from a better family, but at home we mostly spoke Afrikaans because of my father. Nevertheless my mother gave me the tool to succeed in life. It was English all the way.³⁴

Lewin similarly notes:

I grew up speaking Afrikaans. I remember always complaining how certain people were a bit snobbish because they spoke English. I also remember at school, if an Afrikaans child did something wrong the principal would be very severe, but not with the English-speaking child. I think it was because the Afrikaans-speaking parent was more docile, while the English coloured was more protective of their children -- being determined that they succeed. I eventually became English-speaking and taught my children English so that they could have a better chance of succeeding in life.³⁵

De Vries recalls that "I spent most of my early life in Genadendal and there everyone spoke Afrikaans. It was like that in most rural communities. My parents, however wanted me to have my schooling in English. They sent me to board with my aunt in Cape Town where I attended Trafalgar High School."³⁶

Carlier, in turn, recalls that "we only spoke English. My Afrikaans was my weak point. We didn't speak Afrikaans with anyone. All our friends were English."³⁷ They emphasises the class aspect connected with the language spoken. "We did not speak Afrikaans. It was only those lower class coloureds, like

34. Demorny, p. 6

35. Lewin, p. 4

36. De Vries, p. 6

37. Carlier, p. 6

the farm workers in Phillipi, that spoke Afrikaans. I knew an old man who spoke about being a 'onse-klas-kleurling' -- all one word! Well, this onse-klas kleurling very definitely spoke English. Our class coloureds were English-speaking. No doubt about that."³⁸

The childhood social activities of the interviewees are fondly remembered. These activities revolved around the family, the church, various forms of entertainment and sport. De Vries and September reminisce about time spent with their families. De Vries recalls:

My father believed in us playing together. We had a horse and we all rode on it. We had bikes and he saw that there was a garden and a dam. We all played in the garden and swam in the dam. We played very well together.³⁹

September remembers:

My mother, on summer nights when the moon was shining, would play games with us -- ball games and hop-scotch in the sand. She also played tok-tokkie, nothing sophisticated. We had to entertain ourselves and then she would sing so beautifully to us.⁴⁰

Clara Scott recollects moments spent with friends:

I loved to go dancing with my friends. I had a lot of boyfriends. We would go to the city hall to the dances. I was seventeen or eighteen then and my mother would stand there at the corner with a big stick and she would hit me right from that corner to our house.

38. Theys, p. 5

39. De Vries, p. 2

40. September, p. 4

But then the next week I would go to the dances again.⁴¹

Theys, in turn, remembers:

I loved to go to Kalk Bay beach with my friends. We were known as the Kalk Bay splash by all the boys. There used to be a big platform on the beach and all the bands used to play from there.⁴²

The most prominent form of entertainment seemed to be sport. Watching cricket and playing tennis was a favourite pastime. Carlier recalls:

We all played tennis. Even my mother tried to play tennis, but it did not work. Let me tell you a little joke about that. When my mother was going to serve the ball somebody else had to pick it up and give to her. Then she would hit it. She just wanted to think that she was part of it. My father, however, played not a bad game. I am the one though that loved tennis the most and in fact I became very good at it. I won several championships. Apart from the tennis, I liked to watch cricket. I used to go with my father.⁴³

These sporting events were important places for social interaction. Naz Ibrahim observes:

I met my future husband on the tennis court ... I went to my sisters' tennis club and I saw this guy playing tennis. He was the most handsome chap in the world -- bronzed, physically attractive and very cute. We met at the tennis party that night. Soon he became my husband. We married in 1949.⁴⁴

41. Interview with Clara Scott at her Hanover Park home, 23/02/95, p. 4

42. Theys, p. 9

43. Carlier, p. 4

44. Interview with Naz Ibrahim at her Gatesville home, 24/02/95, p. 5

Most women, as was the case with the men interviewed, associated sport with the class to which they belonged. De Vries points out:

I belonged to the Ivy Tennis Club in Paarl. It was a very well known club with the best players. If you played tennis that generally meant that you were from a good and respectable family. But if you belonged to the Ivies -- I mean then people thought that you were it! It was the most prestigious tennis club in the Cape. Many white families belonged to this club -- it was all very prestigious!⁴⁵

Similar sentiments are expressed by Carlier:

Not just anybody played tennis and cricket. It was for the wealthier people, for decent class coloured people. I don't really know why, but it was. There was also a lot of mixing in these clubs, many whites belonged to them. These clubs were very respectable places. A few Muslim and families also belonged. We all played together.⁴⁶

Sports clubs not only functioned as an important form of class leisure among middle-class coloureds. They also presented an arena in which middle-class people from different backgrounds were able to interact. The presence of white people at a particular tennis club to which this group belonged came to be seen by both De Vries and Carlier as important. "Most better class coloureds," notes De Vries, "liked playing tennis with better class coloureds and with whites. It's just the way it was."⁴⁷

45. De Vries, p. 3

46. Carlier, p. 5

47. De Vries, p. 4

Family Politics

The recollections of most women interviewed concerning political events and issues are less vivid than that of the men. Issues like the vote, election day, political movements and meetings were not significant occurrences of the childhood memories of most of my informants. Benn, Theys, Bydell and Carlier do, however, have some remembrance of political encounters.

Joyce Benn recalls:

Politically my father was what one might call a very conservative man, but then when we were growing up there was no political alternative. If you were considered to be leftist in politics you were United Party. My dad had the vote and he was a very active canvasser for the United Party in Pinelands for Captain Du Toit. He went door to door canvassing.⁴⁸

Theys notes:

There was not much politics in the home, my uncles were involved because they were teachers. My dad did vote. That was a big thing for him. He voted UP. I know that as there was no coloured party then. I remember that our neighbour, Mr Smith, was Nat. You should have heard the way that the family spoke about him because he voted Nat. On voting day they would all be fetched in a car and they went to the town hall. They voted there ... but not the women.⁴⁹

Bydell, on the other hand, remembers her mother voting:

My mommy had the vote as she had white blood in her. I think her mommy was French so my mommy was classified white. She was on the voters' roll and she voted for the UP.⁵⁰

48. Benn, p. 2

49. Theys, p. 3

Carlier reminisces about attending political gatherings with her father:

My father was quite the politician. He was a APO man. I used to go with him to APO meetings in town. He was a very good chairman. My mother never really went with, as she was not really interested. She preferred to stay at home.⁵¹

These recollections are, however, not representative of those interviewed. The most common response was that, "in our home my mother and father weren't active in political organisations and we did not speak politics."⁵² Alternatively the response would be "politics was for men".⁵³ Luskey highlights this position:

Women didn't have an interest in politics and generally the older people did not want children in their company. I remember when my grandfather spoke politics with my father, us children and my mother weren't allowed to come near the door to listen. Things were different then.⁵⁴

The notion of women not being concerned with politics emerged as a common theme in my interviews. Most women were nevertheless aware of the political issues that directly affected them. "My mother knew what was going on, she was aware. She read the newspapers and listened to the radio," comments September.⁵⁵

50. Bydell, p. 1

51. Carlier, p. 5

52. Lewin, p. 4

53. Interview with Theresa Lawrence at her Walmer Estate home, 7/07/94, p. 5

54. Luskey, p. 7

55. September, p. 2

"No, we were not involved in party politics, but this does not mean we were indifferent to the concerns around us," says Theys.⁵⁶ "We addressed these concerns in other ways."⁵⁷

The main concern of my respondents, besides their families, was welfare and charity work which was often expressed through their involvement in churches. De Vries recollects that "my mother used to have a bazaar table at the church. She was very interested in the church and when there was a bazaar she used to make cakes, scones, clothes and ornaments."⁵⁸ Demorny, in turn, notes that "besides being an ordinary house-wife, my mother worked in the church organisation -- in the sewing guild. They used to make things for the poor."⁵⁹ Lewin recalls that:

My mommy was a very big worker in the church -- after all she was the minister's wife. She was very active and I remember going with her on a number of trips when she used to have prayer meetings in various homes. She would also spend the whole week, before the Saturday morning bazaar, baking cakes and sweets. The house always smelt so sweet and warm on those occasions.⁶⁰

An important question emerges as to why were women seemingly uninterested in political parties, gatherings and activities, while dedicating so much time to charity, welfare and church organisations? Vicky Randall's study on women and politics shows

56. Theys, p. 4

57. Ibid., p. 5

58. De Vries, p. 3

59. Demorny, p. 1

60. Lewin, p. 2

that there is substantial evidence that "suggests that women's political participation, conventionally defined, is everywhere [world-wide] less than men's"⁶¹ This suggests that the apparent lack of interest in politics by middle-class coloured women is not a unique aspect to this group of women. It must be seen in a broader context. In other words, the seemingly apolitical stance of coloured middle-class women cannot simply be attributed to the 'anti-female' attitudes among middle-class coloured men. Nor can it merely be attributed to women's involvement in domestic duties which left them with no time for active political engagement. The reason needs rather to be sought elsewhere. The question needs to be asked whether mainstream political activities (political discussions, attending political gatherings or supporting political parties) are the *only* means through which women can express community political consciousness.

The reason for women not participating in political parties may well be that established political organisations were "too narrowly conceived around particular male defined economic and political issues to adequately reflect women's concerns."⁶² As a result, the political agendas of these organisations made little impact on the lives of women. Differently stated, women probably experienced greater freedom to give expression to their concerns in church groups, sports clubs, welfare organisations and women's groups than in male dominated political parties.

61. V. Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective, London, 1987, p. 57

62. Berger, p. 8

September observes: "It wasn't easy to give expression to your political concerns as a woman when men were dominating the political scene."⁶³ The mere fact that these women could not exercise the vote underlined the patriarchy of the political system. "I thought, to hell with them. I will spend my time and energy where I do not have to deal with a bunch of domineering men," notes Lewin.⁶⁴

To appreciate the significance of this, one needs to broaden one's understanding of what constitutes political awareness and political participation. To quote Randall: "There are other kinds of activity that intentionally influence the making of public policy. We need in particular to consider what can be called *ad hoc* politics, not fully integrated into the formal political process or institutionalised, *protest* activity directed against existing regimes and a range of political activities falling somewhere between these. *Ad hoc* participation means participation in political campaigns that are relatively short-lived, throwing up makeshift organisations and tending to rely on direct tactics such as pickets, squats and self-help projects. Typically, too, they focus on issues of local or community concern."⁶⁵ Historically these '*ad hoc*' activities have been for many women the only vehicle through which to express their individual identity and culture. However, this form of political engagement is often overlooked by male-

63. September, p. 6

64. Lewin, p. 8

65. Randall, Women and Politics, p. 58

dominated political organisations. When it is recognised it is frequently dismissed as being "less authentic than that of men, and based on relatively unsophisticated political understandings."⁶⁶ These perspectives dismiss women as politically naive and apolitical. Such understanding is reinforced by dominant arguments which, in the words of Siltanen and Stanworth, maintain that the "private is apolitical and that women are private beings, ... [placing] women in a marginal relation to the public and the political."⁶⁷ Such understanding is, however, too simplistic in that it "fails to address the political nature of the private, and implies that women are defined exclusively by the private sphere and men not at all."⁶⁸ In other words, the politics of the private domain impinge on the public, as do the politics of the public influence the happenings in the private sphere.⁶⁹

Most of the women interviewed recall events or influences of a profoundly political nature that had a direct effect on their childhood and early family life. This is portrayed by Demorny,

66. J. Siltanen and M. Stanworth (eds), Women and the Public Sphere: A Critique of Sociology and Politics, New South Wales, 1984, p. 186

67. Ibid., p. 195

68. Ibid., p. 208

69. See also: M. Currell, Political Women, London, 1974; D.B. De La Chungara, "Women and Organisations" in S. Delamont, The Sociology of Women, London, 1980; L. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," in The Journal of American History, No 75, Vol 1, 1988; M. Perrot, "Women, Power and History," in M. Perrot (ed), Writing Women's History, Oxford, 1994

Lewin and De Vries. Demorny, who continually states that "I am not interested in politics," clearly remembers:

Something really hit my father badly. I recall this very clearly. He was a keen hunter. He used to love to go into the mountains around Fish Hoek and shoot rabbits. Then my father was told that if he wanted to have a gun he would have to get a 'white pass', which would mean that he would have to give up his whole family. He decided to stick with the family, but he was very disappointed that he could no longer go hunting. This made a lasting impression on me.⁷⁰

Lewin, in turn, recalls:

I remember when my father was a minister at Noordhoek. The church said that they did not have any more money left to pay him and got rid of him. This was because he was a black person. It was all political. It was the beginning of the separation within the DRC which my father served. That is something that I have never forgotten. It hurt me terribly as a child to see my father having to leave the church and become a hawker. I was in standard seven then and when I had finished writing exams I went with him to hawk. It did not bother me that I was a girl doing it. I enjoyed helping my dad. Then my mommy was forced to go to Fish Hoek to do char work. She was not used to doing this kind of work. I sometimes helped her.⁷¹

De Vries recollects the National Party coming to town:

I still remember when they said that Smith of the NP was coming to our town [Genadendal]. As children we thought that a wonderful person was coming. Then came this short, thin man wearing old veld skoene. As children we were all so disappointed as we were expecting this tall, strong and powerful man -- someone who looked like a king to come walking through our main street.⁷²

70. Demorny, p. 2

71. Lewin, p. 3

72. De Vries, p. 4

These disclosures indicate that the women interviewed were concerned and aware of 'political' matters surrounding their childhood, despite suggesting that their families were not "interested in politics."⁷³ They seemed not to define these insights as political, because they themselves were alienated from mainstream politics.

Education

The childhood of most women interviewed was seemingly not directly influenced by the political events of the time. It would, however, in continuity with what has already been argued, be incorrect to deduce that these women did not have a political consciousness. That political consciousness emerged through personal experiences and encounters. The mere knowledge that their father was able to exercise his vote and that their mother was involved in a number of community organisations outside of the home would have influenced the creation of their political identity.

Events outside of the home must also have contributed to their political perspective. Most respondents (unlike the men interviewed) do not, however, openly recognise the extent to which influences beyond their family (their schooling and work exposure) had an impact on their political identity. Benn is an exception.

I grew up in the Anglican church and I stayed there
until I started thinking for myself. When I went to

73. Ibid., p. 3

Trafalgar, for the first time, I came into contact with ideas other than the ones with which I grew up with.⁷⁴

Carlier's memories of her schooling are more representative of the respondents. She recalls:

I started at a private school with Miss Isaacs up there in Claremont. She had a private school and I was there until standard three. It was sort of a middle class school with a mixture of whites and coloureds. Then came some segregation and Miss Isaacs had to close the school. Those on the wrong side went into town. I went to Trafalgar. I went there in standard five and I stayed there until I passed standard ten. I loved my time at Trafalgar. I played a lot of sport and did not worry with politics.⁷⁵

Meyer-Fels tells of her encounters:

I went to a Catholic school. I decided to become a Catholic, converting from the Anglican faith. I went to a Catholic Convent and my mother didn't have to pay school fees. That was very important in my conversion. There was no politics in the school and everyone played together.⁷⁶

It can, nevertheless, be argued that educational experiences did influence the political thinking of the respondents. The mere recollection that one "did not worry with politics" or that there "was no politics in the school" indicates that one either had to take a conscious decision not to participate in the politics within the school or to adopt an apolitical position which contradicted the actual school experience. In addition, Carlier's contention that policies of segregation resulted in her Claremont school closing down must also have had a direct

74. Benn, p. 2

75. Carlier, p. 2

76. Meyer-Fels, p. 2

impact on her political perceptions. In other words, the political consciousness and identity of those interviewed was moulded in incongruous ways.

After leaving school, the majority of the informants became teachers. However, unlike the men, most did their teacher training after completing a standard eight certificate. Demorny explains:

In those years we were not very good teachers because our education was so poor. We only had to go as far as JC, [Junior Certificate] and then we could teach.⁷⁷

Van der Ross continues by recalling her first encounter with teaching:

I walked into my classroom in January 1926. I was sixteen. I tried to look very mature. In college I had long pigtails. That was okay. Now I was a teacher. So I rolled my hair into a bun with hair pins and tried to look really grown up. I took a deep breath and I walked into my classroom.⁷⁸

De Vries explains the reasons why women especially, became teachers at such an early age:

I did my standard eight and then my teacher's certificate. You see in a big family of nine children, when one finished one had to go and work so one could help the others at home. The girls were always the first to start working as the boys were given the chance to better their qualifications. I was sixteen when I started teaching. When I started I got four pounds and something a month. I would pay board and send the rest to my parents.⁷⁹

77. Demorny, p. 4

78. Van der Ross, p. 3

Theys concurs: "I went to standard eight and left school. Lots of girls left at standard eight. Only the boys went a bit further. Parents just felt that it was more important to use the little money they had to better the boy's education."⁸⁰ These memories of having to leave school, possibly before an elder brother, must have reinforced the gender stereotypes that prevailed in society. These women were forced to accept that their brothers would eventually be the head of a household and would need the extra income to provide for his family. Money spent on them as women was seen as a waste. They would eventually get married, with their husbands taking care of them on the basis of a male 'family wage.'

Carlier highlights a sharp status distinction between women teachers who trained at a teacher's training college and those who went to the University of Cape Town for their training.

I remember as I grew up my father said that I could do anything. Since my two cousins were teachers, I wanted to be a teacher. So my father said that I could be a teacher, but not one like my cousins as they had no real education. They only had a standard eight. I was not allowed to be one of those ordinary teachers. My father sent me up to the university to get a BA.⁸¹

Carlier's disclosures highlight the divisions surrounding the teaching profession. There was a clear distinction between those who gained a Junior Certificate, followed by a Teacher's Certificate and those who acquired a university degree. This was

79. De Vries, p. 5

80. Theys, p. 5

81. Carlier, p. 11

overwhelmingly a gender distinction. In general, it was primarily those children from wealthier families who could afford to attend university. The vast majority was forced to take the other route and where money was available for university education, it was invariably the boy who attended university. Farima Thuisiers comments:

In my family all the children became teachers. My sister and I did the Junior Certificate followed by the Teacher's Certificate, but my two brothers went up to UCT. I think my parents felt that it was more important for my brothers to become better trained teachers than us girls. I also don't think they could afford to send all four children to university.⁸²

Those women interviewed who did not become teachers, became seamstresses, hospital workers, secretaries, washer women and shop assistants. They constituted a third social group among coloured women. Some who had the opportunity of becoming teachers, chose otherwise. Lawrence notes:

I was doing a teaching course, but then I failed and my mother said that I could not continue as I had too many boys in my head. So I took up a shorthand and typing course, but then after that somebody offered me a job as a seamstress.⁸³

Scott recalls:

I left school in the second term of standard eight because my mother wanted me to be a teacher. My whole family were teachers and one of them was a minister, but I didn't want to be a teacher. I wanted to be a nurse. At that time my mother did not want me to sleep out of the house and nursing required one to stay at Somerset Hospital. My mother would not allow me. She was very strict. So I investigated other options. I

82. Interview with Farima Thuisiers at her Kensington home, 8/08/94, p. 6

83. Lawrence, p. 5

did char work and eventually ended up working at a laundry for thirty-one years.⁸⁴

This kind of exposure expanded the experiences of these young women. Interestingly, nearly all the married women interviewed married teachers. De Vries is the only exception. "My husband started off in teaching," comments De Vries "but he lost interest because of the pay. He therefore started his own business."⁸⁵ Their marriage to men who were involved in the teaching profession would also have introduced them to further ideas. Meyer-Fels comments:

Yes I knew all about the TLSA, NEUM, Anti-CAD and so on, because my husband was a teacher and he was involved in all of that. I went to their dances and parties, but never took part in their politics. I always had this tremendous inferiority complex when I was in their company, as they were all teachers. Most were men. They were all intellectuals. They understood politics. I don't think they had very much patience with people like me who didn't talk their kind of language, who didn't talk politics.⁸⁶

Despite this exposure, most women did not seem consciously to realise the political influences to which they were being subjected. Alternatively, perhaps because of the patriarchal nature of politics, they chose not to acknowledge what was happening to their perceptions.

This possibly explains why most of these women interviewed did not feel the need to challenge the politics of their fathers'

84. Scott, p. 4

85. De Vries, p. 5

86. Meyer-Fels, p. 1

generation in the same manner as their male counterparts. This is especially the case when one reduces politics exclusively to electoral politics. From this, women were alienated. The franchise was never extended to them. Electoral politics was dominated by males. Luskey makes a telling observation: "Women didn't have the vote and therefore they didn't take part in politics. They simply left that side of things to the men. It didn't even occur to most of us that we should have the vote. It was a male thing."⁸⁷

The younger generation of middle-class coloured males confronted the prevailing political structures and beliefs of society. The majority of middle-class coloured women were elsewhere engaged. It is to these activities that I now turn. They contain both a latent and an overt political content.

87. Luskey, p. 10

Chapter 5

LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES:

CHURCHES, CHARITIES AND SPORTS CLUBS

The conflict that scored middle-class coloured politics during the period, 1943-1956 (noted in earlier chapters), made its impact on women no less than it did on men. That impact was, however, manifested in rather different ways. These included involvement by women in alternative social structures which provided them with a social space for community and political engagement.

It is important to recall that the main political and organisational divisions that emerged at the time were essentially the concerns of the educated elite. The vast majority of working coloured people were both uninterested and unaffected by these developments. In September's view:

Many of us were not very interested in those issues. I really don't know why, but I suppose it did not affect us. It only really interested the teachers. The intellectuals were fighting among themselves, but this made little impact on the majority of coloureds. The majority of the coloureds were not part of this educated group of people. They had to work to keep the wolf from the door. They did not have much time to sit around with the intellectuals and talk.¹

Women and Coloured Middle-Class Politics

The majority of the women respondents were unconcerned about and indifferent to organised politics among the middle-class sector

1. September, p. 4

of the coloured community. They were therefore less directly affected by the emergence of CAC, Anti-CAD, NEUM, CPNU and similar organisations. Most recall the general divisiveness of coloured politics at the time and some expressed support for a particular political grouping. The majority, however, failed to show much interest in the political disputes in the same manner as males. Irene Van der Ross' reflections confirm this:

There was so much Anti-CAD stuff going on and the feelings around were ugly. You got these people trying to do what they thought was right. Then there was a break away element among the Anti-CAD supporters. It was not a nice situation. I tried to keep out of these conflicts -- not to become part of them. If I met you and I knew you were Anti-CAD I'd do my best, trying not to be forced into an argument. It was really only the men that got so hot headed about it all. As a rule, women somehow managed to ignore all this stuff. We found ourselves looking for alternative ways of addressing our concerns -- whether through churches, charities or sports clubs.²

De Vries relates similar feelings: "I remember that period, but was not very much interested in what was going on. My brother was involved. He used to say, 'if the whites can get the money why can't we?' He began to feel we should put our divisions aside and direct our energy to a better end. That was my attitude too. I just didn't understand what all the fighting among our people was about. The men became very upset and angry. It caused some unnecessary and nasty attitudes among certain people and it did not help our cause. I tried to remain friends with everybody."³ Nevertheless, a few women were more directly involved in organisational politics. Lewis remembers:

2. Van der Ross, p. 15

3. De Vries, p. 7

There were lots of discussions going on and I was involved in organisations like the New Era Fellowship, the Teacher's League and so on. We rejected the CAC. It was seen as an organisation that could not possibly give us our rights, our birth rights. It was supported by a bunch of sell-outs. So we were very lively and had meetings on the parade and at the Drill Hall. There were always wonderful speakers who spoke out against the CAC and the people serving it.⁴

Benn, in turn, explains her interest. "The fight was about the franchise for everybody -- the right to elect somebody into parliament but also the right to be elected. CAD was prepared to have white members representing Africans, to have native representatives in parliament. So we were against that. We felt that there should be one parliament for everybody in the country. We had meetings on the parade and thousands of people would come to listen. I, as a woman, was right in there with the men."⁵

Most of the women who became teachers, initially joined the TLSA, although again they did not indicate the same interest in the organisation or the politics surrounding it as the men interviewed. Most eventually left the organisation and became involved in alternative spheres of activity. Carlier recalls her brief encounter with the TLSA:

For a while I belonged to the League, but then I got fed up with their attitudes and I left. They wouldn't allow members to belong to organisations that included whites. I had a lot of white friends, who I wanted to mix with. I fell out with the League. I could not go

4. Interview with Louise Lewis at her Observatory home, 5/07/94, p. 4

5. Benn, p. 6

along with all their ideas, and I became much more involved in the sporting arena. I started teaching tennis to school children. I even got the school to build a tennis court. This made a hell of a lot more sense to me. All this anti-white politics drove (sic) me mad.⁶

Lewin, in turn, remembers her early teaching years and the time she spent in the TLISA:

I was a member of the TLISA. The divisions between the TEPA and the TLISA were explained very clearly to me when I was at college. My husband and I both became members of the TLISA. My principal was very upset at this because he was a TEPAITE [member of the Teachers' Educational and Professional Association]. Mrs van der Ross asked him 'Why worry about the girl, is she doing her work?' So he stopped interfering. Then after a while I stopped attending meetings because I found them too dogmatic and offensive. I was not going to be told what to think by a bunch of bossy men. I became involved in the community instead. We set up soup kitchens, formed sewing groups and generally helped the poorer people Afrikaans-speaking people. It was much more enjoyable to work in the community -- hands-on kind of work.⁷

Demorny likewise recollects her experiences:

When I first started teaching I belonged to the TLISA, but then I left. We started our own teachers' body in our church -- the Catholic Teachers' League. So I spent most of my free time working with them. It was based on religious principles. Mostly women attended. We fought for everything through the church. The ordinary teacher was much more involved in this way. In the TLISA it was really only the men that were the leaders and that spoke. In our group women had space in which to express their views, without men trying to impose their views on everyone else.⁸

6. Carlier, p. 7

7. Lewin, p. 2

8. Demorny, p. 10

The majority of these women felt excluded from the prevailing structures of political engagement. At the same time, Carlier's reference to not being allowed to mix with whites is an important perspective. The Simons's have argued that "the great bulk of coloureds were indifferent or hostile to the idea of unity with Africans."⁹ Yet Carlier's comment goes subtly further. It indicates that at least some coloureds were resentful towards the policies of the TLSA, Anti-CAD and NEUM because they did not allow their members to fraternise socially with sympathetic liberal whites. Given the relatively few Africans residing in the Western Cape at the time -- the issue may not have been so much an anti-African attitude among some coloureds, as a desire for 'normal' acceptance into mainstream Western Cape society -- which was white. A fearful anxiety about Africans only seemed to emerge after World War II, when Africans seemed to be becoming a more direct threat to coloured wage employment. This threat was brought about by the large number of Africans entering Cape Town during the war years, as a result of increased war economy industrialisation. The number of Africans living in the metropolitan areas of Cape Town increased from 16,450 in the 1936 census to 35,197 in 1946 and 59,937 in 1951.¹⁰ The threat of this influx to coloured employment was reinforced by the newspapers of the time. Billboard headlines

9. Simons, p. 544

10. Union of South Africa, Population Census, 1946 and 1951

For more on the influx of Africans into metropolitan Cape Town during and after World War II see: K. Greenbank, Into the Wild Bushes of Nyanga: The Growth, Control and Relocation of Cape Town's Squatters, 1939-1955, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993

such as "Native Invasion of Cape Town"¹¹ and "Native influx into Cape Town"¹² were common sights. An ultimate consequence of this was the National Party introduction of the 'buffer' Coloured Labour Preference Act in 1957, whereby "coloured people were given generous opportunities for finding wage-earning employment in the Western Cape. ... This meant that coloured employees were to be appointed in preference to African wherever possible."¹³ While the labour market threat of unskilled African workers obviously did not affect middle-class coloured people directly, the propaganda employed by the National Party was probably enough to encourage a generalised social worry about Africans. "We actually had very little contact with Africans prior to the war," Lewis recalls, while "after the war, they seemed to be everywhere. The Nats exploited this to their own benefit. While coloureds, generally speaking, opposed the National Party, they thanked God that they kept the Africans at bay."¹⁴

The women interviewed who did not become teachers, express similar affinities for the security of a white fraternity. Lawrence notes that, "I did not worry with all the politics going on. I knew the issues, but I preferred to play basketball. Here I was able to associate freely with my white friends."¹⁵ Scott, in turn, recalls:

11. Cape Times, 14 March 1945

12. Cape Times, 30 March 1945

13. Davenport, South Africa, p. 420

14. Lewis, p. 10

15. Lawrence, p. 12

I knew about all the fighting in the politics. I had friends who were teachers. They kept me informed. I, however, did not become involved. I was involved in the church and the community. Here I was able to do the things I enjoyed. In the church we had a women's group. Through this we organised bazaars and fundraisers, and we had collections of old clothes for the poor. We also organised food parcels for the poor in the winter. If one of the women in our group had problems we would help her. We were always helping one another. This gave the women a sense of purpose and belonging that we did not experience in most of the political groups.¹⁶

Similar alienation from the dominant political structures is expressed by Theys:

Politics was very boring. Why sit in all those meetings listening to men? There was also too much fighting in politics. I wanted nothing with it. I was more interested in the community and in playing sport. So I organised sporting teams in soccer and netball. We would play matches against other teams over the week-end. The whole community would turn out to watch when a big game was taking place. This is where the community was united, not in politics.¹⁷

It is important to note the coded language used by these women in order to gain a greater understanding of the gender relations existing at the time. Joan Scott argues that society does not only create ideas and words, but that ideas and words help to create social structures. She sees language as an inherent part of the construction of meaning. It therefore needs to be carefully analysed. Notions such as class and gender become inscribed as social realities through language. It is through

16. Scott, p. 10

17. Theys, p. 5

language that people and society are organised, giving them a social role.¹⁸

The categories and concepts used by the women interviewed in this research project reflects the particular culture and patriarchal context in which they found themselves. It is a culture that historically limited women's activities -- excluding them from mainstream political activities. "I could not attend TLSA meetings as most of them occurred when I was supposed to be making dinner and looking after the children. My husband could attend, but I had to look after the family," comments Theys¹⁹. The observation of Gluck and Patai speaks directly to this situation:

An exploration of the language and the meanings women used to articulate their own experience leads to an awareness of the conflicting social forces and institutions affecting women's consciousness. It also reveals how women act either to restructure or preserve their psychological orientation, their relationships, and their social contexts.²⁰

Observations such as: "I got fed up with their attitudes." "I found them too dogmatic and offensive. I was not going to be told what to think by a bunch of bossy men." "I looked for places where the community was united," make clear that women were quite aware of male domination in politics. They were less submissive to males than many of them perhaps fully realised.

18. See: Scott, On Language, Gender and Working-Class History, New York, 1988

19. Conversation with Bettie Theys subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 9/03/94

20. S.B. Gluck and D. Patai, Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, New York, 1991, p. 18

This determined their political role within society -- in ways different to that of males. Women were forced by patriarchy to discover a sense of belonging, purpose and response in the community through participation in alternative structures. This allowed them to engage in political discourse from within a familiar nurturing environment. The consensual construction of "helping one another" or "a united community" fed a sense of inherited roles, and also placed women in central positions. "I simply walked away from all the internal conflicts in politics. Today you would say I voted with my feet," notes van der Ross.²¹

Civil Society

The withdrawal of women from organised politics, accompanied by their involvement in the church and sport or community activities provided an expression of the importance of civil society for women in middle-class coloured politics. Robert MacIver speaks of this tendency in alienated communities under the rubric of 'voluntary associations':

... the essence of the associational is the voluntary ... An associational society is one in which membership choices are possible ... In addition, by implication, voluntary associations are organised to allow ultimate sovereignty to rest in the membership. Decisions are made from the bottom-up -- by citizens, stakeholders, church members and so on.²²

The institutions (voluntary associations) of civil society function as intermediaries between the people and the

21. Van der Ross, p. 6

22. D.B. Robertson, Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Society, Richmond, Virginia, 1966

government. In normal situations they provide ordinary people with access to government. In the 1940s and 1950s, they functioned for women as alternatives to both government and coloured political organisations.

Coloured middle-class women created their own associations. They established these around defined areas of interest. In this way they were able to exercise maximum control in the decision-making of these bodies and, in so doing provide a framework in which the voluntarist social impulses of women could be addressed. Moreover, they often expressed their implicit political consciousness and identity through these alternative groupings. This is clearly portrayed by Demorny:

One thing that really disappointed me was that there was no life insurance and other benefits for women teachers in my days. When we retired there was nothing for us. The TLSA never addressed such issues. They were more concerned with bigger issues like the vote, which did not extend to women anyhow. That's why we formed the Catholic Teachers' League where we were able to raise our concerns about such issues affecting us women. We were angry. There was not much that we could do, but at least we tried.²³

Similar observations are noted by Lewin:

I didn't join any political organisation. I chose rather to express myself through the letters I used to write to the newspapers. I was watched by the government, because I always used the term 'we' in my letters as I was writing for my friends as well. My friends and I used to speak about issues when we were doing our community work. So the police wanted to know who this 'we' was. They came to see me once. I spoke to them as I am speaking to you. I was not afraid of them. I continued to write my letters. I think they were satisfied when they discovered that I belonged to

23. Demorny, p. 9

no political organisation. This is where they were wrong. Our politics as women was simply expressed elsewhere.²⁴

It is, of course, important not to exaggerate the role of women in civil society, as it would be romantic to suggest that all such alternative organisations served the needs of women. Ernest Gellner's recent study on civil society shows that to struggle for dominance can be as much an active part of civil society as in national politics. In resisting the power of the dominant groups in politics (whether this be 'white male' or 'coloured male' politics) one should always beware of what he refers to as the "tyranny of cousins" back home!²⁵ Cheryl Carolus, for example, warns against what she calls 'corporatism in civil society' -- a situation that prevails when civil society is dominated by such sectors of society which are strong enough to organise. These often exclude the poorest of the poor who are marginalised in civil society no less than they are in the greater political sphere.²⁶ This was clearly the case with coloured middle-class women. They had a sense of 'more space' but in reality decision-making was often dominated by a man, whether he was the priest or the owner of the sports grounds.

It would also be too simplistic to suggest that these 'voluntary organisations' were always political alternatives. Theys

24. Lewin, p. 10

25. E. Gellner, Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals, New York, 1994, p. 9

26. C. Carolus, Transformation in South Africa: The Role of Civil Society in the Reconstruction and Development Programme. A paper presented at the Institute for Theological and Interdisciplinary Research Conference, October 1994, p. 15

recalls: "Our involvement in the tennis club was a wonderful escape from all the political nonsense of the time."²⁷ The impact of dominant politics, on the other hand, often forced women to respond to the major events of the time through their organisations. September notes: "Try as you did to escape politics this was not always possible. The result was that you simply did your politics in a different way."²⁸

Obvious questions emerge. Does September's account reflect the benefit of hindsight? To what extent were middle-class coloured women at the time intentionally conscious of doing "politics in a different way"? When asked this question, September responded: "Certainly women did not consciously engage in alternative political activities at the time. It was, however, an expression of social conscience that can be defined as political. My point is simply that women were not preoccupied with their own selfish concerns. They were engaged. This is clear from their activities, if not actual politics."²⁹

The War Years

The validity of September's observation becomes clear when consideration is given to the role of women in war time activities. While most did not become involved in the political debates surrounding World War II, they recall the period

27. Theys, p. 5

28. September, p. 6

29. Conversation with Hettie September subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 2/04/95

vividly. This interest was due to the direct impact that the war had on their personal lives. "The war somehow brought the deep-seated moral and political concerns of women into the open," notes Scott.³⁰ "We were not involved in all the high-profile debates of men, but we had deep moral convictions which we stood by."³¹ This is portrayed by De Vries: "That was a terrible time. Everything was scarce. My eldest brother went to fight. Everybody felt the effects of the war. These issues forced us to stand-up and work for what we believed in."³² Theys similarly recalls that "I knew this one boy that went to war. Six of us girls were all in love with him and we all wrote to him. We were fully aware of what was happening. One could not ignore the rationing, blackouts, and soldiers dying. Those events made all of us face the realities of the time."³³

Demorny remembers the shortage of material:

We used to get most of our material from overseas. I remember the days when things were not coming through. We just had to wear anything -- almost sack cloth. There were no stockings you know. We got most of our stockings from overseas. These stockings had seams down the back. The girls did not want to be seen as having bare legs so they would take a pencil and draw a line right up the back of their legs. So we did have some fun.³⁴

30. Conversation with Clara Scott subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 23/02/95

31. Ibid.

32. De Vries, p. 7

33. Theys, p. 7

34. Demorny, p. 9

September notes: "I remember buying an overcoat during the war. It was a winter overcoat, but it didn't have a collar and pockets. I remember hating the fact that it did not have pockets because I did not know what to do with my hands. The manufacturers were forced to use the minimum of material. The coat was not cosy at all -- I think I was cold all winter. These were the little things that forced even the most apolitical people to ask political questions."³⁵

Understandably, memories surrounding the rationing of food are the most clearly remembered. Most of the women were involved directly in this procedure. Bydell recalls standing in line for food:

I remember the rationing. You would stand in the queue from early in the morning because if you were late and you were in the back of the queue the food would be finished by the time you got to the front. You got nothing. You would have to wait until next time the wagon came by. Butter and rice were the main things that were rationed. We ate mielie-rice and margarine. We blamed Hitler and the politicians. We somehow thought the politicians could have helped us.³⁶

Scott, too, recalls "standing in the line, waiting for the vans to come so that I could buy butter and potatoes. I had to get enough food to last until the van came around again. There was often chaos when the van arrived as the women were scared that they would not be able to get anything."³⁷ September, who was a prominent member of the Communist Party of South Africa during

35. September, p. 7

36. Bydell, p. 6

37. Scott, p. 6

this period, reflects on the pandemonium surrounding the rationing of food:

The rationing was for butter, flour, sugar and rice -- the things that you could not buy in the shops. Army lorries used to arrive and there was total chaos. As the lorry arrived the women would rush for the food. This would often cause the driver to drive off because he could not handle the situation. So I and this comrade decided to get a number of women together. We called ourselves the Women's Food Committee. We organised the women to stand in the queues. We got up very early on the day of rations and gave numbers to the women on the basis of first come first serve. Everyone had a number and queued accordingly. It was a controlled system. This helped to bring some order in the distribution of food. It was a kind of war effort I expect.³⁸

A number of women recall being involved in similarly organised war-efforts. Theys recalls making uniforms for the soldiers³⁹, while Scott notes:

During the war our church opened its doors. We would entertain all the soldiers coming in on the war ships. We gave them food. We would host dances and provide them with shelter. I often asked myself why the political groups in coloured politics did not do something. They seemed to simply continue with their talking.⁴⁰

Here again, was the familiar perception of men `talking' and women `doing'.

De Vries, in turn, recollects her involvement. "I worked for the troops, my friends and I. We gave dances so that we could buy

38. September, p. 7

39. Theys, p. 7

40. Scott, p. 6

what they needed and we knitted jerseys and socks to send to the troops. Even though I was teaching, I worked hard for the war. It seems strange, but those were good years. We all felt that we could do something."⁴¹

The war effort involved women. It showed an awareness by women of political concerns and it motivated participation in community projects. While the majority of middle-class coloured women did not directly engage in the prevailing political discourse surrounding the war, they did, however, develop their own mechanisms for involvement. They also had clear views on the political merits and demerits of the war. Luskey notes: "We felt that we were as involved in the war effort as most men. This gave us the right to express our views -- and we did."⁴² Demorny, in turn, suggests that "the war politicised women -- often forcing them into political debates."⁴³

Despite the impact of the war and the complexity of causes that resulted in the lack of involvement of women in established political organisations, interviews with middle-class coloured women show a dominant perception that 'politics was for men'. As such, it draws attention to the observations of Siltanen and Stanworth. They argue that this sense of political patriarchy amongst women relates to "the myth that politics is a man's realm [being] sustained ... partly through the types of

41. De Vries, p. 7

42. Luskey, p. 10

43. Demorny, p. 10

explanation employed to account for the differences in the political life of women and men. ... Explanations for gender patterns of political involvement highlight the effects of a separation between the public sphere of wage-work and formal politics, and the private sphere of domesticity and personal relations."⁴⁴ These explanations, they suggest, have been internalised by both men and women. Thuisiers recalls:

The women just went around doing their chores at home. They did their work and were involved in church groups and so on. We didn't get involved in things like politics. It was good to keep out. It was only for men. I mean everybody is not the same. We saw the men coming together and speaking about politics, voting and things like that. Women never spoke about such things. I never used to sit among the men when they spoke -- politics was not for women. We left it to the men. We, as you would say today, did our own thing.⁴⁵

De Vries has similar memories:

My husband would have been very angry if I got involved in politics. Respectable women did not take part in such things. So I became involved in welfare. I was the chairlady of the South African Women's Organisation for many years. Looking back I think we did more actual political good than men and their politics.⁴⁶

Luskey recalls women being involved in the Communist Party:

There were a few women in the Communist Party, but there were mostly men. You could count the women on your two hands. But I didn't like the way in which these women hanged on to the men. They didn't seem comfortable unless there was some man supporting them -- both physically and emotionally.⁴⁷

44. Siltanen and Stanworth, Women and the Public Sphere, p. 195

45. Thuisiers, p. 14

46. De Vries, p. 11

47. Luskey, p. 12

Luskey suggests that the few women who did enter the dominant political domain needed to have the support of 'male society' (father, husband or male supporter) in order to function with confidence in the political sphere. Luskey presses this determinism: "If a woman is not brought up with politics or does not marry a political husband, she'll not really be interested in politics and will never fit in with the political people."⁴⁸

Obviously, not all political women fitted into this stereotype. Luskey's perception is, however, underlined by women who were involved in organised politics. Their entrance into politics was often to some degree or other influenced by either a father or husband. September, for example, only became involved in politics after she became married. She remembers that "I was never really interested in politics as a child. I used to help my mother in her church work. Then I met Reg, who encouraged me to go to APO meetings. I joined the APO in 1944 and then Reg decided that it would be best for both of us to join the Communist Party. We joined the Party in 1945. This was all very new to me, but I was soon accepted."⁴⁹ Benn expresses similar memories. "After my marriage, my life was taken up within the political organisations, with the Anti-CAD, the Unity Movement. Outside of that I had very little else. My social activities were all around politics ... dances, fund raisers and so on."⁵⁰

48. Ibid., p. 5

49. September, p. 3

50. Benn, p. 4

Ibrahim, on the other hand, was brought up in a political environment:

My whole family was interested in politics, especially my dad. He believed that politics was bread and butter. His whole life revolved around politics. My dad would always encourage me to stand up for what I believed in, even though this was not usually encouraged in women. When I got married my husband said to me that there was to be no politics in our lives. But deep down in my soul I was very bruised. How could I give up what I loved most? I explained to him that I could not be happy just being a mother or a housewife. I begged him to understand and I promised to love him to his dying day or mine. Eventually he agreed, so I could continue with my political work.⁵¹

The above analysis of the oral history of coloured women suggests that while the overwhelming majority of coloured middle-class women were not directly involved in established politics, this was not due to a lack of community -- and indeed political consciousness or identity. The apparent indifference to institutional politics was at least partly due to the male dominant structures of coloured political organisations and the prevailing perception that politics was essentially the domain of males. For these reasons the majority of women established independent structures through which to express their consciousness and identity. It is presumptuous to measure women's political identity in terms of male-defined political categories. Middle-class political identity among coloured women was often expressed through involvement in activities surrounding sport, church and community. Through these channels

51. Ibrahim, p. 6

they were empowered to address matters of direct political concern to themselves. Through these arenas they acquired a space within which to express their identity and status as actively caring women. This was in itself a political act. The point has been made earlier that there is a "political nature [to] the private."⁵² To fail to recognise this is to reduce politics and political identity to that activity traditionally pursued by males. Women are then marginalised to the realm of the non-public, non-political terrain of the unseen and ultimately to the non-existent.

52. Siltanen and Stanworth, Women and the Public Sphere, p. 208

Chapter 6

ASPIRING TO BE WHITE:

THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL UPLIFTMENT

Social identity is always complex. It is frequently ambiguous. An analysis of coloured middle-class women's identity as it emerged in social and political events of the period under consideration, suggests that the political identity of middle-class coloured women was also fragile. It was shaped by economics and a host of other external forces ranging from religion to home front war experiences. It was also affected by opportunities for engagement in community and political affairs -- as well as by their reactions to patriarchal political exclusion and the curtailment of educational opportunities. Ultimately, it also had to do, in the words of Scott, with aspiring to be white.¹

Working Outside the Home

As suggested earlier, the majority of women interviewed were in one way or another engaged in productive economic activities outside of servicing of the home. This distinguished their generation from that of their mothers. Meyer-Fels' response is typical of the majority of the women: "I don't think working outside of the home was an issue at that time. To work or not to work was simply a matter of choice. If a woman did not work outside of the house it was because she wanted to stay at home."

1. Conversation with Clara Scott subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 23/02/95

My mother wanted to stay at home and look after the family. She enjoyed it."² Most interviewees concede that their mothers were forced to abandon their jobs due to large families. De Vries makes the point. "My mother had nine children, whereas I had only one son. I therefore had more time to be involved in teaching and other activities."³ September comments:

My mother didn't work because she had five children. I only had two. By the time I got married there was much more awareness around issues of birth control. I was able to read about these things and do something to stop the babies coming.⁴

Theys has similar memories. "I remember when I got married, my friends introduced me to birth control. I didn't want to have a big family like my mother. So after the first accident, I stuck to the pill. I don't think my mother knew about contraception in her day. She certainly did not use it. Well, for my generation contraception was a way of improving one's lot in life. It helped us to get into the market-place, to earn some money, to live a little more like whites and if you had a fair skin you could even pretend to be white."⁵

References to birth control are important. Middle-class coloured women in the 1940s and 1950s were better educated than their

2. Meyer-Fels, p. 8

3. De Vries, p. 11

4. September, p. 8

5. Theys, p. 6

mothers and this undoubtedly contributed to their knowledge and understanding of contraception. By 1954, there were nine birth control clinics in the Cape Town region -- including Salt River, Woodstock and District Six.⁶ This resulted in greater public awareness and debate around such issues. It also meant easier access to contraception. Birth control allowed women greater independence from their families, which meant it was easier for them to work outside of the home than it had been for their mothers. This, in turn, helped them and their families to improve their economic status in life.

Not all women, however, enjoyed these opportunities outside of the home. Some women were forced to stop working due to inadequate salaries earned. Theys recalls her situation:

I was earning too little to have a domestic worker at home, so I stopped working when my children came. I was very fond of dress-making, so I started working from home and soon built up a good clientele. I worked hard. I had to work from six in the morning until twelve at night. Remember in addition to my dressmaking, I had babies to care for.⁷

Scott has similar memories. "At first my husband was very insistent that we have help in the house. I told him that we could not afford somebody. After some time he realised that I was correct, so I stopped working for a few years. I looked

6. L. Newton-Thompson, Birth Control Clinics in the Western Cape, 1932-1974: A History, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992, p. 28

7. Theys, p. 6

after the children and cleaned the house. I also did sewing from home."⁸

Clearly most, if not all, coloured middle-class families relied on income generated in one way or another by women. This requires one to recognise the link between the public (work) and private (home) domain. Belinda Bozzoli correctly argues that the domestic sphere (the site of labour, income and property relations) is inevitably regulated by the demands of industry and the market.⁹ The forces of production (in industry) take their toll on the relations (in the home).

Some women interviewed were forced to terminate their involvement in the market place because of inadequate wages. They at the same time continued to support the family financially by working from home. This raises questions concerning perceptions of female domesticity. Differently stated, domestic work was rarely isolated from income-generating work, so in more than one sense women were often forced into 'domesticity.' Unlike males, women did not have much choice when it came to market-related employment. Their domesticity was imposed.

Scott's recollection of her husband 'insisting that we have help in the house' is further revealing. It highlights a point made

8. Scott, p. 9

9. B. Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol 9, No 2, April 1983, p. 142

by Hugh McLeod in his research on white collar values in Britain. He noted:

The best index of middle class status in Victorian England was the keeping of a servant, since any middle class man `shrank' to use the terminology in which subjects were usually discussed -- from reducing his wife to the level of `drudge'.¹⁰

The `keeping of a servant' or a domestic worker conveyed similar values among middle-class coloured families. The employment of a servant was also seen to convey class status. Bydell comments:

I was teaching and so was my husband, but we did not really need a maid to do the cleaning and the cooking as I only worked half day. However, it was the correct thing to do. I mean there was no use washing clothes or cooking dinner when you did not have to. On the other hand I think we could have lived more comfortably if we did not have to pay the maid.¹¹

Clearly social prestige was seen to depend on values ascribed to rather than the actual attainment of a particular social or economic reality. Geoffrey Crossick, in a study of the lower middle class in Britain, provides similar reference to people living beyond their economic capacity, in order to convey the impression of a level of economic prosperity which they had not in fact obtained. He notes:

Proper standards became all-important ... The need to maintain an elevated status on what was often little

10. H. McLeod, "White Collar Values and the Role of Religion", in Geoffrey Crossick (ed), The Lower Middle Class in Britain, London, 1977, p. 63

11. Bydell, p. 9

more than a working class-sized income was a constant problem. Status had to be visible, because on a salaried hierarchy salary indicated level, and only display could reflect salary. It was this need for visible respectable expenditure, on clothing, housing and assistance in the home, that put such pressure on income.¹²

A similar expression of 'visible respectability' is noted in the comments of a number of the women respondents. Lewin recalls:

Besides teaching I used to do some sewing. From the sewing I brought in some extra money, but through my sewing skills I was also able to copy the new fashions. So I could go to all those fancy shops and look through the magazines. I would find a dress that I liked and would make it. Then all my friends thought that I had bought it at Stuttafords or some expensive clothing shop. I never told them my secret.¹³

Ibrahim has similar recollections. "I remember when my husband came home with a car. I couldn't believe it. I don't know where he got the money to buy it, but I never said anything. He simply felt he needed it in order to improve his lot in life. And why not?"¹⁴

If You Played White

In aspiring to be part of the middle-class and to be 'respectable', the ideal for many coloured women was that of white middle-class society. Graham Watson has noted in his

12. Geoffrey Crossick (ed) The Lower Middle Class in Britain, London, 1977, p. 31

13. Lewin, p. 6

14. Ibrahim, p. 6

research that "entry into the elite is eased considerably by the possession of a fair complexion and European features."¹⁵ It is a point also highlighted by William Beinart. "Lighter skinned coloureds tended to be of an upper socio-economic class (in the coloured perspective), while those more closely resembling Africans tended to be of a lower class."¹⁶

Reference to women quickly emphasising their white origin has already been made. They made similar reference to their own physical features: Ibrahim comments:

There was also discrimination between different classes in the coloured community. Colour was an important thing. If you were fair and had straight hair you were accepted. If you had crinkly hair -- God forbid. Marriage between a dark skinned person and a light skinned person was seen to be problematic. To be light in colour and to have straight hair meant that you had the chance to succeed in life.¹⁷

Demorny experienced this discrimination: "You see my husband's brothers could actually pass as white. They were going as whites in secret. I actually felt out of place. I think they were disappointed when my husband married an obviously coloured woman. His family shunned us. I remember once or twice my husband took me to his brother's place, but I could sense that I was not wanted, -- even though his mother was darker in colour

15. G. Watson, Passing for White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South African School, London, 1970, p. 17

16. W. Beinart, The Political and Constitutional Crisis over the Separate Representation of Voters' Act, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1971, p. 4

17. Ibid., p. 8

than me. I think because she married a white man she encouraged her children to be white. Perhaps if I was in her shoes I would have done the same."¹⁸

Concern with skin complexion, of course, emerges in a number of studies beyond coloured identity in South Africa. George Lamming in his novel, *In the Castle of My Skin*, set in Little England (West Indies) makes reference to this.

The best-looking girls in the village and in the whole island were those whose mothers had consorted with white men. They were brown skin, soft, chocolate creamed with long hair that curled and flew in the wind. There was a famous family on the island which could boast the prettiest daughters. Their father was an old Scotch planter who had lived from time to time with some of the labourers on the sugar estate. The daughters were ravishing, and one was known throughout the island as the crystal sugar cake. Neither of us could be called crystal. And there weren't many in the village who weren't black. Simply black. But though we were nearly all black, we all used the colour as a weapon against interference. If we lost our temper we would charge the other with being a black fool, or a black ass. Among the better educated, and the Great, the obscenities might not have been used in public, but they were affected in the same way. They often said of the village teacher how very bright he was but he was so black ...¹⁹

Henry Gates, in turn, recalls his personal experience in the deep South of America:

In 1957, when I was in second grade, black children integrated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. We watched it on TV. All of us watched it. I don't mean Mama and Daddy and Rocky. I mean all the coloured people in America watched it, together, with one set of eyes. ... The children were all well scrubbed and greased down, as we'd say. Hair short and closely cropped, parted and oiled (the boys); "done"

18. Demorny, p. 12

19. G. Lamming, *In the Castle of my Skin*, London, 1953, p. 127

in a "permanent" and straight, with turned-up bangs and curls (the girls). Starched shirts, white, and creased pants, shoes shining like a buck private's spit shine. Those Negroes were clean. The fact was, those children trying to get the right to enter that school in Little Rock looked like black versions of models out of Jack and Jill magazine ... "They hand-picked those children," Daddy would say. "No dummies, no nappy hair, heads not too kinky, lips not too thick, no disses and no dats." At seven, I was dismayed by his cynicism.²⁰

Lastly, a travel handbook on Brazil tells one that there are a wide range of 'colours' in Brazil. These include moreno (suntanned), pardo (light brown), escuro (dark), mulatto (coloured) and mestico (mixed race)²¹ Juan Xeri, visiting from Sao Paulo, reflects on this scenario:

The ideal is to be white in Brazil. The whiter you are the better chances you have in succeeding. Business is largely white, television portrays a white culture, and restaurants are patronised by those who can afford the food -- usually white. Even the Brazilian soccer team is becoming increasingly white. There is little chance of a poor black kid called Pele re-emerging in Brazilian society.²²

A similar preoccupation with colour and physical features is reflected in the observation of Meyer-Fels as she reflects poignantly on being coloured within the Western Cape:

The lighter you were the easier it was to be white and to escape. That was the only outlet. Either you stayed coloured or you tried to escape. To escape would mean

20. H. Gates, Jr. Coloured People: A Memoir, New York, 1995, p. 25-26

21. Prentice Hall Travel, South American Handbook, Englewood Cliffs, 1993, p. 313-321

22. Discussion with Juan Xeri, a Brazilian political activist and Roman Catholic priest, August 1993

greater material benefits. I suppose that was the whole idea. White was beautiful.²³

"Fair skinned children were encouraged to marry people of a similar complexion," September tells us. Lawrence recalls that "my sister had lots of boyfriends. They were all white chaps because she was really fair of face. My mother would not have been happy if she went out with a darker person, but whites were okay."²⁴

This preoccupation with colour, although not necessarily universal, was reinforced by the magazines that most coloured middle-class women were reading, such as *Woman's Own* and *Woman's Weekly*. In general, Deirdre Beddoe points out that "in each age media has projected particular images and dominant stereotypes, to which women were persuaded or coerced to conform."²⁵ The media, she argues, has forced women to "conform to shallow and stupid, externally imposed images of femininity"²⁶

To be part of a particular class required certain adaptations. For middle class coloured women, it included socio-economic status and the pursuit of 'white' values -- as well as appearance. This is clearly reflected in the frank observation of Scott:

23. Meyer-Fels, p. 14

24. Lawrence, p. 7

25. D. Beddoe, Discovering Women's History: A Practical Manual, London, 1993, p. 17

26. Ibid., p. 18

We knew that to be beautiful was to have a fair complexion. Men loved lighter women. If we were too dark the magazines told us how to make ourselves lighter. There were skin lightener creams and other creams to make our hair straight. I tried them all, but I could not really see any difference. Ultimately I was forced to accept the fact that I was always going to be darker than my sister and most of my friends.²⁷

Lawrence has similar memories. "All the models in the magazines were white with long straight hair. We all wanted to be like them. And most men liked women to look like that. There was none of this black consciousness stuff then."²⁸

The women interviewed placed more emphasis on physical appearance than their male counterparts. They felt compelled to conform to dominant ideals of beauty, which were further complicated by the precarious socio-economic position in which they as "vulnerable middle-class" people found themselves. Scott notes: "We wanted to be seen as attractive to men -- many of whom were fascinated by white women. It wasn't easy to compete. You must remember many of us only just managed to stay within the middle-class. We were vulnerably middle-class ... We aspired to be white -- or as white as possible."²⁹ "You were simply more acceptable in the broader society if you played white. You also had a better chance of getting a good job if you

27. Conversation with Clara Scott subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 23/02/95

28. Conversation with Theresa Lawrence subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 7/07/94

29. Conversation with Clara Scott subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 23/02/95

were accepted as white,"³⁰ notes Lawrence. In the absence of wealth, exterior symbols of status (servants, cars and appearance) became important. In addition, women required a fair complexion. A woman with 'light skin' helped maintain the public image of the family. Lighter complexioned women were also seen to be more inclined to "produce white children,"³¹ notes Scott. Theys accentuates this belief with irony:

I remember when my daughter was born. She was quite white. I thought her whiteness comes from her oupa. So I sent a message to my father saying that 'your black hen has laid a white egg'. When my daughter grew up all the men were after her. She looked white. I think they wanted to marry her as they thought she would give them white children. Most coloureds in my day wanted to be white.³²

Suffice it to say, the political identity of the women interviewed was shaped by a variety of social and other forces. These included, in a racially divided society, the imposition and internalisation of patriarchal notions of the 'beautiful women' and the will to be accepted into dominant society. September notes, "There was no thought of black power or coloured consciousness among most women. They simply wanted to be accepted into the broader society -- even if this meant a bit of creativity. It sometimes required people pretending to be white and pretending to be able to afford more than they actually could. All this had political implications."³³

30. Lawrence, p. 10

31. Scott, p. 4

32. Theys, p. 6

33. Conversation with Hettie September subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 8/02/95

Chapter 7

THE ADVENT OF APARTHEID: DEALING WITH REAL POLITICS

We turn now to the political consequences of the attitudes and values of middle-class coloured women as considered in the preceding chapters. The discussion addresses two aspects of the political consciousness of middle-class coloured women that flow directly from their non-involvement in organised coloured politics, as well as from their direct concern for a sense of social and economic well-being. There are: an attraction by many women to the 'white politics' of the mainly English-speaking United Party and a new phase of political consciousness which emerged with the 1948 victory of the National Party at the polls. While aspects of these attitudes have been alluded to earlier, they now need to be addressed more directly.

White Politics

The attitudes of middle-class coloured women to male-dominated coloured politics need not be repeated here. Suffice to say, the response of many of the women to the wrangling of organised coloured politics was at times decidedly hostile. This discontent in coloured politics had a corollary in tacit support for the United Party. This is clearly portrayed by Demorny and Thuisers.

Demorny recalls:

Look I was not interested in politics. I did not really care for all that stuff about CAD. It was a lot of damn nonsense. I did not take much note of what was going on there. I did, however, know about the real things that were happening. I really admired General Smuts. What I liked about him was that he supported us coloureds. We helped in his fight against Hitler. He always said that he would not separate people through government as people would separate themselves through class and so on. That made sense to me. I really admired him and therefore liked the United Party.¹

Thuisers expresses similar sentiments:

I did not really have any interest in all the conflicts that were happening among the teachers, but generally I understood what was happening with the UP and the Nats. Smuts was a very good man, very good indeed. People would say that it was Smuts who introduced this discrimination and that when Malan took over he just enforced it with law. In other words, Smuts did everything in the dark and Malan brought it out into the light. I do not believe that as Jannie was not that kind of man. But then what do I know about politics? I was not really that interested. The Anti-CAD movement simply switched me off. Those people got on my nerves something terribly. To me the real politics was white politics. This is where our future as coloured people was being worked out.²

This support can be ascribed to a number of factors. From the perspective of the women concerned, it also reflected their interest in real politics. "We at least felt that the UP could do something for us if they so chose. That was real politics, whereas the CAD and Anti-CAD people never had any power between them," suggests van der Ross.³

1. Demorny, p. 8

2. Thuisiers, p. 11

3. Van der Ross, p. 6

A few women, however, express reservations about the United Party and the discrimination it practised. De Vries stresses that "Jannie Smuts is the one that actually started segregation. The United Party and Smuts. I don't know how come, but he is the one that started with things like apartheid. Then when the Nationalists took over they were the ones that made apartheid legal. They formalised it."⁴ Meyer-Fels, in turn, recalls subtle forms of discrimination under the United Party. "I remember attending concerts in the city hall in town. There was no law forbidding you to sit where you wanted to, but all the non-whites sat in the back and all the whites in the front. I remember asking this one teacher why this was the case. She said that the sound was better in the back. That might have been the reason, but I doubted it. The truth is that everyone knew that most whites, including the government, preferred us to remain separate."⁵

These reservations about the United Party were not, however, representative of the majority of those interviewed. Most maintain that they were not affected by the discreet forms of prejudice that existed during the period of United Party rule. In the words of Demorny: "In retrospect I realise that my infatuation with the UP was a kind of psychological way of escaping the realities of white racism. I managed to persuade myself that they were our friends."⁶ Lawrence notes that "racism

4. De Vries, p. 5

5. Meyer-Fels, p. 8

6. Conversation with Doris Demorny subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 31/01/95

didn't really affect us before 1948. That is why I say there was harmony during that time. That is why I had lots of white friends."⁷ Carlier concurs:

It didn't really affect me much. I came from quite a mixed family. We had motor cars and things like that. We did not go about in trains. If I had a meeting my father would lend me his car. I also had a lot of white friends. We would always look very smart and we would go out together. People did not interfere with us.⁸

These insights suggest, that before 1948 a higher social grouping of coloureds could, with sufficient status and will, avoid the brunt of segregatory practices. Most respondents chose to emphasise their ability to associate with white people, while talking of the importance of reflecting family social aspirations through possessions and life-style. "It took a bit of an effort and sometimes we could not really afford it, but it was important for us and our children that we showed ourselves to be of a certain class," Lawrence tells us. They could ignore segregation by "mixing with white friends" or by looking "respectable". Benn laughed in referring to what she called a certain category of coloured persons -- "die onse-klas-kleurling."⁹ This, she observed, "was the coloured who wanted to be accepted in white circles. Looking back it is all very, very sad."¹⁰ Bydell comments:

7. Lawrence, p. 12

8. Carlier, p. 5

9. This category was also used by Theys in Chapter Four

10. Conversation with Joyce Benn subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 16/04/95

I was the darkest out of all the children. My older sister was much lighter than me. We would go out together and on the buses there was no actual law about where to sit -- this is before 1948. Separate seating was, however, practised, so my sister and I would sit in different places. Sometimes, however, if I looked presentable the conductor would allow me to sit with my sister.¹¹

A most important public event for the majority of the women interviewed was undoubtedly the royal visit by King George VI and his family in 1947. Memories, for most, still generate a certain excitement. Theys reminisces:

The royal visit was great. I remember their visit as though it happened yesterday. I turned twenty-one the same year as Princess Elizabeth. We got tickets for the ball at the city hall and I had a special dress made. It was a long white dress with red bows. I went with one of the guys that was teaching with me. We had to stand in a queue to get in and there was hardly any space to dance, but the king and queen were there. It was so beautiful.¹²

Scott recalls attending the celebrations on the parade. "I went to the parade with my granny. We were so excited. There was such a crowd on the parade. People were standing on top of one another. That day I got a nice photo of the king and queen. I've still got it. Also I was very excited because my surname was George -- the same name as that of the king."¹³ Meyer-Fels recalls listening to the radio:

I listened to parts of the royal visit on the radio, but I did not go and see them. She [the queen] was going to ride through Claremont. Everyone was so

11. Bydell, p. 5

12. Theys, p. 8

13. Scott, p. 7

excited that the queen was coming to Claremont. I didn't want to be in the crowds and pushed around. I listened to it all on the radio. I caught the excitement from the announcer when the queen arrived. He said how beautiful she was with her peaches and cream complexion.¹⁴

The memories of the royal visit further promoted a sense of loyalty to England. "Somehow we always thought the English were better people than the boers," says Scott.¹⁵ These affinities were strengthened through the imperial partnership with Britain in the two World Wars. The United Party was seen to be the English-speaking Party. General Smuts associated with the English. English was the language of social advancement. There was conversely, animosity towards nationalist Afrikaners. This is rather rosily reflected by Scott:

You know the younger generation cannot understand why we were attached to white people. Most whites were really good to us. Not all whites though. Afrikaners always made you feel bad, but not the English people. The English South Africans were real gentlemen and ladies. They learnt how to behave from the British and that is why we also had so much respect for the British. So we all went to see the king and queen when they came to South Africa. They were good people. They did not discriminate. The British are too well mannered to do such things. Now English-speaking whites in South Africa were like them and we supported them. That all sounds a little simplistic today, but that was how we felt. I still feel like that. I like the British people -- even Charles and Diana.¹⁶

14. Meyer-Fels, p. 5

15. Scott, p. 6

16. Ibid., p. 8

The Events of 1948

All respondents vividly recall the National Party's election victory in 1948. They blame this victory on Afrikaans speaking whites. Demorny comments:

You see it was the English-speaking people who supported the United Party, but the vast majority of the Boere, the Dutch, were against the liberal stance of the English. They, therefore, decided to put all their weight behind the NP so that they could enforce apartheid. So it was really the Afrikaners fault who ruined things for us. Most English whites were really against apartheid.¹⁷

Scott interestingly remembers that "there was dancing in the streets [in 1948]. Everytime the votes came in supporting the Nats, the coloureds in District Six would get all excited. They were shouting and dancing the whole night. They seemed to be glad that the NP had won. Some of the lower-class people there were very racist. It was all very embarrassing for coloured people like us."¹⁸ This suggestion of urban support for the National Party among certain coloured people deserves further research. I found no further evidence to support this proposition from my middle class respondents.

The majority of the women respondents recall the impact of the 1948 election as an exclusive moment of despair when discrimination was enforced. Thuisiers remembers: "Even us

17. Demorny, p. 8

18. Thuisiers, p. 7

better coloureds were told on what train to ride and where to sit after 1948."¹⁹ Theys, in turn, notes:

I was not interested in politics, but I was interested in right and wrong. Politically I did not worry, but I knew what was going on, so when the NP came in to power I knew it was not good for us. I knew we were going to be trampled on.²⁰

If coloured politics was regarded as 'unreal' by middle-class coloured women and the United Party as giving them (in the words of van der Ross) access to 'real politics' -- then it was the 1948 National Party victory at the polls that constituted the super-reality of politics for middle-class coloured women. "The political pretence was over. We were faced with the harsh reality of what it means to be coloured in a racist South Africa in an inescapable way for the first time ever," suggests September.²¹ A bitter sense of overall betrayal was expressed by a number of women. "We felt very upset," comments Carlier, "because we felt betrayed. We had always supported the whites and now they had let us down."²² For De Vries, distinctions between English and Afrikaner attitudes' now grew increasingly blurred:

We really felt let down. I would say we were disappointed in that we had always supported them. Look how the coloured soldiers fought in the war ... and now they just turned their back on us. We forgot

19. Ibid., p. 7

20. Theys, p. 6

21. Conversation with Hettie September subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 8/02/95

22. Scott, p. 10

about the differences between the English and the Boers. We began to despise all whites.²³

"The reasons for these vivid memories concerning the Nats victory," suggests Bydell, "is that after 1948 we were all forced to deal with politics more directly. If something does not affect you directly you do not take much notice of it. Now we were all directly affected. It was becoming increasingly difficult to play white."²⁴ The National Party policies more directly influenced the lives of these women. This increased interest in the National Party is seen in their recollections of policies that overtly influenced them, such as the Group Areas Act, whereas they continued to show less interest in other consequences of apartheid, such as the removal of qualified males from the voters' roll.

The majority of the women clearly recall the introduction of the Group Areas Act. Carlier remembers:

That was a wicked period. I was forced to come down to Lansdowne. The money that I got from my daddy's place in Newlands was nothing, so I had to borrow more money in order to build. I bought two plots. On the one I built this house and on the other I built two tennis courts. I am so glad that all of this happened once my daddy was dead as it would have broken his heart.²⁵

De Vries recalls her experience:

Apartheid was really evil. I won't say the National Party was evil, that is wrong. Apartheid was evil. The

23. De Vries, p. 9

24. Bydell, p. 4

25. Carlier, p. 10

most evil thing was them taking our homes. That really destroyed us coloureds as we were forced to sell our houses for nothing and start all over again. Nothing did more harm to race relations than that. It was theft."²⁶

The Group Areas Act was the expropriatory equivalent for most middle-class coloured women, as was the loss of the franchise for some middle-class coloured males. For most women did not recall having had much interest in the circumstances surrounding the removal of the coloured male franchise. Luskey's response is representative of most of my respondents when she says, "while I felt it was unfair I did not belong to any organisation or personally support the men fighting against it. I didn't want to get involved ... the whole thing did not really affect me. It was a men's fight. I never did have the vote and men never made me feel they wanted me to get involved in their politics."²⁷ Thuisiers expresses similar views: "Us women were not involved in all of that. I remember my husband and his friends going mad about it. I simply told my husband that there was really nothing that he could do about it. But they continued to make a fuss about it. I was just not interested. That kind of politics was for men. They were on their own."²⁸

Despite this indifference shown by the majority of women, most believed that it was wrong that they, as women, could not vote. Carlier notes, "I was cross because I went with my dad to vote and I went with him to meetings. I realised that it was wrong

26. De Vries, p. 11

27. Luskey, p. 9

28. Thuisiers, p. 4

that women could not vote. But there was nothing that one could do. Law was law."²⁹

Demorny, in turn, states:

I could not see myself supporting any politician because I could not vote. I didn't understand why I couldn't vote and my husband could. I also found it offensive that my white women friends could vote and I could not. But not many of us were prepared to do anything about it. Perhaps we didn't feel strongly enough about it. Today my children cannot understand why my generation accepted the situation. Well, the power of 'what is' of what the law says cannot be easily explained.³⁰

De Vries, on the other hand, feels that voting was not that important for women. "I was not really politically inclined, so I thought it did not really matter as long as my husband voted. He represented both of us when he voted."³¹ September also felt that during that period it was not important to fight for women to vote. Her reasons were, however, different from those of De Vries. She argues:

It was something that we ought perhaps have fought for. But at the time, rather than having fought for the right to vote as a woman, we had to fight to preserve what we had. Our priority was to fight to keep what was going to be taken away from us. I was never a great feminist. I am still not a feminist. I believe in equality for women and equal opportunity and that kind of thing, but I am not a feminist. I am a realist. That realisation told me that at that time the vote for women was not the most important thing. The most important thing was to help males to remain on the voters' role. The coloured male vote was quite significant in the Western Cape. I saw it as my primary political responsibility to ensure that they

29. Carlier, p. 11

30. Demorny, p. 6

31. De Vries, p. 6

retained the vote. It helped keep the United Party in power in certain Cape seats and that, at the time, was important for me. I was a pragmatist.³²

In the previous chapter, some of the complexity of middle-class coloured women's political identity was identified. This complexity is reflected in the consequent political comments of the women. The stranglehold of males in coloured anti-CAD politics excluded women. The fascination, for a variety of socialising reasons, with royalty and English culture, drew them to the United Party, which was seen as the only viable alternative to the Afrikaner dominated National Party.

Ultimately, it was only as the more prescriptive effects of post-segregation apartheid -- especially the Group Areas Act, impinged on their personal lives, that middle class coloured women began to become more directly concerned about organised politics. The earlier indifference was replaced by a heightened sense of political concern. The words of Ibrahim make the point:

The Boere took our homes, our ancestral homes. How could women continue in an indifference to politics? Before segregationist attitudes did not directly affect us -- we could escape the harshness of this by having a few nice things and playing white. After 1948 we faced the reality of apartheid legislation. We could not escape its effect. This is what put most coloureds against the white government. If the Nats had any sense they would have left us alone and most coloureds would have been content.³³

The response of middle-class coloured women to the events of 1948 and the removal of their husbands and/or fathers from the

32. September, p. 8

33. Ibrahim, p. 5

common voters' roll cannot be reduced to any narrow finding. The values and social identity of those women interviewed were less directly affected than men by the 1956 legislation. The complexity of events between 1948 and 1956 were, however, such that women were often -- in a variety of forms -- drawn into organisations that engaged them in the life of the community. The harshness of apartheid legislation was such that they could not escape the effects of racism. They could no longer "play white". They were forced through the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and other pieces of apartheid legislation into an attitude of resentment and eventually resistance. The words of Joyce Benn epitomised this shift in the political identity of middle-class coloured women: "Coloured women who had hitherto managed to ignore the reality of segregation by pursuing private friendships with whites -- even pretending to be white themselves, were rudely awakened. Suddenly they were faced with the reality of what it meant to be on the wrong side of the racial divide."³⁴

34. Benn, p. 8

CONCLUSION

I suggested in the introduction to this study that political identity is essentially a socially constructed reality. As such, it is neither static nor inherently given. My research, in turn, shows that it is almost impossible to determine *precisely* what constituted middle-class coloured political identity during the period 1943-1956 in metropolitan Cape Town. Questions abound: What does one include and what does one leave out of a quest to define political identity? Can the different contours of the enquiry ultimately be reduced to one or more coherent models of identity? What ought to be made of the blurred borders and margins that have an impact on particular attempts of self-definition? Writing from the perspective of post-modern deconstructuralism -- James Scott asks whether it is ever possible to unravel the hidden transcript from the public transcript in any attempt to define social reality?¹

To explore the various social, economic and political ingredients constituting middle-class coloured political identity meant listening closely to the stories told to me by those interviewed. This at times involved reaching beyond the words and facts to the sense of what lay behind the stories, so as to understand the narrations from the perspective of lived experience. More than empathy was needed for this to happen. A researcher is always required to attain a measure of hermeneutical relocation -- seeking to see, hear and understand

1. J. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance, New York, 1990, p. 4-5

in a different way. It is about understanding how and why the informants perceive history in a particular way. It is not only about determining what is 'true' or factually correct. It is also about perceptions, the ambiguity of language and different levels of truth. In the quest for 'factual truth' it can be argued that there either was segregation in the areas in which the interviewees grew up [1930s and 1940s], or there was not. Yet, equally important is 'perceived truth,' which is the manner in which some informants perceived their social reality.

Michel Foucault emphasises the relationship between truth and power when distinguishing between 'factual truth' and 'perceived truth'. He argues: "The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge, and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power." Rejecting any notion of 'essential truth,' he contends that what is perceived as truth in a given situation is inevitably shaped by what he defines as the prevailing "regime of truth" (the dominant ideas) in a particular society. He suggests that each society is governed by a set of presuppositions in terms of which truth is assessed.²

Differently stated, truth is governed by the quest for social well-being -- for survival, for the ability (power) to be a person in a dehumanising world. Perceptions of truth are as worth of study as truth which is critically (empirically) established. The 'perceived truth' (of some) that there was no segregation during the 1930s and 1940s needs to be understood in

2. M. Foucault, in Colin Gordon (ed), Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, New York, 1980, p. 52-70

relation to the 'regime of truth' among at least some coloured middle-class people, which suggests that the essentially English-speaking United Party "were good to the coloureds." The regime of truth that shaped middle-class coloured perceptions was: "It was the Afrikaners that caused segregation."³ Statements like, "He [Smuts] always said that he would not separate people through government as people would separate themselves through class"⁴ needs to be understood in a similar manner. The United Party as the dominant political and economic power during the period under consideration was able to convince many middle-class coloured people that "the United Party does not segregate."⁵ The power of the state and the internalisation of the dominant ideology prevailed. In Foucault's words, power and truth were inter-related. It is in relation to these dynamics that the memories of the interviewees need to be unravelled. It is here that the complexity of coloured middle-class political identity emerges.

I sought to distil my quest for an understanding of the political identity of middle-class coloured people of metropolitan Cape Town by both unravelling and seeking to consolidate what has been communicated in relation to three dominant themes that emerge from the conducted interviews: an *English-speaking orientation*; an affirmation of *middle-class social values* and the desire for acceptance into 'white' society. These categories do not, however, operate in isolation

3. Lawrence, p. 4

4. Demorny, p. 8

5. Carlese, p. 6

-- and they are not treated in isolation in the pages that follow. They continually reinforce one another. The boundaries are often blurred. Through probing these categories in relation to other categories, a complex but functioning definition of coloured middle-class political identity emerges.

Defining Values

The English language was seen by all my respondents as important. To speak English was a way of succeeding in life. It was the 'gateway' to social upliftment. English gave access to both economic and political standing. My interviewees saw English as the language of empowerment and social status. They went to English-speaking schools, associated with English-speaking friends, lived in English-speaking areas, played 'English' sport (cricket and tennis) and many attended the University of Cape Town -- an English language University. They not only identified with the language -- they also became receptive of English values, norms and culture. Many cherish the memories of the royal visit in 1947. They keenly supported Britain and the Allies during World War II and most could tell of friends and families who emigrated to England and English-speaking countries after the loss of the male franchise in 1956. These are memories expressed mostly by women. Males, however, showed similar sentiments when pressed: "That was a really exciting time when the king and queen came to Cape Town. I even went to the dance at the City Hall with my wife. We supported the English during the war and afterwards the king and queen came to say thank you. The English have always been very polite

people. That is why I have so much respect for them. I always told my children that they must behave like the English and not like Afrikaners,"⁶ comments Pitchard.

This English orientation was often translated into categories of class. To speak English "was to show that you were a cut above the rest,"⁷ as it was "only those lower class coloureds, like the farm workers in Phillipi, that spoke Afrikaans."⁸ To speak English identified one's social position in society. The majority of my informants not only came from English-speaking homes, but from families where there was upward social mobility. In many situations, their fathers and mothers were artisans, skilled and semi-skilled workers, petty clerks, seamstresses and tradesmen. This meant that the economic position of their families was better than the majority of coloured families during the 1930s and 1940s. This eased the way for children to enter better and more stable areas of employment, such as the teaching profession. Such salaried advancement, in turn, enhanced the economic well-being of the entire family. Rust comments: "To be educated was to speak English and to speak English meant a better job and a better life for the entire family. This helped us become part of the middle-class." Yet Scott cautions: "We were vulnerably middle-class"⁹ This caused

6. Conversation with Don Pitchard subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 5/07/94

7. Richard van der Ross, p. 6

8. Theys, p. 5

9. Conversation with Clara Scott subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 23/02/95

many to cling intensely to the symbols of this status -- such as the English language in a manner that more 'comfortably middle-class' people would not need to. "We simply could not afford to let our living standards fall. We were determined not to slip into situations of those other coloureds and blacks," Scott continues.¹⁰

To be part of the middle-class often depended on values ascribed to rather than the actual attainment of a particular economic reality. The ideal, for most of my respondents, was white middle-class English society. Their economic aspirations became associated with the complexion of their skin. "Lighter skinned coloureds tended to be part of an upper socio-economic class while those more closely resembling Africans tended to be part of a lower class."¹¹ This association between class and colour became part of many of the interviewees' lives from a very early age. While Theys remembers sending a message to her father "saying your black hen has laid a white egg" after years of having been teased for being the darkest member of the family,¹² Barney De Vries recalls being told by his parents "not to play with those black children as they looked like Africans and spoke Afrikaans."¹³ A clear divide developed between coloureds with 'darker' complexions who spoke essentially Afrikaans and those with a 'lighter' complexion who spoke mainly English. What

10. Ibid.

11. Beinart, The Political and Constitutional Crisis, p. 4

12. Theys, p. 6

13. De Vries, p. 10

middle-class coloured people in the metropolitan Cape Town came to perceive as coloured identity was in fact a class identity as it was inter-twined with their social and economic interest.

To speak English, to be fair in complexion and to associate with white people was what made one "respectable -- different from the lower-classes,"¹⁴ notes Clark. In this way the 'respectable class' of coloured people were able to avoid some customary forms of prejudice that existed during the era of United Party rule, which resulted in many of my informants believing that there was no segregation at the time. "There was no attempt to evoke colour before 1948. We all shared. We went to the same bioscope, the same dances, the same football clubs. We were all the same," recalls Daniels.¹⁵ Such perceptions were largely due to the economic position of the informants, and clearly only a minority of coloured people enjoyed these privileges. Middle-class, urban coloured people were able to ignore the discriminatory attitudes that prevailed at the time of the United Party largely because of the financial resources they had at their disposal. Carlier comments: "We had motor cars and things like that. We did not go about in trains. If I had a meeting my father would lend me his car. I also had a lot of white friends. We would always look smart and we would go out together. People did not interfere with us."¹⁶ Especially after 1948, to be fair in complexion and to speak English became a way

14. Conversation with Reggie Clark subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 3/08/94

15. Daniels, p. 4

16. Carlier, p. 5

of avoiding any stigmatising classification as a coloured. "The lighter you were, the easier it was to be white and to escape the harshness of apartheid. To speak English was an additional advantage. Many coloureds took this route after apartheid came in,"¹⁷ notes Meyer-Fels.

Although not deliberately planned, my random sample of persons interviewed were mostly, in the words of Clara Scott, part of a society that was "vulnerably middle-class". They appropriated the English language and culture in a racially divided society to their own social and economic benefit. They (vulnerably) opted for class distinction as a way of escaping the full brunt of racism. To succeed in this endeavour some of them made 'whiteness' (in appearance and values) their ideal. Ironically, they accepted the imposition of racial categories as a way of attaining class status. These attitudes, together with all the contradictions involved, were internalised. The ambiguities, in turn, manifested themselves in the political identities of those interviewed. It is to this that I now turn.

In Search of Coloured Middle-Class Political Identity

From what has been garnered from the above observations, no clear (unequivocal) political identity can be discerned among the middle-class informants. Within the above categories there existed a range of different political stances:

17. Meyer-Fels, p. 14

The majority of male informants challenged the dominant political perceptions and structures of their father's generation, with most supporting the campaigns of the Anti-CAD. This 'unity' was, however, short lived. Divisions soon emerged around the issue of the vote. One group continued to exercise the vote -- anxious about the threat of its removal. "I knew D.F. Malan's manifesto," comments Afrika. "It was an apartheid manifesto and the United Party was against it. That is why I and others voted for the United Party ... I voted United Party to strengthen the United Party vote against the Nats."¹⁸ Carlese recalls: "We knew that if we lost our vote we would be made a stranger in our own country ... We therefore continued to vote United Party with the hope of keeping the Nats out."¹⁹ The other group campaigned against voting -- arguing that its removal was insignificant. Neethling comments: "We did not care if the vote stayed or went. It meant nothing. Why only focus on the coloured franchise when the majority did not have the vote?"²⁰ Both groups were dominated by teachers, who "spoke in very high language, in a type of English which made sense to the educated but not the grassroots."²¹

Most women chose not to participate in these political conflicts. They formed their own political outlets "as all the men did was fight and divide the community."²² They became

18. Afrika, p. 10

19. Carlese, p. 13

20. Neethling, p. 31

21. Afrika, p. 1

engaged in alternative projects: sporting bodies, welfare organisations and the church. These organisations were often constructed in relation to their social and economic positions in society. Lewin notes: "We were better off than most other coloureds. Our husbands were teachers and many of us women were too. We had extra time, but didn't want to get involved in all that conflict in coloured politics. We had to find other ways of spending our time. We helped the poor Afrikaans-speaking people in our communities, while uniting the whole community through sport. During WWII we helped the English win the war. Women were united in these activities -- white and coloured women."²³

Clearly, most of the political conflicts in the coloured community during the period 1943-1956 took place among a particular class of males. They were educated and spoke English, developing campaigns that not only isolated the majority of coloureds who were grappling with their own social and economic concerns, but women too. The divisions that developed between this group of men was mainly in relation to their 'middle-class' status. This was a status determined by the economic, social and political privileges allowed by the English-dominated United Party. The majority of men, whom I interviewed, chose not to jeopardize this situation. They continued to exercise their vote in order to "strengthen the United Party vote against the Nats."²⁴ They justified such action by stressing that there were

22. Conversation with Irene van der Ross subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 7/06/94

23. Conversation with Annette Lewin subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 13/03/95

24. Ibid., p. 10

"differences between the English-speaking United Party person and the Afrikaans one. The Afrikaans United Party persons you couldn't trust. They were just the same as the Nats, but I felt the English-speaking ones were genuinely with us."²⁵ In so doing the deep-rooted allegiance that these men had for the English justified their vote for the United Party. Fortuin comments: "We had to vote UP. The English had always been good to us. If we did not vote for them we felt we would lose everything ... our vote, our jobs, our homes and security. Our position in society would slowly be eroded. Eventually there would be no difference between us and Africans."²⁶

It is in relation to 'white' politics, as expressed through the United Party, that the majority of the women informants had most in common with some middle-class males. Demorny notes: "Look I was not interested in politics. I did not really care for all that stuff about CAD. It was a lot of damn nonsense. I did not take much note of what was going on there. I did, however, know about the real things that were happening. I really admired General Smuts ... and therefore liked the United Party."²⁷ Again, this interest in the United Party was largely because of their sympathetic attitudes towards English culture which were reinforced through WWII and the Royal Visit. "Most whites were really good to us. Not all whites though. Afrikaners always made you feel bad, but not the English people. The English South

25. Burggraaf, p. 7-8

26. Conversation with Charles Fortuin subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 3/08/94

27. Demorny, p. 8

Africans were real gentlemen and ladies. They learnt how to behave from the British,"²⁸ notes Scott.

The middle-class aspirations of these women, as was the case with the men, was often expressed themselves through an affinity with white society. A surrogate connection with 'white' politics was more appealing to them than 'coloured' politics. Lastly, it can be argued that the developments in 'white' politics eventually impinged on the lives of these women (and men) more directly. This was especially the case after 1948.

Against the group of males who emphasised the importance of the vote and women who were lured by the perceived liberal values within 'white' politics, there existed another political identity among middle-class urban people. This group promoted the boycott of elections, believing that their vote "was a dummy vote and didn't represent anything serious."²⁹ They rejected all contact with 'white liberals' and encouraged a broad alliance with the African majority. Despite this more 'radical' stance, they were unable to mobilise the coloured masses. The reasons are twofold: Owing to their economic and social status they were largely divorced from the concerns of the majority of South Africans. In urban areas, they spoke a language that most did not understand and they lived in localities removed from the daily concerns of 'ordinary' people. In spite of their protests against the dominant power structures, they were unable to

28. Scott, p. 7

29. Hanmer, p. 8

divorce themselves from the 'cultural' aspects of the white exclusivism which they rejected. "These people [who boycotted elections] were often more white in the sense of being elitist than many whites. Certainly the average coloured person did not know what the hell they were talking about," argues Carlese.³⁰ "Middle-class coloured culture is actually rather like white culture. This is who we identify with -- whites. We have more in common with them than lower class coloureds and more specifically Africans."³¹ Secondly, the call for an alliance with Africans by coloured people opposed to voting, and their refusal to associate with 'liberal whites' was ironically not a position that assisted them within the broader coloured community. While Jack and Ray Simons suggest that the majority of coloureds were against the idea of unity with Africans, it can also be argued that many coloureds were opposed to being prevented from befriending whites. "They [the TLSA] wouldn't allow members to belong to organisations that included whites. I had a lot of white friends, who I wanted to mix with. ... All this anti-white politics drove me mad,"³² notes Carlier.

When one notes the attempts by successive governments to drive a wedge between coloureds and Africans, hoping to construct a coloured political identity which had more in common with whites than Africans, this reluctance to be separated from whites is understandable. Long before the imposition of apartheid,

30. Carlese, p. 10

31. Conversation with Pat Sonn subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 10/08/94

32. Carlier, p. 7

coloured separation from Africans was promoted. As early as the beginning of the century Lord Selborne, the British High Commissioner in South Africa, observed:

Our objective should be to teach the Coloured people to give their loyalty to the White population. It seems to me sheer folly to classify them with the Natives, and by treating them as Natives to force them away from their natural allegiance to the Whites and making common cause with the Native.³³

In 1924 the nationalist General Hertzog showed similar intents:

It would be foolish to drive the Coloured people to the enemies of the Europeans -- and that will happen if we expel him; to eventually come to rest in the arms of the natives.³⁴

These policies trapped coloured political organisations within the very structures that some (but clearly not all) rejected. The APO, for example, hoped to safeguard the position of the coloured elite by "extracting concessions from successive governments ... [attempting] to arrest the decline of the coloured artisans and petty bourgeoisie and spare them the fate being suffered by African people of a similar class."³⁵ This was to be achieved by fighting "their battle within the framework of the existing political system, using their voting strength to advance their interests as a group."³⁶ As clearly expressed by

33. Cited in B. Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, London, 1970, p. 10-11

34. Hansard Reports, 1929, Vol 12, Cols 582-583

35. I. Goldin, "The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity in the Western Cape," in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds), The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa, London, 1987, p. 164

36. Lewis, Between the Wire, p. 26

Abdullah Abdurahman: "The educated class of coloured people in Cape Town could no longer be treated as part of an undifferentiated mass of uneducated barbarians."³⁷

By the 1940s, many middle-class coloured people were ready to accept the 'privileges' of being coloured as opposed to African. They had enjoyed relative economic and social advancement from the policies of successive white governments which courted their support against that of Africans. Thus the political identity of coloured middle-class men and women in urban Cape Town was nurtured in relation to social and economic 'privilege'. While many realised the need to question the politics of their fathers' generation, they were at the same time trapped within coloured privilege. "It was not easy to bite the hand that fed you," notes Sonn.³⁸

The majority of middle-class coloured people became despondent when the National Party came to power in 1948. There was a sense of betrayal and frustration. Scott comments: "We felt betrayed. We had always supported the whites and now they had let us down,"³⁹ Frustration grew as apartheid legislation slowly eroded their middle-class 'status', which largely relied on "us speaking English, having a fair complexion and living a respectable life."⁴⁰ Thisiers notes: "Even us better-class

37. R. van der Ross, "The Founding of the African Peoples' Organisation in Cape Town in 1903 and the Role of Dr Abdurahman," in Munger Africana Library Notes, 28 February 1975

38. Sonn, p. 5

39. Scott, p. 10

coloureds were told on what train to ride and where to sit."⁴¹ Middle-class coloureds experienced, often for the first time, discrimination which did not distinguish between class and colour. They were now part of a broader group of people classified as coloured -- separate from whites and separate from Africans. Minister H.J Erasmus explained the intention behind such strategies:

What it will do will be to arouse a sense of national pride in the coloureds. In the past ... their chief aim has been to filter into the ranks of the Europeans. ... By means of the different laws we have enacted, for example, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, the door is being closed to them and they are given the opportunity, in their own ranks to aspire to a higher status for themselves. ... They will now attain a separate status.⁴²

The reality of the new situation was thrust on urban middle-class coloureds. The removal of the male vote in 1956, for example, left many males feeling that they were "no longer part and parcel of the country,"⁴³ making them "second, no third class citizens."⁴⁴ Most women, however, had little interest in the loss of the vote for males. The stark reality of change for them came domestically with the imposition of the Group Areas Act. Marlene De Vries notes: "The removal of the vote did not really affect us, but when they took our homes we could not

40. Conversation with Steven Lochner subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 20/07/94

41. *Thuisiers*, p. 7

42. Hansard Reports, 1950, Vol 71, Col 2703

43. Lochner, p. 24

44. Rust, p. 5

ignore the situation. We soon realised that we were coloureds and there was no way out."⁴⁵

Ian Goldin has suggested that the National Party's intentions, by preventing contact between middle-class coloureds and whites, was to develop middle-class coloureds into the "intellectual and economic core for the coloured nation."⁴⁶ He argues that "without the inspiration of a successful coloured elite ... the coloured working class would have no ambition to work for an improvement within the apartheid system."⁴⁷ While the United Party tried to appease the coloured elite through the vote, the National Party attempted to manipulate middle-class coloureds for its own benefit. Whatever the value of Goldin's analysis, clearly a political change was imposed on the coloured middle-class community. A new period of constructing a distinct coloured political identity had begun.

The details of the power struggles within broader national politics after 1956 are beyond the confines of this research. This having been said, the values, aspirations and contradictions of the formative years of 1943-1956 continued to make their influence felt in the period that followed. The pathos of the period already considered intensified. The forces that thrust middle-class coloureds in several directions increased. New political fissures emerged. Increased political

45. Conversation with Marlene De Vries subsequent to the earlier transcribed interview of 2/02/95

46 Goldin, The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity, p. 169

47. Ibid, p. 169

engineering, driven by apartheid ideologues took its toll. The contours of the future are, in turn, yet to emerge.

A Postscript

T.S. Eliot was living in a different time and place when he wrote these words:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploration
Will be to arrive where we started
And know that place for the first time.⁴⁸

The advent of the apartheid years imposed racial classification onto the already complicated quest for political identity among the emerging middle-class coloured community of metropolitan Cape Town. The Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and related apartheid laws that separated coloured people from whites and Africans have now been repealed.

Does this imply that class will again replace race in the middle-class coloured community? The formation of the Coloured Forum, referred to in the Introduction to this study, suggests not. The historic relationship between colour and class in the South African context, reinforced by more than fifty years of apartheid social engineering, is too intense to suggest that the quest for a middle-class coloured identity can be reduced to one or the other. The quest for self-understanding among coloured people is likely to continue with all the pathos that drives

48. "Little Gidding," in Four Quartets .. The Penguin Book of English Verse, J. Hayward (ed), London, 1956

other groups in their quest for identity in contemporary multicultural South Africa.

Anthony Holiday suggests that coloured people have been "prepared to stomach the traumas of the Group Areas Act and the humiliations of 'petty' segregation in exchange for such benefits, in the form of coloured labour-preference areas and commercial-initiative incentives, as flowed from post-Verwoerdian apartheid and the tricameral parliamentary system."⁴⁹ The question, he suggests, is whether the majority of coloureds will be prepared to risk the dangers of libertarian democracy? More pertinent is the question whether such privileges will continue (albeit in a non-statutory form) to be available to those who may seek to escape the rigours of an open society. This is surely a question with which the Coloured Forum and similar organisations will be obliged to wrestle. Wilmot James' point, as discussed in the Introduction, which concerns the pertinence of economic factors in the formation of political and social identity, is germane in this regard.⁵⁰

49. A. Holiday, "Mastering Slave Politics," in Cape Times, 25 August 1995

50. W. James. "A Coloured People's Congress?" in Cape Times. 4 August 1995

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of Interviewees

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Date of Birth:</u>	<u>Place of Birth/Home</u>
WOMEN:		
1. Pam Bydell	1931	District Six
2. Ray Carlier	1910	Newlands
3. Dorris Demorny	1925	Diep River
4. Marlene De Vries	1907	Genadendal/ Claremont
5. Naz Ibrahim	1925	Bo-Kaap
6. Joyce Benn*	1925	Athlone
7. Theresa Lawrence	1908	Cape Town
8. Annette Lewin	1926	Wellington/ Noordhoek
9. Louise Lewis	1925	Zonnebloem
10. Else Luskey	1919	Woodstock
11. Eileen Meyer-Fels	1921	Newlands
12. Clara Scott	1919	District Six
13. Hettie September	1922	Goodwood/ Salt River
14. Bettie Theys	1926	Wynberg
15. Farima Thuisiers	1925	Kensington
16. Irene van der Ross	1910	Claremont

* Joyce Benn is a non-de-plume, due to the interviewee's request to remain anonymous

MEN:

1. James Afrika	1922	Woodstock
2. Henry Burggraaf	1932	Diep River/ Athlone
3. Richard Carlese	1913	District Six
4. Reggie Clark	1927	Parow
5. Norman Daniels	1922	District Six
6. Barney De Vries	1925	Wynberg
7. Charles Fortuin	1926	Rondebosch
8. Tom Hamner	1923	Salt River/ Woodstock
9. Mike Isaacs	1920	Mowbray
10. Steven Lochner	1919	Claremont
11. Dan Neethling	1913	Malmesbury/ Wynberg
12. Don Pitchard	1910	Wynberg
13. John Rust	1908	Rugby
14. Reg September	1919	Woodstock
15. Pat Sonn	1912	Beaufort West/ Claremont
16. Richard van der Ross	1921	Plumstead

Printed Primary Sources

Civil Rights League, The Coloured Man Speaks: The Entrenched Clauses, 1950

Coloured Advisory Council, Annual Reports, 1st 1943/1944 to 4th 1949

O. Du Plessis, Separate Representation of Voters, published by the Information Committee of the Nationalist Party, 1947

Hansard Reports: 1929, Vol 12, Cols 578-692

 1943, Vol 45, Cols 1778-1782

 1944, Vol 49, Cols 6691-6701

 1946, Vol 46, Cols 4239-4240

 1946, Vol 56, Cols 2838-2840

 1949, Vol 66, Cols 59-65

 1949, Vol 67, Cols 2806-2831

 1950, Vol 71, Col 2452-2703

 1957, Vol 95, Cols 6436-6439

Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1959

Report of the Commission of Inquiry regarding the Coloured Population of the Union, UG54/1937

Union of South Africa, Population Census, 1936, 1946 and 1951

Newspapers

Argus: 1940 - 1995

Cape Times: 1940 - 1995

The Sun: 1940-1956

The Torch: 1940-1956

Books

- P. Abrahams, The Path of Thunder, London, 1948
- G. Anzaldua, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, San Francisco, 1987
- G. Baum, Religion and Alienation, New York, 1975
- D. Beddoe, Discovering Women's History: A Practical Manual, London, 1993
- S. Bekker, Ethnicity in Focus: The South African Case, Grahamstown, 1993
- I. Berger, Threads of Solidarity, London, 1992
- B. Bozzoli, Women of Phokeng, Johannesburg, 1991
- G. Casalis, Correct Ideas Don't Fall from the Skies, New York, 1984
- S. Caunce, Oral History and the Local Historian, New York, 1994
- S.P. Cilliers, The Coloured People of South Africa: A Factual Survey, Cape Town, 1963
- G. Crossick (ed), The Lower Middle Class in Britain, London, 1977
- M. Currell, Political Women, London, 1974
- T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa: A Modern History, Grahamstown, 1987
- A. Davis, Women, Race and Class, London, 1982
- S. Delamont, The Sociology of Women, London, 1980

J. Dugard, Human Rights and the South African Legal Order, Princeton, 1978

R. du Pre, Strangers in their Own Country: A Political History of the 'Coloured' People of South Africa, 1652-1992: An Introduction, Johannesburg, 1992

V. February (ed), From the Arsenal: Articles from the Teachers' League of South Africa (1913-1980), Leiden, 1982

V. February, Mind Your Colour: The 'Coloured' Stereotype in South Africa, London, 1981

J.M. Forley, The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology, Bloomington, 1988

M. Foucault, in Colin Gordon (ed), Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, New York, 1980

D.L. Fowlkes, White Political Women: Paths from Privilege to Empowerment, Tennessee, 1992

H. Gates, Jr., Coloured People: A Memoir, New York, 1995

E. Gellner, Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals, New York, 1994

S. Gluck and D. Patai, Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, New York, 1991

I. Goldin, Making Race: The Political and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa, Cape Town, 1987

K.A. Heard, General Elections in South Africa 1943-1970, London, 1974

D. Henige, Oral Historiography, London, 1982

P. Hugo, Quislings or Realists? A Documentary Study of 'Coloured' Politics in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1978

E.D. Ives, The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History, Knoxville, 1974

- A. La Guma, A Walk in the Night, London, 1967
- G. Lamming, In the Castle of My Skin, London, 1953
- G. Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall, Cape Town, 1980
- T. Lummis, Listening to History, London, 1987
- W. MacMillan, The Cape Coloured Question: An Historical Survey, London, 1927
- B. Magubane, The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa, London, 1970
- N. Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom, Randburg, 1994
- J. Marais, The Cape Coloured People, 1652-1937, Johannesburg, 1968
- G. Mare, Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Politics and Ethnicity in South Africa, Braamfontein, 1992
- A. Matheson, The Coloured People of the Cape, London, 1948
- M. Perrot (ed), Writing Women's History, Oxford, 1994
- Prentice Hall Travel, South American Handbook, Englewood Cliffs, 1993
- V. Randall, Women and Politics: An International Perspective, London, 1987
- R. Resaldo, Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis, Boston, 1989
- D.B. Robertson, Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Society, Richmond, Virginia, 1966
- E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, Wisconsin, 1964
- J. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance, New York, 1990

- A. Seldon and J. Pappworth, By Word of Mouth: 'Elite' Oral History, London, 1983
- J. Siltanen and M. Stanworth (eds), Women and the Public Sphere: A Critique of Sociology and Politics, New South Wales, 1984
- J. and R. Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850-1950, London, 1969
- K. Spink, Black Sash: The Beginning of a Bridge in South Africa, London, 1991
- H. Suzman, In No Uncertain Terms, Johannesburg, 1993
- L. Thompson, A History of South Africa, New Haven, 1990
- L. Thompson, The Cape Coloured Franchise, Johannesburg, 1949
- P. Thompson, The Voice of the Past, Oxford, 1988
- R. van der Ross, The Rise and Decline of Apartheid: A Study of Political Movements among the Coloured People of South Africa, 1880-1985, Cape Town, 1986
- R. van der Ross, Myths and Attitudes: An Inside Look at the Coloured People, Cape Town, 1979
- A.J. Venter, Coloured: A Profile of Two Million South Africans, Cape Town, 1974
- G. Watson, Passing For White: A Study of Racial Assimilation in a South African School, London, 1970
- C. Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa, Cape Town, 1991
- M.G. Whisson and H.W. van der Merwe (ed), Coloured Citizenship in South Africa, Cape Town, 1972
- M.G. Whisson, The Coloured People, Cape Town, 1971
- C. Ziervogel, Brown South Africa, Cape Town, 1937

C. Ziervogel, The Coloured People and the Race Problem, Cape Town, 1936

C. Ziervogel, Who are the Coloured People?, Cape Town, 1944

Chapters in Books

B. Bozzoli, "Class, Community and Ideology in the Evolution of South African Society," in Bozzoli (ed), Class, Community and Conflict, Johannesburg, 1987

J. Fout, "Women's Role in the German Working Class Family," in J. Fout (ed), German Women in the 19th Century: A Social History, New York, 1984

I. Goldin, "The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity in the Western Cape," in Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa, London, 1987

K. McCormick, "The Vernacular of District Six," in S. Jeppie and C. Saudien (eds), The Struggle for District Six: Past and Present, Cape Town, 1990

U.S. Mesthrie, "'No Place in the World To Go To' -- Control by Permit: The First Phase of the Group Areas Act in Cape Town in the 1950s," in E. van Heyningen (ed), Studies in the History of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1994

F. Molteno, "Colour-caste and Ruling Class Strategy in the South African Class Struggle: The Case of 'The Coloured People' and Collaborationist Politics," in M. Murray (ed), Black Political Organisations, Cambridge, 1982

B. Nasson, "The Unity Movement Tradition: Its Legacy in Historical Consciousness," in J. Brown et al, History from South Africa: Alternative Visions and Practices, Philadelphia, 1991

J. Scott, "On Language, Gender and Working Class History," in Gender and the Politics of History, New York, 1988

M. Simons, "Organised Coloured Political Movements," in H.W. van der Merwe and C.J. Groenewald (eds), Occupational and Social Change among Coloured People in South Africa, Cape Town, 1976

Journal Articles

M. Attlee, "The Coloured People of South Africa," in African Affairs, Vol. 46, No. 184, July 1947

V. Bickford-Smith, "Slavery, Emancipation and the Question of Coloured Identity, with Particular Attention to Cape Town, 1875-1910," in The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 19, No. 45, University of London, 1993

B. Bozzoli, "Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies", in Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2, April 1983

C. Bundy, "Report on: People, Power and Culture: The History of Christianity in South Africa, 1792-1992," in KRONOS, No. 19, 1992

L. Callinicos, "Popularising History in a Changing South Africa," in South African Historical Journal, No. 25, 1991

F. Carneson, "The Franchise Action Committee," in Discussion, Vol. 1, No. 3, June 1951

L. De Kock, "People, Power and Culture and the Ethics of Historical Representation," in South African Historical Journal, No. 27, Nov. 1992

E.J. Doman, "The In-Betweeners: A Look at the Coloured People of South Africa," in Optima, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1975

W. Eiselen, "The Coloured People and the Natives," in Journal of Racial Affairs, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1955

J. Inglis, "A Brief History of the Franchise in South Africa," in The Educational Journal, July-August, 1981

L. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," in Journal of American History, Vol. 1, No. 75, 1988

T. Ranger, "White Presence and Power in Africa," in Journal of African History, No. 20, 1970

R.V. Selope-Thema, "In Defence of the Cape Native Franchise," in South African Outlook, September 1928

B. Unterhalter, "Changing Attitudes to Passing for White in an Urban Coloured Community," in Social Dynamics, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1975

R. van der Ross, Founding of the African Peoples' Organisation and the Role of Abdurahman, in Munger Africana Library Notes, 28 February 1975

J.D. Van Der Vyver, "Depriving Westminster of its Moral Constraints: A Survey of Constitutional Development in South Africa," in Harvard Civil Rights -- Civil Liberties Law Review, Vol. 20, No. 2, Summer 1985

Unpublished Papers and Theses

M. Adhikari, The Origins and Founding of the TLSA, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1981

W. Beinart, The Political and Constitutional Crisis over the Separate Representation of Voters' Act, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1971

V. Bickford-Smith, The Emergence of Coloured Political Organisations and the Question of Coloured Identity in Cape Town 1875-1902. A paper presented to the University of Cape Town Department of History Conference, "Cape Slavery -- and after", August, 1989

C. Carolus, Transformation in South Africa: The Role of Civil Society in the Reconstruction and Development Programme. A paper presented at the Institute for Theological and Interdisciplinary Research Conference, October, 1994

R. Donaldson, The Train Apartheid Issue in the Cape Peninsula, 1948-1953, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1981

H. Dugmore, 'Becoming Coloured': Class and Culture in Johannesburg's Malay Location, 1918-1939, PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1993

L. du Toit, A Narrative-Communicative Approach to Identity and Ethnicity. A paper delivered at the Global Change and Social Transformation Conference, Centre for Social Development, November, 1993

R. Gentle, The Non-European Unity Movement in Perspective, B.Soc.Sc(Hons), Sociology Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978

I. Goldin, The Poverty of Coloured Labour Preference: Economics and Ideology in the Western Cape, SALDRU Working Paper, No 59, 1984

I. Goldin, Coloured Preference Policies and the Making of Coloured Political Identity in the Western Cape Region of South Africa, with Particular Reference to the Period, 1948 to 1984, PhD Thesis, Oxford University, 1984

K. Greenbank, Into the Wild Bushes of Nyanga: The Growth, Control and Relocation of Cape Town's Squatters, 1939-1955, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993

F. Khan, The Origins of the Non-European Unity Movement, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1976

G. Lewis, Your Votes are Your Guns: The Emergence of Coloured Political Organisations at the Cape. Unpublished paper, 1983

L. Newton-Thompson, Birth Control Clinics in the Western Cape, 1932-1974, BA(Hons), History Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992

M. Simons, Colour Political Organisations and Their Response to the Separate Representation of Voters' Act of 1951, BA(Hons), Political Studies Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1968

A.G. Weiss, The Cape Coloured Women Within an Industrial Community and at Home, MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1950